

Florida Atlantic University Libraries
Library Faculty and Staff Publications

Florida Atlantic University Libraries

Year 2005

A Virtual Reference Shelf for Nursing
Students and Faculty: Selected Sources

Eleanor Lomax*

Susan K. Setterlund†

*Florida Atlantic University, lomax@fau.edu

A Virtual Reference Shelf

A Virtual Reference Shelf for Nursing Students and Faculty: Selected Sources

Eleanor Lomax, MLIS, AHIP
Electronic Resources Librarian
Lomax@fau.edu

Susan K. Setterlund, MLIS
Head, Department of Information Literacy and Instructional Services
setterlu@fau.edu

S.E. Wimberly Library
Florida Atlantic University
777 Glades Road
Boca Raton, FL 33431

A Virtual Reference Shelf

ABSTRACT

A virtual shelf for nursing that closely mirrors what previously was found on a physical reference shelf is now a reasonable goal. Advantages of doing this for nursing students and faculty in an academic setting are enumerated. Overviews of relevant vendor and publisher interfaces and models are included. The authors present a selected list of appropriate electronic reference sources that demonstrate how ebooks and internet sites can be combined to build a virtual reference shelf in this subject area.

Key words: virtual reference shelf, subject guides, nursing reference, ebooks, electronic books, bibliography, webliography, internet sites

A Virtual Reference Shelf

Until recently, subject and research guides designed for students and faculty included both online and print resources. Index and abstract services generally accounted for the electronic, with some useful internet sources included for added value. Most of the other reference sources, however, were in print and located on the physical reference shelves. Today with the continuing presence of electronic books and well-established quality internet sites, it is quite possible to provide a more than satisfactory virtual reference shelf in many subject areas. In this case, we set out to see if a virtual reference shelf for nursing students and faculty could be put together combining resources that traditionally had been found on a physical reference shelf and quality internet resources and sites in the field.

There are several reasons why a virtual reference shelf would be more useful to this group in our particular setting. Firstly, this university has a distributed campus structure with the College of Nursing having a presence on four of the seven sites. The College of Nursing also offers online and web-assisted courses for its students. Having the reference resources readily available to everyone regardless of location is much more desirable and appealing than having them sitting on a shelf in one or more of the libraries. In this way, the resources are also available 24/7 and there is no need for shelving and reshelving. Ebooks can also be put on a virtual reference shelf and also continue as part of the general collection. Decreasing the need for duplication of reference resources on the various campuses and the subsequent monetary savings are also pluses.

As librarians, we continually struggle to increase awareness of the electronic resources the library has in its collections. This virtual reference shelf for nursing would highlight these resources as well as provide one more access point. We know that many individuals seem to have difficulty locating library materials and perhaps having the resources in one place will alleviate that difficulty to some extent. Building this virtual reference shelf provides an excellent

A Virtual Reference Shelf

opportunity for comparing the library's electronic reference holdings to what is currently available. In today's educational environment, many institutions will find that the reasons noted here are applicable to their situations also.

As mentioned earlier, bibliographic and journal full text databases such as CINAHL, MEDLINE, HAPI, etc., are well established and accepted in electronic format. For that reason, these will not be discussed here other than to say that they would necessarily be entries on the virtual reference shelf. Electronic books and their method of delivery, however, are still evolving. The ebook format also has not always been accepted by readers quite as readily as other electronic resource interfaces. But, despite their demise being predicted for several years, electronic books seem to be doing quite well in some niche areas. Textbooks, technical publications, and reference books are examples of successful enterprises in the electronic book market. Additionally, the health professions are frequently identified as appropriate markets for electronic books (Hawkins 2002, 42).

Internet resources freely available in the field of nursing are also well established and accepted. Most continue to evolve, offering new features and access to information that was not as readily available in the print world. New subfields, such as evidence-based nursing, have spawned new web sites. A virtual reference shelf would not be complete without including these.

