The NLM Technical Bulletin on the Web

In keeping with the electronic age, the NLM Technical Bulletin will be published electronically in HTML (Hyper-Text Markup Language) format via the NLM Web site, http://www.nlm.nih.gov, beginning with the January-February 1998 issue. The November - December 1997 issue will be the last issue to be printed on paper and mailed to readers. The decision for this transition was made due to the many requests we have received for an electronic version of the Technical Bulletin and also due to the increasing costs of printing and mailing.

The name of the publication will not be changing and the issue numbers will continue sequentially without interruption. However, articles will now be numbered rather than having page numbers and they will have an electronic indicator “e” before the article number. For example, the first article in each online issue will be e1 and the second article will be e2.

In addition, all 1997 issues of the Technical Bulletin will be converted to HTML format for viewing through your Web browser from the Web site.

Finding the Technical Bulletin


The specific URL address, as of January 5, for the electronic Technical Bulletin will be: http://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/techbull/tb.html. Until that time this Web site will only be for downloading the Technical Bulletin in PDF (portable format document) and PostScript format.

Getting Around in the Web-based Technical Bulletin

One of the advantages to publishing electronically is that readers will have new information in a more timely manner - no more waiting for a complete issue to be cumulated and printed to find out about a new feature or other newsworthy information. New articles and Technical Notes will be published electronically as they become available.

Because each article will be in HTML format rather than a PDF or PostScript file you will be able to print a selected article right from your browser rather than downloading the entire issue. Reminder: The Technical Bulletin is not copyrighted and is freely reproducible.

All articles and Technical Notes published within the two-month time frame of an issue will then be compiled into one bi-monthly issue and assigned an issue number. Completed issues will be easily distinguished by a dark icon. An issue that is in progress will be marked by a grayed-out icon.

Beginning in 1998, new issues will no longer be available in the PostScript or Acrobat PDF formats. However, the May - June 1993 through November - December 1997 issues, originally printed on paper, will still be available as downloadable PostScript and PDF files.

A print alternative for a fee is being investigated. Stay tuned for details.

Cumulative Index

The Technical Bulletin cumulative index will also be available electronically on this Web site. The index is from 1979 to the present and will include a link to the cited HTML-formatted article if it was published in January-February 1997 or later.

--prepared by Mary Herron
MEDLARS Management Section

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Technical Notes

NLM Web Site Update Service
You are invited to subscribe to a new e-mail service which announces new/updated files available on the NLM Web site (http://www.nlm.nih.gov) and from the NLM Anonymous FTP server (ftp://ftp.nlm.nih.gov). The messages contain automatically generated lists of new and updated files with their titles and URLs and are a good way to keep up on what is added daily or weekly.

After you subscribe to nlmfiles, you will receive a weekly message each weekend indicating what files, if any, were added or updated on the NLM Web and FTP sites during the previous week. Please note all requests must be entered in the body of your e-mail message; the subject line is ignored.

To subscribe:
Send an e-mail message to: owner-nlmfiles@mailserv.nlm.nih.gov
In the body (NOT subject) of the message, type: subscribe nlmfiles

To remove your name from the subscription list:
Send an e-mail message to: owner-nlmfiles@mailserv.nlm.nih.gov
In the body (NOT subject) of the message, type: unsubscribe nlmfiles

OR you may subscribe and unsubscribe from the NLM home page as follows:
Open the NLM home page: http://www.nlm.nih.gov
Click on News, click on new files mailing list

This information on how to remove yourself from the mailing list will be sent to all subscribers as partly of the weekly message.

For more information about using this mail server:
Send an e-mail message to lists@mailserv.nlm.nih.gov
In the body (NOT subject) of the message, type: help

To contact the nlmfiles list manager:
Send an e-mail message to: owner-nlmfiles@mailserv.nlm.nih.gov

The nlmfiles mailing list does NOT support general postings. E-mail sent to nlmfiles@mailserv.nlm.nih.gov will be automatically discarded without notice. Any suggestions or recommendations may be sent to: owner-nlmfiles@mailserv.nlm.nih.gov.

Internet Grateful Med® Update
Internet Grateful Med Version 2.3 with the added databases: AIDS DRUGS, AIDS TRIALS, DILINE, HISTLINE HSRPROJ, OLD MEDLINE and SDILINE, became available online on July 23, 1997. These databases joined MEDLINE, PREMEDLINE, AIDSLINE and HealthSTAR to bring the total number of databases on Internet Grateful Med to 11.

