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Online Publication Structure

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With the evolution of technology, the process of publishing content changes at a very rapid pace. This evolution includes publication of scholarly information and has led to debate around recent publishing models, such as open access (content available to readers at no charge), hybrid (some combination of print and online content delivery), or early online access to print journal content.

Fully online journals continue to develop and disseminate scholarly content by incorporating multiple media sources, such as , links, images, or sound, a practice that is gradually becoming easier to do and more accepted by readers in many settings, including academia (Anderson-Wilk & Hino, 2011; Ippolito, Blais, Smith, Evans, & Stormer, 2009). However, there is very little, if any, scholarly literature that defines or discusses the dynamic publishing model of journal structure, which permits addition of new content directly linked to existing content using multiple tables of content (TOC). A search of the literature and the Internet yielded only one definition of a dynamic page publishing model from Wikipedia, with no support citations (Dynamic publishing, 2014).

One of the first scholarly journals to introduce a dynamic publishing model in 1996 was *OJIN: The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing* (OJIN). It remains one of the few actively publishing online journals to use this model. As we approach the 20 year mark of publishing OJIN content this way, and other journals are considering online applications, it may be helpful to provide some background and discussion about the OJIN dynamic publishing model.

ABOUT OJIN

OJIN is a peer-reviewed journal that was conceptualized as an exclusively online, open access, scholarly journal in 1996 at Kent State University College of Nursing (Coeling, 2006). For the first 10 years, the journal partnered with both the university and the American Nurses Association (ANA); the university assumed responsibility for content and ANA provided web support for online publication. In 2006, OJIN was acquired by and became the scholarly journal of ANA. OJIN is indexed in databases, such as the Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature® (CINAHL) and Medline®, offered by all of the major information services including EBSCOhost, ProQuest, and Scopus.

The mission of OJIN is to provide a forum for discussion of issues of interest to nurses and other healthcare professionals. The journal advisory board determines the three topics that will post each year on January 31, May 31, and September 30. OJIN also includes several columns. The intent of the journal is to present differing views on issues that affect nursing research, education, and practice and to enable readers to understand the complexity of the topic at hand. The selection of a dynamic publishing model, which allows addition of content to any OJIN topic at any point, supports this intent by decreasing temporal limitations and allowing evolution of the discussion on any given topic or concept. Examples of content that may continue to develop a topic include additional peer-reviewed articles or letters to the editor and columns, which are not peer-reviewed. Additional content encourages dynamic dialogue that contributes to a comprehensive discussion of the topic.

PUBLISHING MODELS

Multiple models for publishing exist and much current discussion centers on the open access model. OJIN utilizes a hybrid open access model by embargoing the most recent topic for four months to ANA members only until the next topic is published. Non-peer reviewed items such as letters and columns and peer-reviewed articles added to an existing topic are always open access. The scope of this article is to discuss the dynamic/temporal aspect of the journal.

Traditional Models

In most traditional models of publishing, an issue contains a predetermined amount of content such as articles, columns, letters, and editorials. The journal TOC lists all features published in that particular issue. If the editor or editorial board decides that updates or corrections to a subject of interest or specific article are needed, these items would be offered in a subsequent issue and listed accordingly in the TOC.

Dynamic Model

The limited online references to dynamic publishing concentrate on a concept called dynamic page publishing (Dynamic publishing, 2014; Farina, 2011), that essentially refers to using the same content in more than one layout. Typical non-scholarly documents that

may use this model might include advertisements, brochures, catalogs, direct mail, and e-books. (Dynamic publishing, 2014). In scholarly publishing, it appears from my personal experiences and informal conversations with editor and author colleagues, that the most common application of this model at present is for authors to pre-publish work in an online format. Doing so can potentially increase access to content and encourage reader follow up in the hardcopy version that includes either the same article or an expanded version. This seems an appropriate model for hybrid publications that include both online and hardcopy options. However, to maximize the potential of the Internet and its various online platforms, fully online journals might do well to consider utilizing the dynamic model of publishing to a greater extent.