Two sources were consulted in order to identify reference titles in nursing that have been designated as essential and/or highly recommended for nursing practice, education, administration, and research: *The 2002 Brandon/Hill Selected List of Print Nursing Books and Journals* (Hill and Stickell 2002, 100-113), and *Essential Nursing References* by the Interagency Council on Information Resources for Nursing (Allen et al. 2002, 310-318). The library's physical

A Virtual Reference Shelf

reference shelf and current electronic collections were also examined to identify nursing and health-related titles for inclusion. Additionally, publisher/vendor and nursing-related web sites were used to see what more there might be to offer. For electronic resources that require purchase or subscription, only those that provide access by IP authentication and allow for remote access by users have been considered. In searching for and organizing resources for this virtual reference shelf, the traditional approach based on type of resource (directories, dictionaries, encyclopedias, manuals, statistical resources, etc.) has been employed. In each category, nursing-specific resources are listed first followed by more general yet relevant resources.

Today, there is an increasingly multidisciplinary aspect to many fields of study and nursing is no different. For that reason, there are some standard, general reference titles and titles from other disciplines that could find a place on the shelf. The focus here will be nursing, but we are mindful that nurses and nursing students will at times have a need for resources of a general nature or resources in another field. In designing a virtual reference shelf, links to these other resources need to be made accessible in some visible and logical way.

In searching for electronic equivalents to the traditional reference books, it quickly became apparent that several vendors offer electronic versions of print titles included in the sources we consulted. Some offer additional reference titles that are relevant to nursing within their multi-subject collections. Electronic reference works are sometimes only available directly from the publisher. In other cases, publishers might sell their titles directly and also make their titles available electronically through vendor collections. Some titles are also available in formats that can be downloaded to PDAs, allowing for mobility.

A Virtual Reference Shelf

Of the vendors that include reference titles of interest here, the purchasing models and user interfaces have both similarities and differences. A discussion of some of the vendor models follows in no particular order of preference.

Books@Ovid

<http://www.ovid.com/site/products/books_landing.jsp?top=2&mid=3&bottom=7&subsection=11 >

Ovid is well established as a provider of ebooks in the field of nursing. Titles can be subscribed to individually or as a package. Traditionally, Ovid pricing has used the “number of simultaneous users” model. Ovid allows for searching across the library’s entire Books@Ovid or in one or more selected titles. Readers may access a single table of contents for any title owned. Browsing by title and subject are possible with added linking capabilities to the library’s other Ovid products. Ovid also offers multiple file searching which allows simultaneous searching of ebooks, Ovid databases, and journals.

Gale Virtual Reference Library

<<http://www.gale.com/gvrl>>

This virtual library includes many of the Gale reference titles and other publisher titles as well. Libraries can purchase one book or an entire collection package. Users only see what their library has purchased. Searching can be conducted across all of that content or in one or more specifically selected titles. Navigation through the ebook mimics the print with hyperlinked tables of content and indexes. Gale uses an unlimited usage model with no checkouts or turnaways. MARC records are available and include embedded InfoMarks that take the reader directly to the selected title. Entries are stored in eBook format allowing for downloading to portable devices. Pricing is on a title basis and once purchased the book is owned. New editions of titles need to be purchased as they are published.

A Virtual Reference Shelf

Micromedex

<<http://www.micromedex.com>>

Micromedex is a division of Thomson Healthcare and offers Internet-based products to researchers, clinicians, and other healthcare professionals. The Healthcare Series includes drug resources, critical and emergency care data, customizable patient education materials, and alternative medicine information. As part of a subscription to the Healthcare Series, information can be downloaded directly to a handheld device. mobileMICROMEDEX is automatically updated on a monthly basis. Products are purchased in the suite although access to some can be purchased individually.

netLibrary

<<http://www.netlibrary.com>>

netLibrary's general collection of ebooks includes some reference titles and more recently this vendor has added a Reference Center. netLibrary mimics the library circulation model where users check out an ebook. New users accessing the netLibrary collection must create an account, although ebooks may be viewed for a short period of time without one. As check out times expire books are automatically returned to the shelf. No overdue fines are incurred. Searching is available across the titles in the collection. MARC records are available for downloading into library catalogs. The Reference Center includes more than 800 titles. Searching can be accomplished across all content or by subject and section content. A specific reference source can be navigated and browsed. In order to be able to offer the Reference Center, libraries must have a minimum of 50 netLibrary reference titles. These can be chosen individually to meet the specific needs of patrons.

