



Connecting Pathologists

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Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube are social media sites that have changed the way we look at our professional and social networks. The pathology industry is no different; technology is revolutionizing the field. In the past decade, the industry has transitioned into the digital age, allowing pathologists to view, manage, manipulate, analyze, report and collaborate slides in digital form.

Stay Connected

The move to a digital format has increased the need for pathologists to stay connected with the professional network and keep up-to-date with the latest advances in the field. Traditionally, community pathology practices are geographically fragmented and small, employing one to two pathologists at each location working in isolation. Social networks, however, can allow a bridging of collaboration and consultation regardless of physical location.

Launched in March, PathXchange.org (PX) is a not-for-profit professional networking portal for the global pathology community. This brings the field of pathology into the digital age with Web 2.0 features designed to promote exchange of pathological cases, ideas, knowledge, information, products and services. Cases and information can originate from anywhere, from any platform, and be shared with the sub-groups of users' choice.

Allen Gown, MD, medical director and chief pathologist, PhenoPath Laboratories, says, "Technology is revolutionizing the art and science of pathology, both in the nature of the tests we can offer, as well as the methods at our disposal to disseminate information generated by these new technologies. A pathology portal is an excellent example of the latter, as it can foster e-learning, case sharing and telepathology, bringing together the eyes and minds of pathologists who find themselves in disparate locations. Ultimately, all these technologies promise not only to enhance the practice of pathology, but to dramatically improve patient care."

Social Tools

Dubbed "Facebook for Pathologists," PX not only allows pathologists to stay connected with their professional network, but also provides access to a number of tools designed to support the exchange of knowledge and ideas, including:

- Case Gallery - Members can share cases online by creating their own photo gallery of case slides. The gallery also allows members to browse and search for cases, archive cases in their own library and develop a URL for each case for use in Web sites, papers and journals.
- Case Reviews - At the end of each month, a case review committee will review member cases and publish the case of the month.
- Virtual Tumor Board - Members can use PX as a platform for conducting tumor boards virtually, without having to be present physically.
- Peer Reviews/Second Opinion - Members can selectively submit a case and seek an informal peer review or a formal second opinion from experts.
- Probono Review Service - Members may use PX as a platform to offer their service (free of charge) to review cases from developing places like India and Africa, where the subspecialty may not exist.
- e-Learning - The site will offer tutorials and course material, reference material and community contributed information. Users can browse cases, reference material and community contributed information.

- Alerts - Allow members to stay informed of new developments through community feeds.

Collaborative Efforts

Additionally, the site allows members to collaborate on cases and view slides together in synchronized mode. Pathologists are able to gain a second opinion through their professional network. Pathologists can digitally scan glass slides and upload them to PX, facilitating image examination and diagnosis at a distance.

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Benefits of a Pathology Social Network

- Affords the opportunity to share and review cases online
- Offers a platform for conducting virtual tumor boards
- Provides the ability to seek an informal peer review or a formal second opinion from experts
- Allows pathologists to stay informed of new developments through community feeds

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