

# Editorial

**info@cda-adc.ca**

**(1-800-267-6354)**



*Dr. John P. O'Keefe*

**T**he merger of America Online (AOL) and Time Warner in January was remarkable for the amount of money involved and the concentration of media power it created. In the dental world, many groups are coming together to create novel means of providing professional information to dentists. New technologies figure prominently in all of these ventures.

I saw recently that Calgary-based Axia NetMedia Corporation has formed a partnership with the Karolinska Institute, a school of medicine and dentistry in Sweden, to create what they call the Global Centre for Knowledge in Oral Health. This will be a subscription-based service to provide continuing education via the Internet.

The FDI World Dental Federation is working on a project called World Dental Informatics, with the aim of being the leading information source for world dentistry. Other people have told me in whispers that they are involved with the development of commercial sites with

similar aims. These projects all seem to be classified "top secret" at present.

CDA states publicly it is an organization that is primarily in the information business. Yet one has to ask how we can remain relevant as an information provider of the highest quality in the era of AOL-Time Warner and World Dental Informatics.

I believe the answer lies in customer service — truly working for you. We must have intimate knowledge of your information needs. We have to know what format you want the information in, as well as where and when you want it delivered. Then we need to get trustworthy information to you quickly and with a smile. When I think of customer service at CDA, the Resource Centre immediately comes to mind. This jewel of a service helps me nearly every day of the week. I believe it can help you too. Here's how.

Staff can search for information for you, either manually or in computer databases. While some practitioners want to conduct their own literature searches, others may not have the time or the inclination to do so. The Centre can help you by either conducting searches on your behalf, or by guiding you to refine your search strategies.

The Sydney Wood Bradley Memorial Library, one of just two specialized dental libraries in Canada, is housed in the Centre. Members can borrow videos and books, and staff will send you photocopies of journal articles on request.

The Resource Centre is like an early warning radar system for the Canadian dental profession. Staff receive thousands of calls every year from members of the public and the profession. They monitor the Internet and a variety of publications for issues that are likely to have an effect on Canadian dentists and the oral health of the Canadian public. Staff at the Centre update me on a regular basis on the questions being asked by dentists and the public.

The Centre packages information in a user-friendly way as well. Regularly, the staff put together information packages based on hot issues. I have recently started

receiving the monthly Table of Contents service. For an annual fee of \$40, members can receive the tables of contents of some 50 journals. If you wish to get photocopies of any articles that interest you, \$10 will get you the first ten articles.

I find the Table of Contents service invaluable. With a relatively quick perusal, I get a good idea of what is being published. If I want more information, I know where to get it.

Many of the changes introduced recently in the *Journal* are premised on the concept that shorter articles should point the interested reader to more information that can be retrieved easily. Most articles in the Clinical Practice, Applied Research, and Professional Issues sections have two features that point the reader to further information. At the end of articles, you will find an information box that highlights resources, related to the topic of the article, available from the Resource Centre. At the beginning of these articles is a list of MeSH key words.

MeSH is an acronym for Medical Sub-Headings, the key words used in the Medline database. If you or a staff member in the Resource Centre uses the combination of key words featured at the beginning of a particular article in a Medline search, related articles will be retrieved in the database. This type of search often leads to literature not cited by the authors of the *JCDA* article.

This year, I want to make a special effort to build up the Clinical Practice section of the *Journal*. The starting point for deciding what articles to publish in this section must be your clinical questions. These questions will guide us to seek original material or use the Clinical Abstracts section to satisfy your needs. No matter what we publish in the *Journal*, I predict that we will be directing you to the Resource Centre with increasing frequency.

*John O'Keefe*  
1-800-267-6354, ext. 2297  
jokeefe@cda-adc.ca