Oxford Reference Online

<<http://www.oxfordreference.com>>

A Virtual Reference Shelf

The **Core Collection** includes more than 100 reference works, all published by Oxford University Press. The resource is updated three times a year with new titles, new editions, and additional features. Only four titles are included in the subject Medicine. The **Premium Collection** enhances the Core Collection with an expanding range of titles. This added content does not, at this time, include any nursing or health related reference works. Searching is possible across all titles, in a subject area or in one specific title. Alphabetical browsing of subject areas and books is also available. MARC records can be downloaded freely for inclusion in the catalog. Although it received the Best Interface award from the Charleston Advisor, this is not a rich source for nursing reference works.

Oxford will be introducing the Oxford Digital Reference Shelf in March 2005. This provides a new purchase option whereby titles are available for a one-time purchase. Libraries can choose one or more of the titles offered to fit their needs. Each work will be available as a fully searchable, stand-alone resource. Libraries that also subscribe to Oxford Reference Online: Premium Collection, will have the option of adding these new titles to the collection while also offering access as individual stand-alones.

Xreferplus

<<http://www.xrefer.com>>

This reference collection includes the contents of hundreds of reference books from multiple publishers and covers major subject areas. Libraries may choose one of two options; the full collection or a select 100 titles. If the full collection is chosen, access to newly added titles is automatic and at no extra cost. With the **xreferplus100** collection, libraries can change their selections at any time. Purchase of either is by subscription with pricing based on the size and type of institution. Free MARC records are available for download. Searching can be conducted

A Virtual Reference Shelf

across the collection, by specific subject area, or by individual title. Table of contents browsing is available where applicable.

Depending on the type of library, one or more of these collections may be reasonable choices for providing electronic reference books for nursing. Academic libraries might find the collections that offer titles in various subject areas practical as they could purchase many ebooks using the same interface that meet needs across the curriculum. For the medical or hospital library, a vendor that offers title by title purchase from a rich collection of nursing works might be the preferred choice. Several other ebook vendors and publishers such as ebrary, Wiley and Elsevier are continually adding to their electronic book collections. Other publishers are just beginning to make their reference collections available electronically. Although the selection of nursing titles from any of these is not extensive at this time, more may be available in the future.

Included below are ebooks and internet resources organized by reference type. This is not an all inclusive list, but rather one that demonstrates the evolution of reference sources from print to electronic and the continued creation and evolution of internet sites that provide new and original access to information, especially in terms of reference content and currency. In the case of electronic versions of print resources, the vendor/publisher or collection where they can be found is noted. For websites, the URL is provided as is a description of the resource. Free resources are designated as such. If the title or website was included in one of the source lists consulted, it will be so designated using these symbols:

* *2002 Brandon/Hill Selected List of Print Nursing Books and Journals*

† *Essential Nursing References*

Directories

Directories are resources that are very well suited to the online environment, especially with

A Virtual Reference Shelf

regard to currency. Some online directories without a previous print counterpart have been created as a result of technology using the internet as a delivery method. Directories are considered below in three traditional areas (research/grants, education/careers, and organizations) and one exclusive to the web (discussion forums/email lists).

Research/Grants

- *National Institute of Nursing Research; Research Funding and Programs †*
<<http://ninr.nih.gov/ninr/index.html>>

NINR supports clinical and basic nursing research on health promotion, illness, and chronic and disabling conditions. The site provides listings of areas of research opportunities. Free Access.

- *Registry of Nursing Research †*
<<http://www.stti.iupui.edu/VirginiaHendersonLibrary/RegistryofNursingResearch.aspx>>

This electronic directory, from the Virginia Henderson International Library <<http://www.stti.iupui.edu/VirginiaHendersonLibrary>>, is now provided as a complimentary resource. It is searchable by researcher, study or keyword. Searching conference abstracts, researcher registration, and study registration functionality are under construction at this time. Individual researchers enter and update their own profiles. Free Access.

- Schlachter, Gail A., and R. David Weber. *RSP Funding for Nursing Students and Nurses, 2002-2004*. 3rd ed. El Dorado Hills, CA: Reference Service Press, 2002.

Available in netLibrary.

- *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance †*
<<http://www.cfda.gov>>

The Catalog is a searchable database of federal programs of assistance that are available to state and local governments, profit and non-profit organizations, specialized groups, and individuals. Free Access.