AIDSLINE® Update
The AIDSLINE database was updated on August 1, 1997 with 126 additional abstracts from the 11th International Conference on AIDS. The SI value for these citations is ICA11 and the Entry Month (EM) value is 9709.

While the bulk of the abstracts from this conference were entered into AIDSLINE and put on the Web in January 1997, these 126 late breaking abstracts were not indexed and loaded into AIDSLINE until August 1997.

Error in Publication Type (PT) Field in CANCERLIT®
An error in the CANCERLIT Publication Type (PT) field has been recently found for approximately 300 non-MEDLINE (ICDB) records from Entry Months (EM) 9702 through 9706. Please be aware that when you search using values such as Review in the PT field; you may not receive correct retrieval from this small subset within CANCERLIT. The data in the PT field in these ICDB records will be revised and corrected during Year-End Processing.

Location Codes to be Deleted from SERLINE®
The following fields will be removed from SERLINE effective with the October 1997 update:

Regional Locator Codes (L1-L8)
Regional Locator Counts (K1-K8)
Region (RG)

The data in the SERLINE locator fields is no longer current and will not be updated due to technical constraints. Current holdings information is available via SERHOLD®, which serves as the basis for DOCLINE®, NLM’s online interlibrary loan request and referral system for health sciences libraries. Descriptive information about libraries and other organizations which use NLM’s Interlibrary Loan (ILL) services or are a part of the Regional Document Delivery Network is provided by the DOCUSER (DOCUMENT DELIVERY USER) database.

Expansion of Copy Cataloging
In June 1997, the Cataloging Section began using OCLC member records in copy cataloging of monographs and serials. This practice represents an expansion of copy cataloging, particularly for monographs, where NLM previously relied solely on copy available from the Library of Congress and the U.S. Government Printing Office. This expansion was made possible by the implementation of new NLM designed software which uses the OCLC Z39.50 client/server interface under an agreement with OCLC, Inc.

Users have been able to see bibliographic records for which NLM has provided copy cataloging based on OCLC member copy in its regular USMARC record distribution since July 3, 1997. In conformance with USMARC record content designation, any such records distributed to NLM licensees may be easily recognized by the coding of the USMARC field 040 (Cataloging Source).
1998 MeSH® Tools - Ordering and Pricing Information

The 1998 MeSH Tools may now be ordered from the National Technical Information Service (NTIS) with delivery expected in October. Questions concerning orders may be directed to NTIS at 800-423-9255. Callers from outside the U.S. or Canada may reach NTIS at 703-487-4650. Questions about standing orders should be directed to NTIS Subscription Section at 703-487-4630.

Orders may be placed in the following ways:

Phone: 800-423-9255 or 703-487-4650
TDD: 703-487-4639
Fax: 703-321-8547
Web site: http://www.ntis.gov/ordering.htm or you may call to download a pdf file from http://www.ntis.gov/ordernow
E-mail: orders@ntis.fedworld.gov

If you are concerned about Internet security you may register your credit card at NTIS by calling 703-487-4682. If you need a paper form to place your order, you may reach NTIS at 703-423-9255, to have a form mailed to you.

Medical Subject Headings —Annotated Alphabet List, 1998

Single Demand Order Number: PB98-964801
NTIS Standing Order Number: PB98-964800
Hardcopy Price: $49.95 (U.S./Canada/Mexico)
$99.90 (other countries)

Medical Subject Headings —Tree Structures, 1998

Single Demand Order Number: PB98-964901
NTIS Standing Order Number: PB98-964900
Hardcopy Price: $44.95 (U.S./Canada/Mexico)
$89.90 (other countries)

Permutated Medical Subject Headings, 1998

Single Demand Order Number: PB98-965101
NTIS Standing Order Number: PB98-965100
Hardcopy Price: $40.95 (U.S./Canada/Mexico)
$81.90 (other countries)

Notice for Licensees of NLM Databases

Section M of the National Library of Medicine License Agreement to Lease NLM Databases in Machine-Readable Form currently states that the designated representative of the licensee will be sent a copy of each issue of the NLM Technical Bulletin. Beginning in January 1998 when NLM ceases to publish the Technical Bulletin on paper, licensees are advised to go to the NLM Web site to retrieve their copies. Modifications to the License will continue to be published in the electronic version of the Technical Bulletin. Please refer to the article on the cover of this issue for details concerning the discontinuance of the paper version of the NLM Technical Bulletin and the introduction of the Web version.

NTIS To Charge $5.00 Per Quarter for Deposit Accounts

In June, the National Technical Information Service (NTIS) notified all Deposit Account holders that effective July 1, 1997, NTIS was imposing a $5.00 quarterly service charge ($20.00 annually) for all Deposit Accounts. This includes those used for MEDLARS searching, or for other purposes (ILL, ordering government documents, etc.). Quarterly Deposit Account statements reflecting MEDLARS account activity for July, August, and September 1997 will carry this $5.00 service charge. NLM urges you to consider changing to either free MEDLINE via Web-based PubMed or Internet Grateful Med or changing your billing method to credit card payment to avoid these service charges. You must notify NTIS in writing to close your account, and request a refund of funds deposited, and/or to switch to credit card billing. Please include your NTIS Deposit Account number and the name on the account in your letter; this information can be found on the NTIS invoice. You may send your written notification in one of the following ways:

National Technical Information Service
Attn: Deposit Account Division
5285 Port Royal Road
Springfield, VA 22161

E-mail: dhaynes@ntis.fedworld.gov
FAX: 703-487-4793

Surcharge Eliminated

For many years the Library has charged foreign users, as non-U.S. taxpayers, a surcharge that represents their proportional share of the costs of creating the databases. The surcharge has applied to users of the NLM databases whether access was direct to NLM from outside the U.S. or through MEDLARS licensees who provided products or services to users outside the U.S.

The Library recently reviewed its pricing policies in relation to the worldwide free Web access and the spirit of the U.S. Government’s Administration’s Global Information Infrastructure. That initiative encourages use of the Internet on a global basis. The Library has therefore decided that effective October 1, 1997 to discontinue charging users or licensees a foreign surcharge and urges all licensees to remove NLM’s foreign surcharge from their pricing.

The ELHILL and TOXNET “SHOW COST” command displays will be changed to reflect this reduction in cost. Please watch the Online News and Broadcast for an announcement of when the change will be implemented online; it will likely take place sometime around October 1, 1997. Regardless of the date of the online announcement, all billed usage on non-Web based MEDLARS databases will exclude the surcharge portion in the actual invoices, effective, October 1, 1997 forward.
PubMed: Basic Boolean Search Hints

PubMed is a new NLM Web interface available at: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/PubMed. As described in the cover story of the May-June 1997 Technical Bulletin, PubMed provides free access to MEDLINE (1966-current) and PREMELINE all in one database. This article, the first in a series of occasional articles, describes how to do Boolean searching in PubMed. The goal is to make the transition to PubMed a little easier for experienced ELHILL searchers. The hints below are an introduction to a whole new way of thinking about how to frame your search. Please remember that these hints represent just one way to accomplish a search and there are almost always alternative ways to do any strategy in PubMed. Future articles will explore some of the alternate methods and highlight other aspects of PubMed including unique features of the system. Also remember that PubMed is “a work in progress” and features may change as the system is enhanced.

Boolean Searching on PubMed
PubMed provides for Boolean searching. You may run a Boolean search from any search box, but the roomiest screen is available in Boolean Search. To reach the Boolean Search box: click on Advanced Search, and then Click on Boolean Search. All the information below is available to you in the Help screens including a full description of the Boolean Search features. Click on Help and Search Fields for a description of the fields that are available for searching and the abbreviations used for those field qualifiers. This article will not give a comprehensive list of all the search fields available in PubMed, because this information is available to you in Help and will be at your fingertips there, when and where you need it.

Boolean Operators MUST Be CAPITALIZED in PubMed
There are three Boolean Operators available to you in PubMed: AND, OR, NOT. The operators must be entered in capital letters (if spelled out) as shown here. If you type them in lower case, your search may still retrieve results, but all the lower case Boolean operators will be replaced with AND, which is the default Boolean operator.

Symbols for Boolean Operators
You may use the & (ampersand) in place of AND. A search formulation may contain both symbols and words to represent the Boolean operators, e.g., x & y OR z.

Field Designations MUST be in Square Brackets
If you are using the Boolean search screen, you must post qualify each term with a field designation that must be enclosed in square brackets [ ]. Pre-qualification of terms does not work. Field designations may be in upper or lower case, i.e., both heart [MH] and heart [mh] will retrieve the same citations. Parentheses are reserved for the nesting of Boolean operations as described in the next paragraph and may not be used with field qualifiers.

Using Parentheses to Create an Order of Operations
In PubMed there are no separate search statements to indicate the order of performance for the Boolean operations. Instead, parentheses are the indicators for which operations are performed in what order, e.g., (a OR b) & (c OR d) means that the OR operations inside the parentheses will be done before the AND operation between the two sets of terms. If there are no parentheses used in a search formulation, then the operations will be processed left to right.

