

A guide to the Internet for psychiatrists

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Objective: To provide psychiatrists with a guide to using the Internet.

Conclusions: The key to using the Internet is to have the skills to keep the signal-to-noise ratio high. This requires knowledge and practice. The paper contains tips on searching and information about surfing skills, notice-boards, portals and email lists, and lists a range of very useful websites.

Key words: guide, Internet, psychiatry.

JACK AND THE INTERNET

Once upon a time, a long time ago, there was a lazy boy called Jack with too much time on his hands. His mother was a poor widow, who used to nag him to 'get off that bloody computer' and do his homework. One day, when they had run out of food, the widow told Jack to take their only cow to market and sell it for as much money as possible.

Along the road, Jack met a tinker who offered to buy the cow from him, and save him the need to walk several more miles to the market.

'What will you pay me?' said Jack.

'I will give you this magic modem' said the tinker. 'Take it home and plug it in the back of your computer and all sorts of amazing things will happen!'

So Jack did. His mother was horrified. But after a struggle with logging in and other hassles, Jack woke up the next morning to see a huge beanstalk rising out of the back of his computer all the way up to Cyberspace!

He climbed and he climbed. Eventually, he reached Cyberspace, and started to explore.

And he found some wonderful things...

A goose that laid the golden egg, especially when the markets were favourable: <http://www.etrade.com.au>

A harp that plays all sorts of music: <http://www.kazaa.com>

Any book he had ever wanted to read: <http://www.amazon.com>

And lots more besides.

Jack of course knew his myths. He knew there was supposed to be an ogre-sized fly in the ointment. He listened out for the sound of a 'Fee Fi Fo Fum' but heard nothing. He even Googled 'ogre' without success.

Too good to be true!

It was. The ogre-sized fly in the ointment was, of course, crap. Gigabytes of it. Terabytes of it. Spam. Porn. Trivia. Fallacy. Rubbish.

Jack was overwhelmed by this, and fled down the beanstalk as fast as he could. He came to see me, and together we decided that before he climbed the beanstalk again, he should acquire some skills for filtering the information and maximizing the signal-to-noise ratio of the cyberspace experience.

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Jack made many visits and, based on his experience, I have developed the following 'Netguide for psychiatrists' to help others venturing up for the first time.

<http://www.psyberspace.com.au/netguide>

OVERVIEW OF THE INTERNET FOR PSYCHIATRISTS

An excellent overview of many of the issues can be found on Bob Young's 'Guide to the Internet for psychotherapists and psychoanalysts' (<http://human-nature.com/rmyoung/papers/pap138.html>). Bob was, until recently, Professor of Psychotherapy and Psychoanalytic Studies at the University of Sheffield in the UK. He played a big role in promoting issues to do with psychiatry on the Internet, with the help of his one-time PhD student Ian Pitchford. The Centre for Psychotherapeutic Studies also has an excellent Guide to the Internet (<http://www.shef.ac.uk/~psyc/guides.html>).

SEARCHING

The key to successful Net searching is to understand the concept of syntax rules. Different search engines have different rules. You can find them for the most common search engines at Findspot (<http://www.findspot.com/>).

Click on one of the search tools and the site tells you the system. For example, under 'Google' it says:

Search syntax.

The word boats or the word cars	n/a
The word boats and the word cars	boats cars
The word boats but not the word cars	boats -cars
The phrase: scenic view	"scenic view"

Search examples

GOOGLE TIPS

Google is not case sensitive. All searches are processed as lower case. Google does not perform word stemming. A search for cat will not retrieve documents containing the word cats. Google ignores common words (and, is, etc.) and single characters and digits in its searches. To force Google to include a common word, single character or digit in a search, precede it with a + sign.

Example: 'Babylon +5'

There are many different search engines, and several good sites to describe their various advantages.

