



The World At Our Fingertips

By Jacqueline Stader

Recently there were 2 press releases that should be of interest to anyone participating in clinical research. First the Audit Bureau of Circulations reported that newspaper circulations were down 2.5% to 5% depending on the geographical areas. Many sited the Internet as the reason for the decline.

Obviously the Internet is becoming the preferred medium choice when looking for information. Not surprising given that we can read all major newspapers online without ever taking them to the recycling bin or getting ink on our hands.

The second press release of interest was from the FDA.
FDA Press Release, May 3, 2007

“FDA Launches New Web Page, E-newsletter to Enhance Online Consumer Health Information”

This press release indicates that even the federal government recognizes the need to reach out and educate patients electronically. To read the complete press release click here:
<http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/2007/NEW01627.html>

These 2 news items are of little impact individually to the research practice, but when put together and viewed with an eye towards clinical research and our recruitment efforts it becomes quite interesting.

Have we stopped to think of the potential we may have at our own fingertips if we initiated a service that paralleled the FDA’s patient information? Imagine, how much easier recruiting subjects would be, if we used our websites to promote clinical research in positive ways, with additional links to sites like the FDA or to the sponsors. Let’s say our website has a podcast explaining the benefits of any new FDA approved drug or treatment that pertains to our practice, what impact could that have on our practice, and our research efforts? Simply referring patients and their families to our website would give us exposure 24/7 and place us, and our offices in the limelight of information delivery and cutting edge research.

Many years ago most physicians believed that advertising wasn’t ethical and many shied away from it with little more than an ad in the local telephone book. But times are changing and if we want to capitalize our efforts we have to reach out to potential patients and clinical research subjects in the mediums they want. To me this isn’t advertising, it’s educating. An educated patient can become an excellent research subject, especially if our websites provide more than just our location and hours. Although this is a great start, it’s not enough when people are flocking to the Internet to search out the information they want. The more information our websites contain about our research efforts the more information we are extending to our potential subjects.

So how would you rate your website presence?

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