A Virtual Reference Shelf

- *Community of Science (COS)*

<<http://expertise.cos.com>>

This resource currently contains more than 480,000 profiles of scientists and scholars in a wide range of subject fields from more than 1,600 institutions. The coverage is international and it can be searched by member institution, researcher name, keyword, and geographical location.

The profiles include contact information, positions held, publications & patents, and funding received. Universities and institutions may purchase subscriptions with fees being based on the size of the institution and the selected package options.

- *CRISP (Computer Retrieval of Information on Scientific Projects) †*

<<http://crisp.cit.nih.gov>>

This database contains information on federally funded biomedical research projects conducted at universities, hospitals, and other research institutions. It is searchable using multiple criteria such as key terms, institution, principal investigator, and geographic location. Free Access.

- *The Foundation Directory †*

<<http://fconline.fdncenter.org>>

The database includes both foundation and grant searching, and is available for purchase online directly from the Foundation Center. Direct links to the websites of foundations are included. Additionally, the Foundation Center offers a free search function that provides basic, but limited information on foundations and grants.

- *National Institutes of Health Guide for Grants and Contracts †*

<<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/index.html>>

Published weekly, this official publication of the National Institutes of Health announces funding opportunities in support of basic or clinical biomedical, behavioral, and bioengineering research.

Free Access.

- *National Science Foundation Funding Opportunities †*

A Virtual Reference Shelf

<<http://www.nsf.gov/verity/srchfund.htm>>

Through grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements, the NSF funds research and education

in science and engineering. Current program announcements are searchable by program area, title, or full-text. Free Access.

Education/Careers

- American Association of Colleges of Nursing Member Schools †

<<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Membership/membdir.htm>>

This site offers a listing of 575 member schools arranged by state, with links to the websites of each school of nursing. Free Access.

- *American Journal of Nursing Career Guide* †

<<http://www.nursingcenter.com/CareerCenter/CareerGuide.asp>>

This resource includes employment opportunities and contact information for facilities and health systems across the United States. Detailed descriptions about benefits and facts about the surrounding communities are provided. The guide is searchable by location or facility. Free Access.

- *Online Directory of Accredited Nursing Programs* †

<http://www.nlnac.org/Forms/directory_search.htm>

This online directory from the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission allows searching for accredited programs by state, country, or institution. Searches can be limited by program type. Direct links to most institutions offering these programs are included. Free Access.

- *The College Blue Book*. 29th ed. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004.

Part of the Gale Virtual Reference Library.

- *GradSchools.com* †

<<http://gradschools.com/>>

A Virtual Reference Shelf

This online directory allows searching for programs by subject or the institution's location.

Results are comprised of listings which provide a brief description and contact information.

Programs which have paid for advertising include longer descriptions and linking directly to the

institution's web site. The directory currently includes more than 58,000 unique graduate programs from around the world. Free Access.

- U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. 2004-2005 ed. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004. <<http://www.bls.gov/oco/home.htm>> (21 November 2004).

This standard resource from the U.S. Department of Labor is available in ebook format. It is a nationally recognized source of career information, designed to provide valuable assistance to individuals making decisions about their future work lives. Revised every two years, the *Handbook* describes what workers do on the job, working conditions, and the training and education required. One can search and/or browse the occupations. Free Access.

- *Thompson Peterson's* †
<<http://www.petersons.com>>

This site provides searching of educational institutions by major, location, size, tuition, name, and keyword. Direct linking to the colleges' and universities' websites is provided. Free Access.

Organizations

- *Nursefriendly.com: Directories: National Nursing Organizations*
<<http://www.nursefriendly.com/nursing/natlink.htm>>

This site lists nursing associations alphabetically as well as categorically by organization topic. A Google-powered search function locates an organization either within its website or searches the entire web. Annotations, contact information, and linkage to organizations' websites are provided. Free Access.

- *VirtualNurse.com: Nursing : Organizations*

A Virtual Reference Shelf

<http://www.virtualnurse.com/index.php?c=Nursing/Organizations>

This listing of organizations with descriptions is arranged by topic and by geographic location. In addition to browsing, a simple search feature locates the association within the web site. Links are provided to the external homepages of the organization. Free Access.

- *DIRLINE*

<http://dirline.nlm.nih.gov/>

This directory database from the National Library of Medicine provides a user-friendly resource for locating health and biomedical organizations offering information and support for various diseases and conditions. Free Access.