Google is outstanding, and a good first choice. <http://www.google.com>

Note the arrival of a second second-generation search engine to join Google: Yahoo Search. <http://search.yahoo.com/>

Scirus is a specialized scientific search engine. <http://www.scirus.com/>

Tutorial sites include:

Noodle Tools

<http://www.noodletools.com/debbie/literacies/information/5locate/adviceengine.html>

UC Berkeley: Teaching Library Internet Workshops

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/SearchEngines.html>

Infopeople <http://www.infopeople.org/search/guide.html>

Quite a useful option with Google is to install a browser button on your desktop. I use Netscape. You can get the button at <http://www.google.com.au/options/netscape6.html>

You drag the link called 'GoogleSearch' to the personal toolbar and drop it. From now on, whenever you are browsing and see a word anywhere on a page that you want to know more about, merely highlight it, click the button, and Google will fire into life and search for that word or phrase.

For those who use Internet Explorer, there is an alternative called the Google Toolbar: <http://toolbar.google.com/>

NOTICEBOARDS

These are sites or emails that are regularly updated with information of different sorts. Typically, they contain a tease paragraph, with a link to the rest on another website. Ones I like include:

Google News (<http://news.google.com.au/>), which presents information culled from approximately 4500 news sources worldwide and automatically arranged to present the most relevant news first. Topics are updated continuously throughout the day, so you will see new stories each time you check the page. Google has developed an automated grouping process for Google News that pulls together related headlines and photos from thousands of sources worldwide, enabling you to see how different news organizations are reporting the same story. You can choose versions from other countries (e.g. USA), or select, for instance, health news items. It makes an excellent home page. It is updated every few minutes.

News in Behavioural and Brain Sciences (NIBBS): <http://human-nature.com/nibbs/>

This is the weekly edition of *The Human Nature Daily Review*. It contains snippets from psychology, anthro-

pology, psychiatry and related fields. It also comes as a convenient emailout.

Arts and Literature Daily (<http://www.aldaily.com>) is one of the wonders of the Web. A huge range of international articles about everything under the sun. Put a link on your personal toolbar. Several new items are added daily; old ones are left down the page to read if you check in only occasionally. There are also links to many newspapers, magazines etc.

Scitech Daily (<http://www.scitechdaily.com/>) is the science and technology sister site to Arts and Literature Daily. It claims: 'Here's the most intelligent, informed science and technology coverage and analysis you can find on a daily basis, sourcing a huge range of great writers and excellent publications.'

SURFING SKILLS

There are various skills that make surfing the Internet easier and more efficient. You may well know these, in which case they will seem obvious and mundane. But for those who don't know them, they can make a big difference.

Surf using both hands. Lots of people use the keyboard for typing text and the mouse for commands. Try to learn to use the mouse with your right hand, and the keyboard with your left hand.

Mouse

Use the mouse cursor to point to things and move the cursor. Use the left button to click links if you want to leave your present page and go to the link. Use the right button to open up other options, such as 'open in new tab' or 'open in new window'. This is particularly useful if you have done a search and elicited a list of several different items you want to check out. If you left mouse click on one of them, you lose your list. If you right click and open a new tab, you still have your list to return to.

I assume the reader knows that you can have many different windows or tabs open at one time. I usually have 10–20. That way, I never spend time waiting for a page to download. It is always happening in the background while I am looking at one that has already arrived.

Keyboard

The most important part of the keyboard is the left end. Your left little finger owns the left 'CONTROL' (CTRL) key, and the other fingers of your left hand can reach many of the options that go with it. Each program is different, and you can read the CONTROL options by looking on the right of the menu items. Common browser options are as follows.

These control features work throughout your computer. Thus, you might see an email you want to save into a Word document.

