ELECTRONIC INFORMATION SOURCES :
BASIC CONCEPTS AND HISTORICAL OVERVIEW
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MEDICAL SCIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Electronic Information Sources(EIS) constitute a major component in disseminating information and knowledge in modern world. EIS offer a variety of opportunities than their printed counterparts. This article discusses the concept of EIS and provides a historical overview of various EIS in medical sciences. The EIS are grouped into five catagories, viz. offline batch processing systems, online information source, CD-ROM sources, Internet and web sources and Personal Digital Assistants.

1. Introduction

In a wide variety of acadamic disciplines including the medical sciences, Electronic Information sources (EIS) are generally presumed to represent the leading edge of innovation in the presentation and dissemination of scholarship. They can reach potentially enormous professionals and lay audiences in a fraction of the time. They are capable of supplementing traditional text with images, sound and video, opening up entirely new vistas of inquiry and analysis. Medical science is always in the forefront of making use of the potentials of computer based electronic information sources and services since the inception of these resources. Today multitudes of electronic medical information source are available in various formats. The integration of electronic resources in the health care system provides enormous potential to increase the efficiency of medical education, research and patient care.

2. Defining Electronic Information Sources

Library of Congress in its draft interim guidelines for cataloguing electronic resources define electronic Information Source as "manifestation of a work encoded for manipulation by computer. The manifestation resides in a carrier accessed either directly or remotely". The Library of Congress goes on to further define a "directly accessed electronic resource" as an "electronic resource whose carrier is 'touchable' e.g.a CD-ROM" and a "remotely accessed electronic resource as an electronic resource whose carrier does not embody a direct 'touchable' physicality. [e g an electronic journal, or a database accessed through the Internet, or a web-site]"

AACR2[2], define an electronic resource as "Material (data and / or program(s) encod.' for manipulation by a computerized device. This material may require the use of a peripheral directly connected to a computerized