Designing Web-based Image Databases To Enhance Medical Education

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Abstract: The WWW is not merely an electronic equivalent of a textbook. It can provide a dynamic interface with databases in which knowledge can be stored and retrieved in complex ways to promote educational outcomes. The objectives of this project were (1) to design an online database of pathophysiological images that would allow second-year medical students to retrieve and search for images; (2) to create an "intelligent" database that directly directs students to similar cases of the same disease or alternative representations of the same case; (3) to create an easy, online interface for faculty to manage the content of the multimedia database. The web browser interface was programmed with ColdFusion®. A Microsoft Access® database contained fields with information related to the location of the image, descriptors of the image, clinical and patient information, and proprietary information. Feedback from students and faculty has been very positive.