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: 15 May 2006

Reviewer: Margaret Maag

Reviewer's report:

General

First of all, thank you for giving me this opportunity to review a manuscript addressing the use of Web 2.0 applications in collaborative clinical practice and education. I will address the itemized questions provided in the guidance for reviewers that you have provided.

1. In my opinion, the authors present two arguments and it is confusing to actually identify their debate. Therefore, I suggest they clearly state the debate. If the debate is the veracity of information provided on the Web and remedies for assuring quality information, it should be clearly stated. Or, if the debate/discussion is surrounding the need for empirical research surrounding the use of these cutting-edge technological tools, the whole manuscript would benefit from having the argument stated very clearly. Currently, the purpose of the paper is not clearly stated.

2. I think the debate surrounding veracity of information provided via the Web 2.0 modalities is pertinent to the broad biomedical audience. This is an ongoing issue in taking any information provided on the Web as face value. The authors do provide sound remedies for assuring the readership quality content. Also, I applaud the authors for providing 78 references supporting the manuscript content. However, I am not certain of the authors advertising upcoming events in a publication of this nature. Actually, I think the whole paper centers around providing the audience with many references and does not provide the reader with a consistent flow of contextual information as most journal articles do.

3. I do not think the piece is well argued and there are perhaps too many references for this type of a paper.

4. The authors use sound arguments, however, the reasoning is lacking. For example, I did not get anything out of reading the section on pedagogical underpinnings. In my opinion, the authors need to rewrite this section to offer the reader sound pedagogical theories that underpin the Web 2.0 applications. This area was not well researched.

5. In my personal opinion, I think the authors have a good outline for a manuscript, however, the authors would benefit rewriting the paper for publication.

I also suggest the authors look into adding patient permission when posting clinical photos. Podcasts and clinical blogs may be password protected (see: http://www.potionfactory.com/blog/2006/02/20/password-protecting-a-podcast/) in order to protect patient's anonymity. HIPPA has delineated the rules regarding the protection of patient information regarding electronic records and personal information. This may be woven into the context of the article. I think the authors did an excellent job of providing examples of wikis used in medicine and the PowerPoint supplement is very well done. I think the authors need to clearly state the argument(s) and focus on not repeating sections. Please contact me for any further comments or suggestions regarding this good beginning of a fine manuscript.

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

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

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
**What next?:** Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions