

The First Virtual Textbook of Cataract Surgery

If your home office is anything like mine, limited shelf space results in stacks of periodicals and journals that barricade your desk. Although I maintain a library of textbooks and peer-reviewed journals, I have never quite known what to do with the piles of trade journals that arrive each week. Many accumulate in my inbox. Once I read them, I throw most away (in keeping with the familiar *throwaway* moniker). Some I have trouble discarding because of excellent articles that I want to read later or save. Perhaps naively, I plan to find time to clip and file important articles for future reference.

Where does one save such articles for easy retrieval? In this age of information technology, we should have a better system for managing written content. Although most periodicals' current issue may be viewed online, different sites' search engines make retrieving articles on specific topics difficult. This very problem inspired me to create the *Cataract & Refractive Surgery Today* Virtual Textbook of Cataract Surgery. My hope is to provide instant online access to a continually updated, comprehensive, virtual textbook written by leading cataract educators.

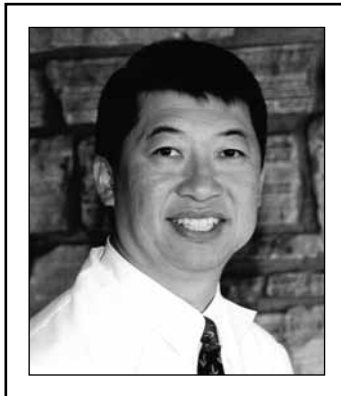
Since its inaugural issue in September 2001, *CRSToday* has published a cumulative wealth of practical and timely articles written by leading cataract and refractive surgeons. As the Co-Chief Medical Editor overseeing cataract content, my selection of articles is guided by two simple criteria: the topics I most want to learn more about and the experts whose opinions I am most interested in reading. Where relevant, *CRSToday's* authors summarize evidence-based findings from the peer-

reviewed literature as support for their own opinions and experience. Furthermore, our original articles are usually written by the surgeons themselves, rather than by staff writers. Because these thorough and well-illustrated articles are just like textbook chapters, it struck me that we could use them to compile a wonderfully current and comprehensive textbook on cataract or refractive surgery. However, unlike a textbook, newly updated material could be added every month.

The fruit of this idea is a virtual cataract cyber-textbook that organizes all of *CRSToday's* archived cataract articles into an online table of contents. It is a free, user-friendly resource that requires no registration to access. From our home page, <http://www.crstoday.com>, a button accesses the Virtual Textbook's table of contents. Under each section and topic heading, a link identifies the title, author, and date of every pertinent article. Every article's title links to either an HTML page or a PDF file that may be printed out and saved as if torn from the original print issue. Current and archived issues

may still be viewed chronologically from another area of the Web site.

We are proud to launch our Virtual Textbook of Cataract Surgery this month. I personally combed through every past issue of *CRSToday* to select and categorize all of the cataract articles. I hope that through word of mouth, the international community will also learn about this free educational resource. Take a moment this month to check it out. If you think it is useful, e-mail the link to a resident, fellow, or international colleague and help us to spread the word. ■



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