Discussion Forums, Email Lists

- *Nursing Discussion Forum †*

http://nursing.buffalo.edu/mccartny/nursing_discussion_forums.html

This site provides a list of discussion groups and listservs within the nursing profession, including direct links or email addresses for subscription/registration. Free Access.

Dictionaries

Dictionaries in nursing and health-related areas are readily available in both online reference collections and on the internet. Several included in the resources we consulted are listed below with the name of the collection and any other online access available. Also included are internet sites that provide links to free online dictionaries in the field.

- Anderson, Kenneth N., et al., eds. *Mosby's Medical, Nursing & Allied Health Dictionary*. 6th ed. St. Louis: Mosby, 2002. *†

Part of the xreferplus collection. This title is also available (but not for exclusive purchase) in Gale's Health & Wellness Resource Center. Purchase of the print includes a free companion website with updates and other web links.

A Virtual Reference Shelf

- Booker, Christine. *Churchill Livingstone's Dictionary of Nursing*. 18th ed. Edinburgh: New York: Churchill Livingstone, 2002. †

Part of the xreferplus collection.

- McFerran, Tanya A., consultant, Martin, Elizabeth A., ed. *A Dictionary of Nursing*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Part of the Oxford Reference Online collection.

- *RNstudent.com : Nursing Resources*
<<http://www.rnstudents.com/rnstudents/rn-dictionary.htm>>

This is a portal to general and specialized medical dictionaries relevant to the nursing profession. It also includes a few encyclopedias. Free Access.

- *American Heritage® Stedman's Medical Dictionary*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002. †

Part of the xreferplus collection.

- *Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary*. 30th ed. Philadelphia: London: W.B. Saunders, 2003.

Part of the xreferplus collection. Merck Source offers a free, online dictionary powered by *Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary*
<http://www.mercksource.com/pp/us/cns/cns_hl_dorlands.jspzQzpgzEzzSzppdocszSzuszSzcomonzSzdorlandzSzdorlandzSzdmd_a-b_00zPzhtm>

Illustrations in this free version are not of the same color quality as found in the print or the xreferplus version. Dorland's in electronic format is now also available directly from the publisher, Elsevier.

- Jablonski, Stanley. *Dictionary of Medical Acronyms and Abbreviations*. Philadelphia: Hanley & Belfus, 2001. †

Part of the xreferplus collection.

A Virtual Reference Shelf

- *Multilingual Glossary of Technical and Popular Medical Terms in Eight European Languages †*

<<http://allserv.rug.ac.be/~rvdstich/eugloss/welcome.html>>

This glossary includes more than 1,800 technical and popular medical terms, translated into eight languages: English, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Danish.

Free Access.

- *Stedman's Medical Dictionary*

<<http://www.stedmans.com>>

Many medical terms are not listed in this free, abridged version of Stedman's Medical Dictionary, 27th Edition. Available for purchase at the same site is Stedman's Electronic Medical Dictionary, v6.0 which contains definitions and etymologies for more than 100,000 medical words and nearly 1,500 images.

- Thomas, Clayton L., ed. *Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary* 19th ed. Philadelphia: F.A. Davis Co., 2001. *†

Part of the xreferplus collection. *Taber's* can also be purchased directly from the publisher, F.A. Davis, and it is made available at <<http://www.tabers.com>>.

Encyclopedias

Encyclopedias in nursing and the medical field are not numerous in print, because they are generally out of date by publication time. Currency is easier to achieve in electronic formats; therefore this reference type may be more obtainable in the future. One title specific to nursing is available online. Several other health-related encyclopedias in ebook format are also appropriate to a nursing reference shelf.

A Virtual Reference Shelf

- Krapp, Kristine, ed. *Gale Encyclopedia of Nursing and Allied Health*. Detroit: Gale Group, 2002.

Part of the Gale Virtual Reference Library and netLibrary.

- Krapp, K. M. and J. L. Longe. *Gale Encyclopedia of Alternative Medicine*. Detroit, MI: Gale Group, 2001.

Part of the Gale Virtual Reference Library and netLibrary.

- Longe, J. L., and D. S. Blanchfield. *Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine*. 2nd ed. Detroit, MI: Gale Group, 2002.

