

Blog your clinical photos

Sir,

I read with interest the article by Kamel Boulos.^[1] The article lucidly describes the efficient ways of 'finding the right image online,' which is the prime concern for dermatologists.

Sophisticated digital cameras have become an essential part of many dermatologists' armamentarium. Hence the next important concern is how to efficiently share one's digital photographs. Clinical photographs, directly from the camera, will be huge and need to be optimized for web use. Though many software products are available for this task, image optimization is a difficult job for a dermatologist. Though clinical image libraries like DermAtlas^[2] accept contributions, it is difficult to add a personal touch to the postings. Hence sharing of images is mostly done through e-mail, which is possible only with people you know.

A perfect answer to all these image-sharing problems is *Blog*, which is the short form for *weblog*. A blog is basically a journal that is available on the web. The activity of updating a blog is 'blogging' and someone who keeps a blog is a 'blogger'. Blogs are typically updated daily using software that allows people with little or no technical background to update and maintain the blog. Many sites offer free blog.^[3]

Posting a clinical photo from your digital camera directly to your blog after optimization and adding your comments is simplified to the touch of a button by a product called *picasa* offered free by Google.^[4] If you want to post a note without image, it can even be done directly from Microsoft® Word, once you install a plug-in.^[5]

Blog is a concept becoming popular day by day and with the ease brought about by *picasa*, it is probably the most efficient and effective way of storing, sharing

and discussing clinical images.

REFERENCES

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Response by author

Sir,

I fully agree with the author of the letter titled 'Blog your clinical photos'.^[1] The latest generation of collaborative web-based tools - namely, wikis, blogs/photoblogs and podcasts/vodcasts - offer many unique and powerful information-sharing and collaboration features. They also have the added advantage of taking the technical skill out of these features, allowing users to focus on the information and collaborative tasks themselves, minus delivery obstacles.^[2-13]

Wikis, blogs/photoblogs and podcasts/vodcasts carry the potential of complementing, improving and adding new collaborative dimensions to the many existing online dermatology services like Map of Dermatology (<http://healthcybermap.org/dermap/>),^[14] the UK NLH Skin Disorders Specialist Library ([Indian J Dermatol Venereol Leprol | May-June 2006 | Vol 72 | Issue 3](http://</p></div><div data-bbox=)