The dynamic model used for OJIN features new topics by concept. From a structural perspective, each new topic has initial peer-reviewed articles as appropriate to support the selected concept. New content added to previous topics may include articles from multiple years/months of publication. Each TOC is based on a time period that begins the day after a new topic post, that is, February 1, June 1, and October 1, and ends with the posting of the initial articles in the next topic. By using this model, articles that update previous OJIN topics, featured columns, and letters to the editor may be posted at any time and are not limited to the scheduled three new topics each year.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM OJIN

Eighteen years of developing OJIN content has helped the editorial team to identify benefits that we feel result from the minimal structure and temporal limitations inherent to dynamic publishing practices. We have also identified a major challenge as well. I will briefly discuss these lessons learned and provide a few outcomes as a result of developing our current list of 54 topics using dynamically published content.

Benefits and Challenges of this Model for OJIN Readers

Likely the greatest benefit to our dynamic publishing model is the potential to provide a perspective that includes both breadth and depth. Any OJIN topic can be updated at any time. Additions to a given topic are not tied to the new topic publication schedule of three times annually. This allows us to stay true to the original intent of the journal as conceptualized: a comprehensive, dynamic discussion of a given topic important to healthcare and nursing. Not only can readers appreciate the complexity and evolution of a topic, they can also seek historical perspective (albeit limited to content in one journal) with immediate access to all originally published OJIN content on a given topic.

Another benefit is easy access to comprehensive content. This model is very compatible with devices used for online readers. Consumers who engage in online reading do not have to search static hardcopies for information published previously in OJIN. They are easily able to see links to all OJIN-published content related to a given topic on a single content page in the journal. This includes any corrections or addenda that are published near the original content (and not in a subsequent hardcopy issue) for ease of reader review. Should a reader wish to print a physical copy to read, that option is always available.

The dynamic structure allows us to link content to more than one topic, if appropriate. Occasionally an article or column can inform more than one OJIN topic. If so, it is easy to cross-link content so that in a review of a given topic, readers have access to as much related content as possible. This is a feature that has generated positive comments from both authors and readers.

The major challenge of using the dynamic publishing model is educating catalogers and database managers about areas that can impact reader access. Readers who enter OJIN directly from the journal website have not reported any difficulty understanding the navigation process to access journal content. However, contact persons for information services have questioned the structure of multiple articles in a single topic that, due to the dynamic model, fall under several different TOCs. Frequent turnover of personnel can lead to repeated explanations of this unique structure. It is critical that the people who index journal content clearly understand this process. As with any journal, if articles are incorrectly indexed, readers may not successfully find OJIN content appropriate to their search using an external database. Additional time and effort on the part of the editor, and to a lesser extent the editorial team, are absolutely required to assure accuracy in database management and user retrieval.

Outcomes

A few descriptive statistics illustrate the success we have had in updating OJIN topics using this dynamic publishing model. Over one quarter (28%) of the 54 topics have been updated at least once with new peer-reviewed articles and almost half of them (41%) two or more times. In the years 2012 – 2014, a total of 16 topics (30%) have been updated. In the years 2010 – 2014, this number increased to 22 topics (41%) and in the years 2008 – 2014, we updated more than half of our existing topics (n = 32, or 59%).

Over 80% of the topics (n = 44) feature at least one type of related content (column or letter) in addition to peer-reviewed articles. Twenty of the 54 topics (37%) include a combination of peer-reviewed articles or columns and letters to the editor, the most desired combination of content to promote a comprehensive perspective of a given topic. By far the most successful dynamic topic in OJIN is about the nursing shortage, which included four original articles posted on January 31, 2001. Since then, we have featured in this topic

11 additional articles from 2002-2012, four related columns (one original in 2001 and 3 added in 2003, 2007, and 2008), and 40 letters to the editor, including seven that generated responses from article authors, from 2001-2013 (ANA, 2014).

CONCLUSION

It is my hope that the success of a dynamic publishing model as illustrated in OJIN may prompt discussion about whether it might be prudent for other exclusively online, scholarly nursing journals to consider this structure. With additional journal applications, and ongoing dialogue about this type of publishing, nurse editors and publishers of nursing content can lead the way to inform potential best practices for using a model that provides an exciting way to enhance accessibility and usability of online content. As online resources continue to become more sophisticated, and more easily available to readers, it is important for nurse authors and editors to explore how advances in technology, such as the dynamic publishing model, can support dissemination of scholarly content to the maximum extent possible.

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