New Technologies to Enhance Internet Education for Dentists

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Introduction

As an educational medium, interactive streaming video over the Internet has the potential to improve standards of dental health and contribute to the development of more universal standards of dental care around the world.

The ability to stream video over the Internet is a developing technology already achieving high standards for users with broad-band access. As these technologies improve, smaller interest groups, such as professional groups will be able to take advantage of this new medium by broadcasting content specific to their interests. This medium will be different from conventional media such as television, CD and video, that it can be accessed by local and distant users alike, and will be able to be accessed on demand.

The Internet can provide far greater levels of interactivity and therefore the potential for a greatly improved learning experience when compared with traditional educational media. The Internet already provides a medium for discussion for a live or delayed “question and answer” sessions or bulletin boards. Additionally, video conferencing, which was once only available to the executives of large corporations, is now a relatively common event on the Internet.

Lectures in a “Virtual Auditorium”

As a quickly developing medium in dental education, the internet affords the ability to view lecture presentations in a “virtual auditorium”. The user can view the speaker and the speaker’s slides on a computer screen at home or in the office, as if attending a live lecture. We may think of such educational websites as “online video journals”, and the library of material that they offer is already substantial.

Using the Internet to provide “live” and interactive educational material may be of only moderately additional value to people with ready access to more traditional forms of education.

Authors

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