Reviewer’s report

Title: Wikis, blogs and podcasts: a new generation of Web-based tools for virtual collaborative clinical practice and education

Version: 2 Date: 10 May 2006

Reviewer: Peter Anderson

Reviewer’s report:

General:

This article provides a very nice overview of some relatively new technologies that can be utilized in medical practice and education. The authors provide a fairly basic description of the technology with both real world examples and either ongoing or proposed medical and/or medical education applications. This is definitely a must read for clinicians and educators who have heard these words and/or acronyms (from their grandkids, kids, nephews or nieces) but are not exactly sure what they mean.

Although this is a nice overview of a fairly broad topic, there is almost by necessity a paucity of specificity and/or data to support some of the statements made in this article. Although, I personally believe many of the predictions and the conjecture described in this article, there is little concrete data to demonstrate the validity or utility of these predictions. That being said, I do like the forward thinking approach these authors have taken. I just think that the authors should be more diligent to specify in their text that many of the ideas and suggested uses are not yet supported by hard data. In the last section of this manuscript (Summary and conclusions) the authors state that this is an “eye-opener” paper. This statement is much too harsh! Many educators and clinicians have their eyes wide open and have noted the utility of these technologies in their clinical practice and or educational endeavors. This paper and these authors may have just discovered this technology “ but many many others have had their eyes wide open for a long time. Secondly, in this same sentence the authors state that they have “argued that these tools would prove useful . . . ” again I disagree with the tenor of this comment. The authors have provided useful information about these technologies and they have “suggested” some possible uses; however, I think argued is too harsh a term for this manuscript.

In summary, as mentioned above, I think this is a very timely and useful article. I will certainly share this article with my technophile education colleagues.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Rewrite the “Summary and conclusions” section of the manuscript taking into account my comments above.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.