MeSH Headings
Retrieving a Starred MeSH Heading
In the Boolean Search box, to retrieve a starred MeSH heading, e.g., *COLITIS, ULCERATIVE, you would type in colitis, ulcerative [majr]. This four-letter field designation stands for MeSH Major Topic and using this field qualifier allows you to retrieve starred MeSH headings.

Retrieving a MeSH Heading/Subheading Combination
To retrieve citations indexed with ANGIOPLASTY/AE, you would type in angioplasty/adverse effects [mh]. To retrieve citations indexed with *ANGIOPLASTY/AE, you would type in angioplasty/adverse effects [majr]. Subheadings must be spelled out in full when typed in.

Exploding a MeSH Heading
All MeSH Headings are automatically EXPLODED, e.g., if you enter gingivitis [mh] you will automatically retrieve citations indexed with gingival pocket and gingivitis, necrotizing ulcerative, the two MeSH headings indented under gingivitis in the tree.

Limiting to a Specific Year
The year is indicated by four digits (the four digit designation is Year 2000 compliant) in the DP (Date of Publication) field, e.g., 1995 [dp]. There is no YR (Year) field in PubMed.

Limiting Your Search to English
To limit your search to English (or any other language), you must type in the full name of the language and post qualify with [la], e.g., english [la]. Three-character abbreviations for the language of the article are not valid search entries in PubMed.

No Documents Found
Beware the dread “No Documents Found” message; it probably means there is a mistake in the way you have entered your search terms. PubMed does not have the equivalent of a No Postings message that can be applied to a single term within your search; there is just this one all-purpose message that applies when your search fails to retrieve citations for any reason. All of the following searches will produce a “No Documents Found” message. If you see this message, please review your search strategy very carefully for one (or more) of the more commonplace errors shown in the table on page 5.
Sample Boolean Searches in PubMed

The above search formulations illustrate the features highlighted on page 4. Note that except for Boolean operators, which must be capitalized, all other terms and qualifiers may be upper or lower case.

**Search Query**
I am interested in articles in English on ulcerative colitis in cats and dogs.

**PubMed Search Formulation**
colitis, ulcerative [mh] & (cats [mh] OR dogs [mh]) & english [la]

Note: Parentheses are used to indicate that the OR operation will be performed before the terms in the parentheses are ANDed with the other terms.

**Search Query**
I am interested in review articles on angioplasty published in the current year.

**PubMed Search Formulation**

Note: The MAJR qualifier is used to retrieve ‘angioplasty” as a Major MeSH topic (i.e., *ANGIOPLASTY) and DP takes the place of YR.

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July-August 1997 NLM Technical Bulletin 5

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--prepared by Toby Port
MEDLARS Management Section
Background
On June 26, 1997 NLM announced free Web-based access to MEDLINE through PubMed and Internet Grateful Med. Because of this recent development, the NLM Online Training Program for 1998 will be modified to present several new classes to introduce and train searchers on these two interfaces.

New Classes Offered

• Making the Transition: Converting to PubMed and Internet Grateful Med to Search NLM’s Databases

This one-day class is designed for experienced MEDLARS or MEDLINE searchers. It is expected that students attending this class will have familiarity with MEDLINE, MeSH vocabulary and Boolean logic. Those core topics will not be covered in this Transition class. The class will examine both the PubMed and Internet Grateful Med search interfaces. It will include information for “translating” functions used by experienced searchers, especially those using ELHILL command language, to methods used by these Web-based interfaces. There will be no charge for this class. It will be taught at sites across the country by the National Online Training Center staff and in Bethesda, MD by NLM personnel.

• Introduction to Web-based Searching for the Librarian and Information Specialist: Using PubMed and Internet Grateful Med to Search NLM’s Databases

This two-day class is designed for librarians and information specialists who are new to searching MEDLINE. This includes those who have never searched before, or the user with some searching experience but little prior knowledge of the MEDLINE database or the MeSH vocabulary. Students will learn to search MEDLINE via both PubMed and Internet Grateful Med, with emphasis on areas specific to NLM databases, including the MeSH vocabulary, database fields and creation, and Boolean logic. There will be no charge for this class. It will be taught at sites across the country by the National Online Training Center staff and in Bethesda, MD by NLM personnel.

