

Hobby clubs and professional Special Interest Groups (SIGs) can be very valuable for the same kind of informal exchange of ideas that makes face-to-face conferences so popular these days. One such group is found on the CompuServe Information System.

Once you have entered the CompuServe System you will see the main prompt, " ! ". If you then type: " go hom 123 ", you will be greeted by these messages:

***note to editor - suggest text in square brackets be in alternative type face. LL ***

[Welcome to The Med SIG, V. 2C(10)

Name: Liza Loop 70007,1341
Last on: 24-Feb-84 21:38:59
High msg#: 0

You are user number 40366
System contains messages
13369 to 13693

Brief bulletin:

You are invited to become a member of the nation's largest medical computing association. Join ranks with your colleagues and:

- *Learn about computer applications from experts;
- *Keep up-to-date with hardware and software developments;
- *Share in two national meetings each year;
- *Receive a quarterly newsletter and "Medicine and Computer" monthly;
- *Participate in Professional Specialty Groups;
- *Learn how computer networks will influence the practice of medicine;
- *Find out about standards of terminology and coding;
- *Receive news of major conference proceedings.

For additional information, put your name and address on this message ~~board~~ addressed to 70707,323 and a packet will be sent to you, or write to:

Ann Barker c/o AAMSI
Suite 402
4405 East-West Highway
Bethesda, MD 20814

(301) 657-4142.

Gordon C Black, MPH
MEDSIG Manager]

You are now at the beginning of the "bulletin board", an area where you can "leave messages" for all to read. A "scan" of the messages tempts you with titles such as these:

[Function: qs
System contains messages
13369 to 13693
Starting message (N for new): n
13369: MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION Sec. 0 - GENERAL/MISC
 5 replies
13381: My problems Sec. 0 - GENERAL/MISC
 4 replies
13391: Adverse drug reaction? Sec. 0 - GENERAL/MISC
13417: BELONGING TO AAMSI Sec. 9 - OTHER PROF. ACTIVE.
13432: SICK SINUS SYNDROME Sec. 10 - PRIMARY CARE
13457: software evaluation Sec. 0 - GENERAL/MISC
 1 reply
13476: LITERATURE SEARCHES Sec. 0 - GENERAL/MISC
13662: Bubble Boy Sec. 0 - GENERAL/MISC
13682: speech pathologist Sec. 3 - REHABIL. SERVCES.
13683: FROM MOIRA VIA CLEM Sec. 0 - GENERAL/MISC]

The Sec. #'s refer to interest areas. If you write your message after entering a section it will carry that section's label. Unfortunately, this ~~system~~ ^{method of organization} is hard to use and most people simply leave their messages in Sec. 0. ^{On entering Sec. 0} ~~Here~~ you will find this message:

[Q. Who are you, and who are those other people on MEDSIG Thanks so much, Gordon and John??
A. You are welcome. I am Alvin M. Lewis, M.D.
I am a physician in Private Practice, with interests mainly in Pediatrics and Family Medicine. I live in Houston. John Sheppard, M.D. is also in private practice in Vermont, near Burlington, with interests in Surgery and Family Medicine. Gordon C. Black, MHA, is in the Office of Gerontology at Ohio State Univ. School of Medicine. He is the Secretary of AAMSI, also, and started MEDSIG in July, 1982. He has a background in Hospital Administration and is interested in health risk assessment, preventative health, long-range health risk assessment. Also, all three are very interested in promoting the growth of computer-based information exchange in Medicine. MEDSIG is such a beginning in the use of this new technology. Other computer-accessable databases offer some very useful services (at costs that do not attract their casual use!) and which are not YET available on MEDSIG. However, no other system offers Medical Professionals the ability to share their experiences, software and other contributions with other professionals, as well as to

receive assistance, reports of others' evaluations of hardware/software, and acquire new computer-centered skills - all at a low cost! Moreover, whatever it is possible to do with computers, MEDSIG provides either help in doing it, or an audience eager to listen and applaud your accomplishments! What more can you ask for??

Q. Well, thanks!

A. You are welcome.

(By Al Lewis, MD, SYSOP.

January, 1983.]

