Current Perspective

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EyeWiki, Do You Wiki?

One of the Academy's most popular educational resources almost didn't happen. Academy educational tools, whether the *Basic and Clinical Science Course (BCSC), Focal Points, EyeNet,* or the ONE Network, go through a rigorous editorial process. This results in a high level of member trust in the accuracy and integrity of the Academy products. In 2009 Academy educational leaders noted the success of a new learning tool that violated the core principle of this process—the wiki.

A wiki is a website on which users collaboratively post and modify articles from within the web browser itself. Once the articles are initially written, registered visitors can make changes, contributions, or corrections. Wikis first emerged in 1995 after computer programmer Ward Cunningham posted his software WikiWikiWeb. ("Wiki" is Hawaiian for "quick.")

Mr. Cunningham is also reputed to have made the statement, "The best way to get the right answer on the internet is not to ask a question; it's to post the wrong answer." Although he denies the attribution, it's now known as Cunningham's Law.

The strength of a wiki is also one of its weaknesses; it is a living document that is posted without initial editorial review. But with a sufficiently committed web community, any errors or omissions are rapidly remediated.

The question was, "Should the Academy embrace an educational process that ignored rigorous editing and instead depended on the ophthalmic community for content development after posting?" In June 2009 the Academy Board of Trustees, intrigued by a wiki's potential, approved its development as a free, public online repository of knowledge that would cover the spectrum of eye disorders. Authorship would be limited to ophthalmologists or ophthalmologists-in-training, and a committee of ophthalmologists would be tasked with reviewing articles after they were posted and contribute to them as needed to ensure content quality.

EyeWiki launched in July 2010 with Drs. Aaron Miller and Brad Feldman as the original editor-in-chief and deputy editor-in-chief. (The current editors-in-chief are Drs. Marcus Marcet and Penny Asbell.) Shortly afterward the new Eye-Wiki had nearly 100 articles covering a spectrum of common clinical topics in ophthalmology.

Where is EyeWiki now? As of Feb. 1, 2019, EyeWiki has 818 user-contributed articles and 70 active volunteer content reviewers. In 2018 there were 7.2 million page views by 3.1 million visitors. Of these, 62%, are from outside the United States and 52% access Eye Wiki from a mobile device. It is the most popular single web-based educational resource in the Academy's armamentarium! As I was writing this column on Feb. 5, I typed "glaucoma" into my search engine, and the first nonadvertising site listed was EyeWiki.

A total of 1,526 ophthalmologists and ophthalmologists-in-training have contributed content to the site. The majority, 65%, come from the United States, 12% are from the Asia Pacific region, 9% are from Europe, and 7% each are from Latin America and the Middle East/Africa. Once a page exists on Eye-Wiki, anyone with an author account can edit and contribute to it. Volunteer ophthalmologist editors review all content on the site every six months.

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EyeWiki supports U.S residents and fellows, and international contributors. Each year it sponsors contests for the best new EyeWiki entries from these groups; since 2011, it has sent 30 U.S. winners to the Mid-Year Forum (all expenses paid) and has awarded free ebook subscriptions to the *BCSC* and *Focal Points* to international winners.

What are the hottest EyeWiki topics as searched by readers? Herpes zoster ophthalmicus, bacterial conjunctivitis, and hypertensive retinopathy. But it's not just common entities. Also, in the Top 20 are dacryocystorhinostomy, Horner's syndrome, and glaucomatocyclitic crisis!

So, if you've never been there before, I encourage you to visit http://eyewiki.org. See why millions of people visit it annually, and (if you've got a favorite topic) go to the "Getting Started Page," type in the topic, hit "Create," and become an author!