

Technology.... Do we use it?

The man is a genius! Imagine having a readable and interesting issue on technology! And one which cannot be put down . . . don't believe it? Wait till you read this issue and then write back to me.

When we first mooted the idea of a technology issue, to my *miniscule* mind all it conveyed was a issue on Homoeopathic software, inciting us and telling and explaining to us how to use it... but this issue has been and of course rightfully so, converted to an issue telling us, as Homoeopaths, what all technology we can use and how it will enhance our lives... to the point of making it easier.

Again to my mind, (where we always play down our own achievements, not always from a false sense of modesty, but because from the vastness which we still have to master, what we have achieved always remains only a miniscule percentage), I always felt I was not born a tech-savvy

Dr VISHPALA PARTHASARATHY
MD (Hom)

person, but have to struggle to bring myself to use a new gadget or new technology. *I hate change*, has been my by-line, which is more from a sense of fear to conquer the unknown coupled with an endemic acute shortage of time.

Yet I must say, reading this technology adaptation issue, (which in my wildest dreams, I must confess, I had never visualized as being so exciting as it has turned out to be!). I do feel I have achieved plenty, as about almost all that has been put up here, I do use and to the hilt.

To enumerate, where would we have been without the MS Word... I do not think the National Journal of Homoeopathy would have been borne or been sustained without it. I still recollect with awe, how we struggled to bring out the IJHM, with minimal technology, writing articles by hand, typing them, then setting them at Unity Press, with manual typesetting process and reading the proofs which laboriously the press made corrections alphabet by alphabet.... From here we moved to NJH in the early 90's, having one of our own team members, Dr Parag, trying his hand at feeding in our articles at his own computer in the Word format, and sending it to Business India on a floppy; through a peon the proofs went back and forth, till we achieved a modicum of perfection. Till the early 2000's, we still employed a typist or rather a feeder, to feed in the articles into the computer. Such a far-cry from today, in 2009, when we receive articles by e-mail. Today we no longer accept articles which are hand written or typed and posted to us. Today we no longer employ a person who feeds in articles. That means almost all Homoeopathic authors are tech-savvy. The miniscule quantity we do receive by post, its authors are requested to resend by e-mail. Our team also proof reads in MS Word, each at his own computer, in a set circular pattern. The same finally goes to the professional page designer, who sets it in *pagemaker* format. At this stage, **for the first time**, we use the paper medium to read the final proof, to result in the printed Journal which is mailed to you readers. But we also have the e-version of NJH, available, as an exact look-alike, on the web-site @ \$3 a copy and of which we sell at least 1 copy a day, often to Indian subscribers - tomorrow's market?

Still, I love the printed issue lying on my table, but I can see the day, not too far off, when we will have only e-version subscribers and it will not be feasible to print the copy for the few who don't read digital version. So all of you folks... Beware!

Next I would like to discuss the dramatic change in the NJH by its online version www.njh.in. It has become a huge reference on the net by its sheer content and its search engine. Just type in an author and you have all his/her articles over the last 17 yrs!! Dr Rashmi will recollect with dread, having to

compile that index, article and author-wise, at the end of each year. It used to take more time than producing the entire year's issues! Imagine NOT having to do that, but rather, having it come automatically, online! (Same goes for our daily clinic accounts. Feed it in the excel file and you no longer have to use the calculator, nor even re-check).



This Technology issue is more than full without even touching on the various other uses and devices which are not Homoeopath(y)-centric ie apply to the general medical world and to our general life. . . Just to give you a small example—I now use the laptop in the kitchen to download and refer recipes!!! The online recipe book in my newest high-tech kitchen!

Where else do we use technology to the hilt.... NOT even imagined in the early 90's (which is within our own lifetimes?)

The mobile phone of course. Today we cannot imagine life without it. And with the push mail services, we have been able to achieve almost instant turn around time to all work, whether it be dictating minor changes in the NJH cover - TAT of 1 hr or less - or articles OR giving advice to patients. This is no longer time and distance -centric. It may well be a patient from America who can claim your instant advice to a crisis. But there onwards, we still are bound by the old postal system, where ongoing medicines have to be snail mailed (as courier and postal services are now referred as), because of the unavailability of Homeopathic medicines universally or not 24/7, even in India.

One last thing I would like to touch on is the negative-effects of all this... our forgetting how to write on paper, use a pen etc. So there is always a downside which has to be borne in mind. The downside to the author and NJH office .. today we no longer have the ubiquitous file and diary which recorded every article received and then laboriously choosing which articles to print. But it also means that we do not have the track record of the articles rejected or dropped for want of space and sometimes an article gets omitted last minute and there is no physical trace and a explanation to the author becomes well-nigh impossible by the NJH office. A small but important point in management of issues!! Another downside is the bad effects (refer article on proving a Homoeopath has carried out, on mobile telephones.)



And all ye non-users. . . do not despair yet. . . to ballast all this high-Tech inputs, we have given Dr Mamgain's mind-blowing case of the 'magical'cure of meningioma, achieved by pure brain power and knowledge of Materia Medica without super technology, (yet sent to NJH by email! no escaping the clutches of technology even by the very senior Dr Mamgain).

And so I give you this tip of the iceberg.... The technology adaptation issue... where even I have not been able to find space to give you all I could or would have liked to.....

Our issue editor, Dr C H Asrani the brain behind it all, and the motivator for all our Editorial Board to use technology, adds....

Writing for this issue has given a new high! Penning a series of articles with a very special target audience; ensuring that those in the knowledge, on one hand, do not feel slighted with the absolute basic information given and still manage to pick up few tips. The uninitiated, on the other hand, should find the information authentic, relevant and just enough to begin adapting to technology. Even if 10 doctors, hitherto not using the latest for practice are motivated enough to try – my efforts would have been more than successful.

This issue also gives another first, an anonymous article – very nicely written at that – sharing his/ her experience of 3 commonly used Homoeopathic software. Although it's a very balanced article, I must put in usual disclaimer "The view mentioned is of the author".