Part of the Gale Virtual Reference Library and netLibrary.

Drugs and Pharmacology

Some references in this area of nursing continue only in print or print with PDA compatibility or with an accompanying web site for updates. Some references are available as ebooks.

Additionally, online sources for drug information with no print counterpart are now available.

Several examples are given below.

- Karch, Amy M. *Lippincott's Nursing Drug Guide*. Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkens, 2004.*

Available via Books@Ovid.

- Skidmore-Roth, Linda. *Mosby's 2005 Nursing Drug Reference*. St. Louis: Mosby, 2004.

Purchase of the print format includes free internet updates.

- Spratto, G. R. and A. L. Woods. *PDR Nurse's Drug Handbook*. New York: Delmar, 2005.*

Individual print purchases include free access to the *Nurse's Drug Database*. However, the institutional version of this database is available at an additional cost based on the number of users.

A Virtual Reference Shelf

- Springhouse Corporation. *Nursing2004 Herbal Medicine Handbook*. Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkens, 2004.

Available via Books@Ovid.

- Hawthorn, J. and E. Martin. *An A-Z of Medicinal Drugs*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Part of the Oxford Reference Online collection.

- *Martindale Complete Drug Reference †*

This online resource contains information about drugs used worldwide. It covers 5,800 drug monographs, 70,000 proprietary preparations, 500 herbal monographs and 5,000 herbal preparations. It is suggested for healthcare professionals with international concerns.

Available in the MICROMEDEX Healthcare Series.

- *Merck Index Online*, 13th ed. †

<<https://themerckindex.cambridgesoft.com/index.asp?SubscriptionID=1199335>>

This site makes available more than 10,000 monographs on drugs, chemicals, and biologicals. It provides much of the same information as the print encyclopedia, with the exception of drawings of the chemical structure. It is divided into three sections: Compound Search, Organic Name Reactions, and supplemental Tables. Online information is updated before the print. Free Access.

- *Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database*

<<http://www.naturaldatabase.com>>

This reasonably priced database from the Therapeutic Research Faculty is also available in book and PDA versions. It is an evidence-based resource providing a comprehensive listing of natural medicines, brand name product ingredients, and extensive references. The group now also offers a consumer version.

- *USP DI Volume I: Drug Information for the Health Care Professional †*

A Virtual Reference Shelf

Contains complete drug information for prescribing and dispensing.

Available through MICROMEDEX Healthcare Series.

Handbooks and Manuals

In Nursing, some print handbooks and manuals are located in the general circulating collection while others are designated as Reference. In their electronic formats, they can be made available on a virtual reference shelf and continue to be available in the library's electronic holdings.

Diagnosis and Treatments

- *The Merck Manual of Diagnosis, 17th Ed.* Whitehouse Station, N.J.: Merck & Co., 2000.
<<http://www.merck.com/mrkshared/mmanual/sections.jsp>> (19 November 2004).

This manual provides detailed clinical information to health care professionals on topics in internal medicine as well as medical specialties. Free Access.

- *The Merck Manual of Geriatrics.* 3rd ed. Whitehouse Station, N.J.: Merck & Co., 2000.
<http://www.merck.com/mrkshared/mm_geriatrics/home.jsp> (19 November 2004)

This online version of the print manual provides descriptions of disorders, symptoms, and treatments with emphasis on the elderly population. Free Access.

- *University of Iowa Family Practice Handbook.* 4th ed. Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa. 2001.
<<http://www.vh.org/adult/provider/familymedicine/FPHandbook/FPCContents.html>>
(22 November 2004).

This handbook contains information on illnesses and therapies necessary for practitioners of family medicine and includes pediatric and adult dosages for commonly prescribed drugs. Free Access.

Laboratory & Diagnostic Tests

A Virtual Reference Shelf

- Cavanaugh, Bonita M. *Nurse's Manual of Laboratory and Diagnostic Tests*. 4th ed. Philadelphia: F.A. Davis Co. 2003.

Available in netLibrary.

- Fischbach, Frances T. *A Manual of Laboratory Diagnostic Tests*. Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkens, 2003.*

Available via Books@Ovid.

NCLEX Test Preparation

- Beare, Patricia. *Davis's NCLEX-RN Review*. 3rd ed. Philadelphia: F.A. Davis, 2001. *

Available in netLibrary.

