CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor:

With admiration I read Dr Renfrew's article entitled "HyperCard-Assisted Journal Article Filing System."¹ I would like to report my own experiences in trying to implement just such a system and offer some suggestions.

Like Dr Renfrew, I am enchanted by the Macintosh's (Apple Computer, Inc, Cupertino, CA) power yet relative user friendliness. Indeed, setting up just such a system with Hypercard was a major factor in my decision to buy a Macintosh as opposed to other computers. However, as a neophyte in computers and at the same time preferring to spend my time doing other things besides learning how to use the computer, I was somewhat frustrated in using Hypercard. This program is limited in its word processing ability and requires at least several hours of training to feel comfortable with it. Setting up fields can be frustrating for a neophyte.

On the other hand, I have found another Macintosh program, Microsoft Works, (Microsoft Corp, Redmond, VA) to be easier to use to get started on saving journal references and personal comments about them. Its word processing, database, spreadsheet, and telecommunications capabilities can be useful as well. For example, in addition to storing a list of journal citations, word processing can be used for letters such as this one. The database ability can be used for lists of interesting cases or cases on which to obtain follow-up. These can easily be ACR coded for a teaching file. The spreadsheet can be used for department or personal daily, monthly, or yearly totals of exams. The telecommunications function can be used for literature search such as through the AMA/Net.

Setting up a hierarchical journal references system in Works is extremely easy and requires only rudimentary skill in working with Macintosh. I have found it much easier to write and modify comments or other textual information in Works than in Hypercard. I also like to create my own reviews of a specific topic, eg, ankle anatomy, with references to the original sources. Having a full page format instead of a 3 × 5-in card greatly facilitates subsequent review of that topic.

For the nonneophyte, Hypercard is unquestionably preferable to any other program I know of except perhaps Super-card for the functions Dr Renfrew has eloquently elaborated. A search of all files for a given text string such as a key word or author's name is more cumbersome in Works than Hypercard. However, I usually only need to search one or two documents since, for example, an article dealing with the technique of intravenous contrast injection for optimal evaluation of liver metastases will only be in my Body CT folder or my GI-liver folder and can be in both should I so desire.

My suggestion for the radiologist neophyte in computers and in Hypercard anxious to avoid frustration or a substantial time investment in setting up a Hypercard based system is to use Works. Your effort will not be "wasted" if you decide to change over to a Hypercard-based system. The information is just in a different format that would be relatively easily changed over by a typist. This permits you as a radiologist to spend your time in other ways.

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REFERENCES

1. Renfrew Donald L: HyperCard-assisted Journal Article Filing System. *J Digit Imag* 3:38-41, 1990

Reply. I thank Dr Vose for his comments regarding my HyperCard stack. Microsoft Works (Microsoft Corp, Redmond, VA) is indeed an easy to use, multipurpose, relatively inexpensive program. I use Works for research projects. The ability to merge data base and word processing functions is particularly helpful for generating forms for information gathering. The spreadsheet function is handy when generating budgets for grants. Drawbacks of Works include that the field length in Works' data base is limited to 250 characters, and a limited number of records can be stored (6,000 on a 1 Mbyte system; proportionately more on larger systems).

HyperCard is not a data base. I used it as one for my journal article filing system for the following reasons: (1) the open format of the search criteria; (2) the speed of the searches; (3) the unlimited number of records that may be stored; (4) virtually all Macintosh (Apple Computer, Inc, Cupertino, CA) users have the program; and (5) there are multiple other uses I have of HyperCard that may utilize the cards in my journal article stacks.

I agree with Dr Vose's observation that learning HyperCard is a tremendous time investment. For many reasons, Works is a good place to start, and for many individuals, it may provide all the computer services required. The journal article filing system I describe allows me to find with great speed and reliability articles which I have read. For me, the time spent learning about HyperCard and entering the information into the computer was well spent.

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