# The use of electronic vs. printed journals by hospital physicians in Israel / Yonit Shechter


## Abstract

Information is an important and necessary component in every research process, where the researcher is both the supplier and the customer of the information at the same time.

Today, in the information age, we can see a dramatic surge in the increase rate of information generated by people. During the last few years we are facing technological developments which enable fast transfer of high volume of information. Researchers today have access to interactive databases, which can now offer a modern, advanced scientific communication.

This research investigated the way Israeli hospital physicians are using electronic media for their jobs. It has checked various aspects of using computers such as: communication with colleagues, bibliographic search, fast access to medical databases and participation in discussion groups through the Internet.

The research is also investigating how the physicians' age, years of experience, internet know-how and other parameters are affecting their use of the electronic media in every day career life.

A survey is provided, as a background for this research, which covers the various scientific communication ways, advantages and disadvantages of printed and electronic journals and a description of the scientific communication through the Internet. Also included, are related research projects, which have been conducted internationally, in an attempt to overcome the information fast increase rate.

The questionnaire that was used for data acquisition was partially based on previous questionnaires used in similar research areas. It was sent to 1000 hospital physicians from 20 different medical sectors in 25 Israeli hospitals. 125 questionnaires have been returned, representing 12.5% response rate.

The results of this research have confirmed its main hypothesis. Hospital physicians are publishing less articles in electronic journals than in printed journals. They are also reading less electronic articles than printed journals.

The most popular use of the Internet by hospital physicians is for fast access to medical databases and saving time in finding specific medical information.

There is also direct correlation between the hospital physicians' self confidence regarding their Internet capabilities and the actual use of the Internet.

Most of the responders (78.6%) reported that they learned to use the Internet by themselves with no professional guidance. Hospital physicians use electronic mail for average of 5 – 10 hours a week and receive an average of 10 -20 electronic messages a week.

To conclude, there is a great challenge for setting information channels for the scientific communities, in order to cope with the increase of the information volume at a high quality and at a reasonable cost. Though today's electronic systems are not fulfilling all the hospital physicians' needs, we can forecast that they will improve in the future, given that better integration and training will be provided.

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