There is a section for members to record their interests in short form. *The first number in each entry is the person's account (and address) on CompuServe. The next two letters*
[71056,400 *tell the person's home state.*

MI GREG BAUMANN / GREG BAUMANN M.D./EMERGENCY
MEDICINE/FLYING/EMS/MEDICAL CONTRDL/COMPUTERS IN ER/REAL TIME
MEDICAL RECORD/TRS80 MODELIII-100

72456,2347

NC Stephen Merritt, Ph.D / TROPICAL MEDICINE / PARASITOLOGY
/ MOLECULAR BIOLOGY / MALARIA / RECOMBINANT DNA /
TRYPANOSOMIASIS / LEISHMANIA]

By searching through the "Interests" *section* ~~file~~ using ~~the~~ keywords

~~music~~, you can identify those members of the group who have included it in their descriptions. *Here is a search for "music".*

[Enter search string
(blank line implies all): music

71646,1276

NC Rick Davidson / PARASITOLOGY, CLINICAL EPIDEMIOLOGY, MUSIC,
STATISTICS

72366,2642

PE WARREN GOLDFEDER MD / SYLVANIA MY FIELD OF SPECIALTY IS
DIAGNOSTIC RADIOLOGY, HOBBIES:CLASSICAL MUSIC,THE MARX BROTHERS,
RACONTEPALL;]

Another search yielded members who were interested in Apple computers.

[Enter search string
(blank line implies all): apple

70116,1677

DC ROBERT S. GREENBERG / medical education, medical student,
TRS80-MOD100, APPLE, Pediatrics, Psychiatry

70356,164

CA JEFF MILLER / EMS - MOTION PICTURE STUDIO FIRST AID - APPLE

70356,164

CA JEFF MILLER / EMS - MOTION PICTURE STUDIO FIRST AID - APPLE
II+ - SOFTWARE - CONFERENCE TREE BBS @ 805-985-2591

71545,1663

PA RICHARD BLUTSTEIN / Neonatology, TRS-80 MOD
I, LDOS, PASCAL, FFT, SIDS, Signal processing, Apple IIe]

The formal data bases in MEDSIG are mostly ^{empty.} ~~unused.~~ But the
informal area, called the xA data base is full of BASIC language
programs and text contributed by members. The "catalog" command
shows you the file names of these contributions:

[
[72405,1375]
NEWBOR.DOC 24-Dec-83 1940

[70156,1167]
PILOT1.ASM 05-Dec-83 59685
SAMPLE.PIL 05-Dec-83 3845

[71605,666]
SNAKBI.BAS 11-Oct-83 12625 19
QA.BAS 05-Sep-83 9840 29]

The last programs in this list were contributed by a member
who described himself like this:

[
71605,666
GA ALAN D. CLARK, M.D. / EMERGENCY MEDICINE COCO 64K/COMPUTER
APPLICATION FOR ER DATABASES, IE MED/SURG EMERG/DRUG INTERACTIONS
DEV DISK SYST ATL ER GROUP]

In another section of the XA data base he left these:

[
[71605,666]
LYTES.DOC 30-Jan-84 660
LYTES.OFF 29-Jan-84 25380 1
RESP.BAS 28-Jan-84 28680
~~PEDCPR.DOC 12-Jan-84 370 10~~
PED.CPR 09-Jan-84 4735 12
COLD.BAS 03-Jan-84 8935 11
PEDIAT.RIC 27-Dec-83 9010 5
XANTH.INE 29-Nov-83 12305 13
TOX.SS 07-Nov-83 8780 11
TOXI.COL 06-Nov-83 32620 12

Ped.cpr contains this program

[10 REM PEDIATRIC FIRST LINE DRUGS
20 REM by

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30 REM Alan D. Clark, M.D., F.A.C.E.P.
31 * WRITTEN IN MICROSOFT BASIC
32 * DESIGNED FOR USE IN THE E.D. OR IN THE FIELD
33 * PLEASE NOTE:
34 * CALCULATIONS ARE FELT TO BE CORRECT; HOWEVER
35 * PLEASE CHECK CALCULATIONS CAREFULLY PRIOR
36 * TO ACTUAL PATIENT USE.
40 CLEAR 100
70 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT
;160 PRINT"Input patient's initials:":INPUT N$
170 PRINT"Input Wt in kilograms:":INPUT W
180 PRINT"Input time of cardiac arrest:": INPUT T$
;570 PRINTTAB(1);"Epinephrine";TAB(20);E;"cc";TAB(36);"1:10,000 IV/ET"
580 PRINT
590 PRINTTAB(1);"Bicarb";TAB(20);NA;" cc";TAB(36);"IV bolus q10min
Other services...

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Another consumer service is ON-LINE PERSONAL BANKING. Customers with personal checking accounts at Bank of America, to name just one of the pioneers, can view their bank statements (updated daily,) and pay bills to other business cooperating with the bank. Questions can be asked of the bank's operations center and answered by electronic mail.

B. Direct Subscription to the DataBase

Very expensive for individuals, set up for corporate clients with in-house professional on-line researchers.

C. Use an Information Broker

- contact Sue Rugge - Information On Demand, Berkeley