Editorial

Bringing forth the old: addition of legacy content to the Journal of Neurosurgery Publishing Group website

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We are pleased to announce that as of May 1, 2009, the Journal of Neurosurgery Publishing Group (JNSPG) website (thejns.org) will offer full texts of all past articles in our journals—dating back to 1944, when our first journal, the Journal of Neurosurgery, was introduced. This content will be fully searchable.

The Internet is a vast and rapidly growing repository of information extending back and forth through time. Only a few clicks of the mouse are needed to locate the newest advances in stem cell research or read an archived news article highlighting an operation performed earlier in the day by Harvey Cushing. When the JNSPG launched its first website (thejns-net.org), little past content was formatted in a manner fit for electronic use. Now, we are able to offer a full-text historical record of advances in neurosurgery and related fields covering the past 65 years. This, together with our ability to publish fully-edited peer-reviewed articles online before their appearance in print, makes the JNSPG website an invaluable tool for the neurosurgical community.

Archiving biomedical reports online is not novel, but many journals only provide abstracts of early articles. At the JNSPG, we believe that abstracts whet the appetite, but only full texts truly satisfy the reader’s quest for knowledge. Many early papers in neurosurgery are lost to interested readers. Lack of space has forced some libraries to store older journals off site or to discard unused volumes. In addition, although expanding, MEDLINE currently contains few entries for articles published before 1949 and some papers published after that date are missing from the database (as I recently found was the case with one of my own articles). This limited access to older material places barriers to researchers trying to document the source of a technique or model and to readers wishing to learn more about the history of neurosurgery and how one progressive step leads to the next.

Addition of back content to our website has long been a dream of the editorial office. It has become a reality due to the foresight and generosity of the leadership of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons. We thank the leadership for its continued support, and we hope that our readers enjoy the new “old” additions to the JNSPG website. (DOI: 10.3171/2009.2.JNS09299)