		Internet Explorer	Netscape	Word etc
Ctrl +	A	Select all	Select all	Select all
Ctrl +	S	Save	Save	Save
Ctrl +	D	-	Bookmark this page	Font
Ctrl +	F	Find	Find	Find
Ctrl +	Z	Undo last action	Undo last action	Undo last action
Ctrl +	X	Cut	Cut	Cut
Ctrl +	C	Copy	Copy	Copy
Ctrl +	V	Paste	Paste	Paste
Ctrl +	B	Organize favourites	Organize bookmarks	Bold
Ctrl +	N	Open new window	Open new window	Open new page
Ctrl +	P	Print	Print	Print
Tab		Cycle through form	Cycle through form	Tab
Enter		OK	OK	
Alt +	Tab	Toggle programs	Toggle programs	

Shortcuts and browser options

CTRL + A (Select all)

CTRL + C (Copy)

ALT + TAB (Toggle a list of open programs; cycle until you find Word)

CTRL + V (Paste into Word)

CTRL + S (Save)

Or you might see a website you want to share with an email list, or a friend. Go to the website with your browser, select the uniform resource locator (URL; website address) in the navigation toolbar at the top using your mouse, then:

CTRL + C (Copy)

Mouse click on your email program (Outlook Express, Netscape Mail etc.)

CTRL + V (Paste into email composition)

Notice that if you paste the whole URL, including the 'http://' part, most email programs will convert it into an active link for the person receiving it. If you put in only the 'www' part, this won't work, for example:

<http://www.psyberspace.com.au/netguide/>

is better than <http://www.psyberspace.com.au/netguide/>

CTRL + ENTER is a shortcut for sending email. TAB is useful when filling out a form on the Net, or moving through a spreadsheet or table. TAB moves the cursor to the next spot. ENTER is useful as an alternative to clicking on an OK button. I use the ENTER on the bottom right of the numeric keypad, rather than using the mouse to find the OK button and click on it.

If you choose the 'Digest' option on an email list, you will receive a daily compendium of emails posted in the previous 24 h. Usually the Digest contains a Contents section with a list of the topics included. One keyboard exercise enables you to read only the items with the topic that interests you.

Select the name of the item with your mouse and left button.

CTRL + C, F, V in sequence. (Copy, Find, and Paste into the Find panel)

ENTER. ENTER, ENTER. (This moves you through the Digest, stopping wherever the word you selected appears.)

A similar approach is useful when you are trying to find something in a lengthy document.

EMAIL LISTS

These are discussion groups on a huge range of topics. You can get an idea of the range from the following sites devoted to listing them:

Sheffield University's Centre for Psychotherapeutic Studies (<http://www.shef.ac.uk/~psyc/guides.html>) catalogues the largest number of lists.

Interpsych (<http://www.interpsych.net/inter.htm>) has 27 psychiatry lists.

Yahoo (<http://health.dir.groups.yahoo.com>) has 158 professional lists under 'psychiatry'.

Tile.net (<http://tile.net/lists/>) has a huge number of lists, searchable by name. Simply put 'psych' in the panel.

Topica (<http://lists.topica.com/>)

Hippo (<http://www.hippodirect.com/>)

Auspsyc is an email list for Australian and New Zealand psychiatrists and trainees. To join, send an email to Dr John Buchanan at jbuchanan@ozemail.com.au

Auspsyc group email addresses:

Post message: auspsyc@yahoogroups.com

Subscribe: auspsyc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Website: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/auspsyc>

Unsubscribe: auspsyc-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com

PORTALS

These are sites that you have to enter before you can access the resources inside them. Typically, you have to register (usually this is free) with an ID and a password. Mostly, once you have registered, the site will recognize you. However, this depends on you having your 'cookie' setting such that your computer can respond to an ID query.

Netscape. Edit/Preferences/Privacy & Security/Cookies and select 'Enable cookies for the originating website only'.

Internet Explorer. Tools/Internet Options/Privacy and move the slider to Medium.

Another useful tip is to keep track of your ID and password using the Bookmarks (Netscape) or Favourites (IE). If you right click on the bookmark for, say Medscape, a menu appears that includes the item 'Properties'. Write in your ID and a hint to which PIN or password you used.

Some portals include:

Medscape (<http://www.medscape.com/>). This is a huge site with a mass of information, including free access to MEDLINE. You can choose your preferred specialty homepage, such as 'Psychiatry and Mental Health'.

RANZCP (<http://www.ranzcp.org/>). This permits access to the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* and *Australasian Psychiatry* online.

APA (<http://www.psych.org/>)

AMAZON (<http://www.amazon.com>). This is a wonderful resource for researching and buying books, and many other items.

MoodGYM (<http://moodgym.anu.edu.au/>). This provides a free Cognitive Behaviour Therapy program online.

LINKS

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (4th edn; DSM-IV) criteria: <http://www.geocities.com/morrison94/> This is possibly the only place on the Web where all the diagnostic criteria can be found. It has been produced by James Morrison, the author of DSM-IV Made Easy.

Internet Mental Health (<http://www.mentalhealth.com/p.html>). This site contains information on the following topics: disorders, medication, self-diagnosis, research, magazine, as well as discussion and links to other sites.

Internet Mental Health Resources (<http://www.mentalhealth.com/p13.html>). This site contains a wide list of topics applicable to psychology and mental health.

International Society of Mental Health (<http://www.ismho.org/>). This is a non-profit organization whose stated goal is to 'promote understanding, use and development of online communication, information and technology for the international mental health community'.

Mental Health Net (<http://mentalhelp.net/>) Professional Resources Index. This is a large website listing topics from alcohol abuse to statistics,

organizations and associations, journal search, job links and DSM criteria, among other items.

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) (<http://www.cpr.net/>). This is a highly rated site with an index for hundreds of medical sites, a place for physicians, medical students, and patients to start on the web.

PlanetPsych (<http://www.planetpsych.com/>). This contains a compatibility quiz and a depression screening test, a therapist directory, basic psychology information about disorders, treatments and other topics in psychology, and features on marriage, teen suicide, smoking cessation, child development, self-help, chats, and a newsletter.

Psych Web (<http://www.psychhttp://www.com/>). This is a large site for many topics in psychology.

Social Psychology Network (<http://www.socialpsychology.org/>). This includes PhD programmes, research groups, journals, on-line studies, books and courses.

Medscape (<http://www.medscape.com>) is an excellent medical resource with specialty pages. You must register (free). The psychiatry section makes a good home page for your browser. There is a good version of MEDLINE available.

Online Dictionary of Mental Health (<http://www.human-nature.com/odmh/index.html>) has a large number of useful links.

Interpsych (<http://www.interpsych.net/>) has a number of different mental health email discussion groups you can join.

Human Nature Daily Review (<http://human-nature.com/nibbs/>) is a free newsletter with links to many interesting articles. To subscribe, send a blank email to nibbs-newsletter-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (<http://www.ranzcp.org/>). This permits access to online versions of the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* and *Australasian Psychiatry*.

Quackwatch (<http://www.quackwatch.com/>) has articles debunking fringe therapies.

Mood disorders

Dr Ivan's Depression Central (<http://www.psychom.net/depression.central.html>). This has many useful links in the area of depression, bipolar disorder etc.

Bipolar Disorder (<http://www.mentalhealth.com/dis/p20-md02.html>).

Trauma

David Baldwin's Trauma Information Pages (<http://www.trauma-pages.com/index.htm>).

Journals

American Journal of Psychiatry: <http://intl-ajp.psychiatryonline.org/>

Medscape Psychiatry Resource Center: <http://www.medscape.com/pages/editorial/public/resourcecentres/index-psychiatry>

Scientific American: <http://www.sciam.com/>

New England Journal of Medicine: <http://www.nejm.org/>

British Medical Journal: <http://bmj.bmjournals.com/>

Online scholarly journals: <http://info.lib.uh.edu/wj/webjour.html>

Medication

RxList (<http://www.rxlist.com/>): a good reference point for drugs.

See the website <http://www.psyberspace.com.au/netguide> to get the active links.

CONCLUSION

The Internet represents a great opportunity for psychiatrists to be able to communicate with peers, research clinical matters and maintain their skills and knowledge. It also brings opportunity for time-wasting and frustration. Knowledge of a range of quality sites, and techniques for searching and filtering information are the keys to making good use of it.