**Subject Gateways / Portals**

Learners and researchers have a potentially vast range of resources available to them through the Internet and associated technologies. But, as the Internet increases in size and complexity, so do the associated usability and navigational issues. A range of strategies has been used to manage online information and provide different searching protocols, navigational aids and maps. Nonetheless, information overload persists. This information overload problem is well recognized and a number of structured resources and environments attempt to address it, such as search engines, information gateways and portals, digital libraries and virtual learning environments.

A subject gateway or portal is a website that provides centralized access to online resources focused around a specific subject. The objective of designing a subject gateway is to help people to find out different resources available on the Internet pertaining to the subject. The subject gateways are characterized by two key factors. 1. They are selective, pointing only to the Internet resources that meet with the quality selection criteria. 2. They are built by subject and information specialists. Resources included in gateways cover a wide spectrum, from electronic journals and books to academic and government reports, as well as related web sites. Subject gateways are doing for Internet information resources what library and information professionals are doing for books. They ensure and support systematic discovery of high quality information pertaining to a subject field. Using a subject gateway instead of a general search engine can result in the return of more genuine and relevant web pages.

The examples for subject gateways in the field of health sciences include MedlinePlus, Medscape and Health On the Net .