Introduction
During the 2000s, SIU School of Medicine supported creation by David King of an instructional website for introductory histology, characterized by extensively hyperlinked text and images to facilitate efficient self-directed learning. In July 2021, this website was relocated to histology.siu.edu.

You are invited to consider how similar resources could complement traditional media, especially in a problem-based curriculum.

Background
Learning resources should be appropriate to the curriculum environment in which they are used.

Self-directed learners, when they first encounter an unfamiliar subject, may not appreciate the value – or even the existence – of introductory concepts and vocabulary. But conventional media are seldom designed for use in a self-directed, problem-based curriculum.

Conventional media (e.g., textbooks) are designed for conventional media (e.g., textbooks) are designed for traditional courses.

Textbooks introduce key concepts in a linear order, chapter by chapter. Although an index can direct students to particular facts, students may also need structured guidance toward background material that is not well known.

Even internet resources commonly just reproduce material contained in textbooks, often with little or no supporting information.

Hypertext resources can offer intuitive nonlinear navigation of unfamiliar material.

Hypertext links can supply cross references from any particular content location to all associated supporting concepts, with frequent pointers back to basics. Appropriately hyerlinked web pages can emulate the guidance that a personal tutor might provide.

Principal features
- Guidance to introductory concepts is readily available from any point.
- Most content-specific terms are active hyperlinks.
- These abundant links offer easy access to background explanations as well as definitions and examples.
- All topics are multiply interlinked. On every page, a top menu links to several "hub" pages. Every topic is accessible from any other via a minimal number of links.

Additional features
- Content is essentially self-contained.
- Content is enriched with links to appropriate external sites.

Website development
- Simple formatting avoids expensive software development.
- Content is essentially self-contained.
- Content is enriched with links to appropriate external sites.

User comments (unsolicited)
- "I would like to congratulate you on your wonderful site. . . . I am sure that students around the world appreciate it immensely."
- "Your website has helped me tremendously! It is very coherent and well planned out. The links are fabulous."
- "After going through some sections of your website I realise how good the website really is. It has everything we need to know for our Histology exams and it’s very easy to navigate as well."
- "The existence of introductory textbook, with about five hundred individual pages. Effective use does not depend on consultation of traditional resources."
- "This site offers the scope of an introductory textbook, with about five hundred individual pages. Effective use does not depend on consultation of traditional resources."
- "Multiple small files are easier to manage than large files. Small, single-topic pages can load quickly. Multiple pages with hierarchical file organization facilitate addition and revision."
- "The resource, occupying about 0.3 GB of server memory, represents three years’ development effort. Hypertext adaptation of preexisting materials, such as handouts, should be relatively less time-intensive."
- "Your website is a wonderful resource. Your site has helped me tremendously. It is very coherent and well planned out. The links are fabulous."
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