• Web-based Searching for the Health Professional: Using PubMed and Internet Grateful Med to Search NLM’s Databases

This two-hour class with workbook is designed for health professional searchers. Librarians and information specialists at hospitals and universities or other facilities may use this workbook to train others. When completed this fall, the workbook will be available for downloading from the NLM Web site; watch for news of availability at NLM’s Web site and in the Technical Bulletin. This 2-hour workshop and a companion “Train the Trainer” class will be offered later in 1998 by the Regional Medical Libraries. Dates for these classes have not yet been scheduled. Watch for further information from your RML.

Information About Current Classes

• Fundamentals of MEDLARS Searching

The Fundamentals of MEDLARS Searching two-day class which was previously offered to teach new searchers the ELHILL command language and MEDLINE search techniques will no longer be offered in a classroom setting beginning in 1998. New searchers should register for Introduction to Web-based Searching for the Librarian and Information Specialist: Using PubMed and Internet Grateful Med to Search NLM’s Databases. There are two training alternatives for the searcher who wishes to learn the ELHILL command language, or to brush up on certain ELHILL features. The Basics of MEDLINE on ELHILL, a self-instructional workbook, has been updated and expanded and is available for downloading via the NLM Web site, at http://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/osrm.nlm.html. A print alternative (for a fee) is being investigated. Stay tuned for details. This workbook covers all topics currently addressed in the Fundamentals class. Non-billed training codes to use in conjunction with the Basics are also available from the National Online Training Center.

There is also a computer-based alternative. The seven computer-based tutorials that are used in the Fundamentals class, e.g., MeSH Searching, MEDLINE Data Elements, Text Word Searching, Proximity Searching, are available for downloading via the National Online Training Center home page (http://www.nlm.nih.gov/mar/online). See Downloading Instructions at this address for further information for computer requirements and installation instructions.

• Chemical/Toxicology/TOXNET Specialized Module

This two-day class covers NLM’s chemical and toxicology files, including TOXNET databases and assumes knowledge of the ELHILL command language. There is no charge for this class. It is taught only at NLM in Bethesda, MD.

• MEDLARS Refresher & Review (MEDLARS R&R)

This four-hour workshop will no longer be offered in its present format in 1998. Following the development and debut of our new classes, an update workshop similar to the R&R will be developed. Stay tuned for details in late 1998.

How to Apply

The 1998 training schedule for the Introduction, Transition, and Chem/Tox/TOXNET classes can be found at the end of this article. You may also view the schedule and register online for classes at http://www.nlm.nih.gov/mar/online. Alternatively, you may register for classes by completing the Request for NLM Online Training form found at the end of this article. Registration for these classes should be sent to the National Online Training Center located in New York, NY at the New York Academy of Medicine. The address and fax number are provided on the registration form.

Every attempt will be made to place training applicants in the class requested. If a class is filled, the applicants will be registered for their second choice, and also automatically placed on a waiting list for their first choice. Approximately one month prior to the class, registrants will receive a packet with information on hotels, local site arrangements and the class agenda. All classes are considered “tentative” pending sufficient enrollment one month before the class.
Questions/More Information

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact the National Online Training Center or the MEDLARS Service Desk as follows:

E-mail:  notc@nyam.org
         mms@nlm.nih.gov

Phone:  National Online Training Center
        800-338-7657 (press 2) or
        212-822-7396

        MEDLARS Service Desk
        888-FINDNLM
        (888-346-3656)

Web Site:
http://www.nnlm.nlm.nih.gov/mar/online

A full description of these changes as well as Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are available at the Web site.

--prepared by Janet Zipser
MEDLARS Management Section
Making the Transition: Converting to PubMed and Internet Grateful Med to Search NLM’s Databases

- Designed for the experienced MEDLARS or MEDLINE searcher. Familiarity with MEDLINE, the MeSH vocabulary, the MeSH Tools, and Boolean logic is required.

- Will examine both the PubMed and Grateful Med search interfaces, providing information on “translating” ELHILL commands, fields, and functions into a format that can be used on these Web-based interfaces.

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Introduction to Web-based Searching for the Librarian and Information Specialist: Using PubMed and Internet Grateful Med to Search NLM’s Databases

• Designed for individuals who are new to searching MEDLINE OR who have never searched before OR who have some search experience but little prior knowledge of the MEDLINE database or the MeSH vocabulary.

• Will examine both the PubMed and Grateful Med Search interfaces, teaching users how to search MEDLINE, including the structure and content of the database, the MeSH controlled vocabulary, the use of the printed MeSH tools, and Boolean logic.

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Chem/Tox/TOXNET Specialized Module

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