The concept of the “Living Textbook of Hand Surgery”

Richarda Böttcher¹
Anita Eppelin²
¹Department for Hand-, Replantation- and Microsurgery, Unfallkrankenhaus Berlin, Berlin, Germany
²ZB MED – Leibniz-Informationszentrum Lebenswissenschaften

Hand surgery is based on highly specialized surgical education, research and discussions. In some fields diagnostic and therapeutic aspects are changing rather fast. Conventional textbooks therefore have to be revised after some years and to be published again. They are quite expensive and difficult to get at many parts of the world.

On the other hand we have a cheap and well-working platform, which is available nearly everywhere worldwide – the Internet. This platform should – in the idea of OPEN ACCESS – not be only another plain for conventional publishing. It implies the chance for a free textbook combined with many graphs, photos and video. Everybody with internet access has the possibility to use this book without any restrictions and to copy, reuse, modify and spread the material in the sense of OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES by addressing the author and the source.

The Living Textbook of Hand Surgery is a comprehensive open access textbook on hand surgery in English language. The aim is to establish a cite-worthy standard work. It includes principles and basics, clinical aspects and all information about diagnostic and treatment. The field of rehabilitation is also extensively covered. Many chapters, where suitable, contain a part with “author’s preferred method”. Videos illustrate surgical techniques and skills and can be reached in a “short-track click” at the register to surgical techniques.

It is clearly a community project. However, it is not meant to be a “Wikipedia for Hand Surgery”. All contents pass a peer review process, an Editorial board recruits authors from their network, editorial quality is assured by copy-editing with editorial professionals. All hand surgeons in the team – editors, authors, reviewers – work complimentary. For editorial and technical work, most of the costs are covered by ZB MED – Leibniz Information Centre for Life Sciences. For the remaining costs a non-profit association of German hand surgeons was founded under the title Handchirurgie Weltweit e.V.

All chapters in the Living Handbook of Hand Surgery are regularly updated by the authors after defined validity periods. However, each previous version will keep accessible in an archive. Thus, a citation will always lead exactly to the version it refers to, while a note will inform the reader that a more recent version exists. For permanent reference, each chapter and each version has a so-called Digital Object Identifier (DOI).

All content is licensed under a CC-BY-SA license and the copyright belongs permanently to the author. However, everybody is allowed to remix, transform, or build upon the material with distributing his or her contributions under the same license as the original. Also a license notice addressing the name of the creator and the source is mandatory.

In future we hope to establish a portal not only for knowledge and education in Hand Surgery but to create a platform for communication between scientists and surgeons, for open data and educational material in the sense of OER.
“Knowledge belongs to whoever produces it, but knowledge does not belong to anyone exclusively.”

Rainer Kühlen

Corresponding author: Dr. med. Richarda Böttcher, Unfallkrankenhaus Berlin, Warener Straße 7, 12683, Berlin, Germany, E-mail: gms-redaktion@zbmed.de


License/Copyright: © 2018 Dr. med. Böttcher, Richarda (et al.)
This chapter is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. See license information at https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/