

Preface

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Knowledge, experience and research build the essential basis for hand surgery at a contemporary level. Under recent conditions with internet availability nearly all over the world we found new possibilities to spread educational and scientific material. Scientists built up international networks to provide their ideas and new findings promptly and developed the Open Access Movement. Under these conditions the idea of a free accessible textbook for Hand Surgery could be developed to a new concept according to the movement for open educational resources (OER), as provided by UNESCO and others. With substitution, engagement and helpful suggestions from friends and colleagues all over the world this book could be started and will be completed and improved step by step.

The aim is to provide a textbook, which fulfills all criteria to be cited according to scientific rules. Therefore defined responsibilities of authors, a peer review process and availability of all versions via unique identifiers (DOI) were parts of the concept from the first moment. Above all the **“Living Textbook of Hand Surgery”** is the pilot for further Living Textbooks in other professional fields of medicine.

Until now, access to knowledge was often limited by missing financial facilities, availability and legal restrictions. With the “Living Textbook of Hand Surgery” **we hope to bring hand surgeons all over the world together** to create a common base of knowledge and to spread ideas and new concepts.

So please feel invited to use this book and contribute in this early stage of development.

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