Writing & Publishing

- Daly, Jeannette M. *Writer's Guide to Nursing Periodicals*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2000. †

Available in netLibrary.

- Fondiller, Shirley H. *The Writer's Workbook: Health Professionals Guide to Getting Published*. 2nd ed. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett, 1999. †

Available in netLibrary.

- *APA Style Helper 3.0* †
<<http://www.apastyle.org/stylehelper>>

This is the electronic companion to the fifth edition of the *APA Publication Manual*. Site licenses are available.

- *ONLINE Nursing Editors™* †
<<http://www.nurseauthou.com/ONE/naed.htm>>

Provides email contact information for editors of more than 200 nursing journals and books and links to many author guideline web pages. Free Access.

- *Instructions to Authors in the Health Sciences* †

A Virtual Reference Shelf

<<http://www.mco.edu/lib/instr/libinsta.html>>

This website from the Raymon H. Mulford Library of the Medical College of Ohio provides links to author guideline pages from hundreds of health science journals. Free Access.

History of Nursing

Although these websites could not be considered “reference sources” in the traditional sense, they are included here due to the interest in the evolving role of the nurse.

- *American Association for the History of Nursing †*

<<http://www.aahn.org>>

The site includes a section on historical methodology as well as links to archives and research centers, conferences, funding, internet resources, journals, and more. Free Access.

- *Center for Nursing Historical Inquiry †*

University of Virginia School of Nursing

<<http://www.nursing.virginia.edu/centers/cnh>>

This center collects and preserves nursing materials such as photographs, textbooks, personal papers, and reports. It includes historical nursing forums and promotes historical scholarship through a yearly fellowship award. Free Access.

- *Center for the Study of the History of Nursing †*

University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing

<<http://www.nursing.upenn.edu/history>>

This center serves as a resource for research in healthcare history and nursing. Free Access.

Statistical Sources

Health statistics are compiled by government agencies and non-governmental organizations. These are included in general statistical reference sources. Additionally, there are sources that

A Virtual Reference Shelf
specialize in reporting health statistics. Also included in this section are websites specific to the
profession of nursing.

Nursing Statistics

- United States, Health Resources and Services Administration and Division of Nursing.
The Registered Nurse Population, March 2000 Findings from the National Sample Survey of Registered Nurses, by Ernell Spratley. U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Bureau of Health Professions, Division of Nursing. Rockville, MD, 2001.
<<http://www.bhpr.hrsa.gov/healthworkforce/reports/rnsurvey/rnss1.htm>> (21 November 2004). †

Conducted in 2000, this PDF version of the survey results provides information on the number of registered nurses, their education background and specialty areas; their employment status,

including type of employment setting, position level, and salaries; their geographic distribution; and their personal characteristics including gender, racial/ethnic background, age, and family status. Free Access.

Health Statistics

- *Finding and Using Health Statistics: A Self-Study Course* †
<<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/nichsr/usestats/index.htm>>

This adaptation of Dan Melnick's book *Portrait of Health In the United States* explains how to find methods, sources, and related literature on health statistics using internet resources. Free Access.

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Center for Health Statistics.
Health, United States, 2003. <<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/hus.htm>> (18 November 2004).

This annual report in electronic format presents statistical trends in health topics such as birth

A Virtual Reference Shelf

and death rates, infant mortality, life expectancy, morbidity and health status, risk factors, health personnel and facilities, health insurance, and managed care. Free Access.

- *National Center for Health Statistics*

<<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs>>

This website provides links to state and territory health care statistics, national health care surveys, and other data collections of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Free Access.

- Brett K. M., and S. G. Hayes. *Women's Health and Mortality Chartbook*. Washington, DC: DHHS Office on Women's Health, 2004.

<<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/datawh/statab/chartbook.htm>> (20 November 2004).

This is a collection of current state data on critical issues of relevance to women's health. Each state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico are ranked on such attributes as major causes of death, health risk factors, preventive care, and health insurance coverage. Free Access.

- *World Health Organization Statistical Information System (WHOSIS)*

<<http://www3.who.int/whosis/menu.cfm>>

The World Health Organization provides health and health-related epidemiological and statistical information. Included are core health indicators, statistics by topic, country or region, and the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10). Free Access.

