way to send in letters to the editor are just two possible benefits. I believe that we are only at the very beginning of a long and exciting chapter of medical progress.

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1 Delamothe T. BMJ on the internet. *BMJ* 1995;310:1343-4. (27 May.)

Will be useful for librarians

EDITOR,—As a librarian at Sydney's largest teaching hospital, I applaud the *BMJ*'s enterprise in setting up a home page on the internet.¹ I recently had the task of trying (in vain) to locate a copy of an article in the *BMJ* that was required on the day of publication; the person who requested it had learnt about it from a press release. Now I know where to go. The *BMJ*'s home page will be an invaluable link from our home page. I have long wanted to make the table of contents from "the big four" (*BMJ*, *Lancet*, *New England Journal of Medicine*, and *Medical Journal of Australia*) available electronically. Congratulations on being the first.

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1 Delamothe T. BMJ on the internet. *BMJ* 1995;310:1343-4. (27 May.)

Who will use it?

EDITOR,—Congratulations for putting the *BMJ* on the web.¹ I, and others, in the World Health Organisation are pleased to see this. It will greatly help us keep up to the minute from the convenience of our desktops.

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1 Delamothe T. BMJ on the internet. *BMJ* 1995;310:1343-4. (27 May.)

Neuroscience on the internet

EDITOR,—We were interested to read the recent articles on the worldwide web.¹⁻³ We recently set up what we believe are the first British pages on the worldwide web devoted to the neurosciences (<http://medweb.bham.ac.uk/clinneuro.html>). We have several aims.

Firstly, the pages will help all doctors with an interest in neurology to access relevant material on the worldwide web. Secondly, they will serve as a forum for discussion between neuroscience researchers so that they can exchange information and ideas. Since many neurological disorders are uncommon the pages will provide a means of communicating rapidly with other researchers and thus help in the collection of data. They will also help people to communicate with charitable organisations and research foundations to gain information on forthcoming research grants, and they will provide information on forthcoming academic meetings, calls for abstracts, etc. Thirdly, the pages will serve as a teaching resource at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Fourthly, they will help patients with neurological diseases to get in contact with support groups. So far our page

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can be used as a contact point for various national bodies, such as the Medical Research Council (<http://nimsn41.nimr.mrc.ac.uk/MRC/>) and the UK Multiple Sclerosis Society (<http://www.infosci.org/MS-UK-MSSoc/>), and several neurological teaching sites.

The clinical neurosciences web pages are part of MedWeb, a resource for teaching and continuous medical education based at the Medical School, Birmingham University; the MedWeb home page is at <http://medweb.bham.ac.uk/>. Over the next few months we propose to develop the pages considerably, with teaching material including high quality images, digital video clips, and on line assessment. Any interested parties should contact us directly if they have any information or material they wish to share with others. Those who do not have access to such computing facilities can contact us by post or fax as we are able to convert material from several different media so that it is suitable for delivery across the worldwide web.

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- 1 Delamothe T. BMJ on the internet. *BMJ* 1995;310:1343-4. (27 May.)
- 2 Coiera E. Recent advances: medical informatics. *BMJ* 1995;310:1381-6. (27 May.)
- 3 LaPorte RE, Marler E, Akazawa S, Saver F, Gamboa C, Shenton C, et al. The death of biomedical journals. *BMJ* 1995;310:1387-9. (27 May.)

Interactive debate is needed

EDITOR,—I am delighted that the *BMJ* is partially available on the worldwide web.¹ One difficulty with such pages is that they are essentially a one way process, whereas the key to electronic media must be the possibility of interactive discussion. The United Kingdom professionals forum (UKPROF) on CompuServe already provides an

electronic meeting place for all health workers in the United Kingdom, discussing various issues. The forum has hundreds of medical members already. There is also a private section for doctors only, and we have been exploring the potential of this medium in postgraduate education in the form of journal clubs and discussion of cases as well as for providing a forum for discussion of medico-political matters. We can provide help, support, and easy to use programs to anyone starting off in what initially can seem a daunting environment.

I look forward to the further development of the *BMJ*'s online services and urge consideration of some form of international and interactive forum for debate on line.

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1 Delamothe T. BMJ on the internet. *BMJ* 1995;310:1343-4. (27 May.)

Orthopaedic textbook will be updated on the internet

EDITOR,—I am wildly excited about the *BMJ*'s use of the internet.¹ I now have in my briefcase an internet spade. If I catch any of my team surfing the internet I cut their connection. The internet is currently the greatest time waster for curious minds that I have ever come across. I am therefore convinced that it is the way for the future, and I am impressed that the *BMJ* has taken the lead.

Colleagues and I have signed a contract with Oxford University Press to produce the *New Oxford Text Book of Trauma and Orthopaedics*. This will be produced on CD-ROM primarily and will then be updated on the internet. We will invite readers to submit short boxes on any topic they wish for inclusion in the electronic book. We will then edit these and put them back on the internet if they fit with the aims of the book. People with the CD-ROM will then be able to download them from the internet on to their hard disk. They will then be incorporated electronically (not physically) into the skeleton of the textbook that is on CD-ROM. Computer users will therefore see a living textbook to which they may have contributed while Oxford University Press owns the skeleton on CD-ROM. It is going to be an immense amount of work, but I believe that it is the only way forward for textbooks (if there is a role for textbooks in the future at all).

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1 Delamothe T. BMJ on the internet. *BMJ* 1995;310:1343-4. (27 May.)

**In the three weeks since selected parts of the *BMJ* have been available electronically on the worldwide web 322 people have entered comments in the electronic comments box or sent us email messages. Most of these have been short congratulatory notes; others have suggested technical improvements and advised us of additional sites of medical interest. The most requested developments include a full text, a searchable version of the journal and index, classified job advertisements, and facilities for online discussion.—EDITOR

Correction

Trust withdraws allegations against consultant

In her letter in the issue of 17 June (p 1607) Wendy Savage stated that Dr Daly's locum in Truro, Mark Lister Patterson, was restored to the medical register after serving a jail sentence. In fact, he was never removed from the register, only suspended from it. We apologise to Dr Patterson for this error.