General

- *LexisNexis Statistical*

<<http://web.lexis-nexis.com/statuniv>>

This resource provides indexing and abstracting of statistics produced by the U.S. government, international governments and organizations, state governments, and professional and trade associations. Numerous statistical tables from the publications are included in the database. Available by subscription.

A Virtual Reference Shelf

- U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2003*. 123rd ed.
Washington, D.C., 2003.

Published yearly, this ebook at <<http://www.census.gov/prod/www/statistical-abstract-03.html>> contains data on many areas relevant to nursing such as population, vital statistics, health and nutrition, social insurance, and human resources. Free Access.

- *Data on the Net †*

<<http://odwin.ucsd.edu/idata>>

This portal to statistics from the University of California, San Diego, can be searched or browsed for numerical data, data archives and catalogs, and lists of data pertaining to social sciences. Free Access.

- *Statistical Resources on the Web †*

<<http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/stats.html>>

This internet site from the University of Michigan Documents Center is annotated and capable of

being searched or browsed. Its Health section contains a comprehensive listing of statistical sources, both national and international. Free Access.

Evidence Based Practice

Evidence Based Practice is an approach to patient care decisions based on the best available research in combination with clinical expertise and patient values. Emphasis on the validity of research has made databanks of pre-assessed resources particularly valuable. Those listed below are applicable to nursing.

- *The Cochrane Library †*

This library is a collection of databases which promote evidence-based decision making. Included are the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (Cochrane Reviews), Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effects (DARE), the Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials

A Virtual Reference Shelf
(CENTRAL), the Cochrane Database of Methodology Reviews, the Health Technology

Assessment Database, and the NHS Economic Evaluation Database.

Available via OVID and Wiley InterScience.

- *Johanna Briggs Institute*

<<http://www.joannabriggs.edu.au/services/search.php>>

The Johanna Briggs Institute supports international research and dissemination of knowledge in the areas of health care. Searchable at this site are the results of systematic reviews, summarized into Best Practice Information Sheets. Free Access.

- *National Guideline Clearinghouse*

<<http://www.guideline.gov>>

A searchable database of objective, detailed clinical guidelines sponsored by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Free Access.

Conclusion

As noted previously, there are many advantages to having nursing references in an electronic medium. Twenty-four hour accessibility is a prominent one; neither nursing students nor practicing nurses keep bankers' hours. Unlike a single volume, electronic access allows a resource to have as many simultaneous readers as the subscription allows. And the increasing trend to download information to a PDA or similar device often permits it to be used at the point of need as clinical decisions are made.

On a cautionary note, when working with technology one must be aware of the times when systems fail, glitches occur, and sites disappear. It would be foolhardy to assume that problems never occur--both minor and major ones. As mentioned earlier, people have not accepted the electronic book format as widely as anticipated. For these reasons, a complete dependence on a

A Virtual Reference Shelf

virtual reference shelf may not be practical or the best choice.

Cost is another consideration when developing a collection. For some of the titles mentioned here, availability is only through purchase of a collection or package. This might not be practical depending on the library's circumstances. On the other hand, some materials freely accessible on the web do meet reference needs. As an example, many U.S. government documents exist that could supplement any academic collection.

One further observation must be stated. It is impossible to predict what information technologies and strategies may develop in the future. New methods of information transference could make computers obsolete. Open access protocols could revise the current subscription-based systems.

In conclusion, more electronic versions of print reference resources have become available and others have been transformed into a unique blend of print with technological enhancements.

In addition to these, completely new reference resources have been created using the opportunities afforded by digital technologies and the internet. Using these available resources in combination makes it possible to provide an appropriate and rich collection of reference sources for nursing students and faculty. Therefore, a virtual reference shelf is possible.

A Virtual Reference Shelf

References

Allen, Margaret et al., "Essential Nursing References." *Nursing Education Perspectives* 23, (6) (2002): 310-318.

Hawkins, Donald T. "Electronic Books: Reports of their Death Have Been Exaggerated." *Online* 26, (4) 2002: 42.

Hill, Dorothy R., and Henry N. Stickell. "Brandon/Hill Selected List of Print Nursing Books and Journals." *Nursing Outlook* 50, (3) 2002: 100-113.