

# Surgical Society Offers Free, Full Access to Web Site

BY ANN CONTI MORCOS, MA, ELS

The Society of Laparoendoscopic Surgeons (SLS) has decided to turn the fee-based model of accessing medical journal articles online on its head. Not only are full-text journal articles freely available on the SLS Web site, [www.sls.org](http://www.sls.org), but so are abstracts, medical textbooks and award-winning videos of surgical procedures, and no password is required.

On most other sites, to read more than just the abstract of a journal article, physicians must purchase a subscription to the journal or pay a one-time fee. At \$15 per article—limited to a 24-hour period—this can get expensive, especially for surgical students or fellows.

“When we launched the Web site 10 years ago, we wanted to stay true to our mission, which is to provide information and education in the field of minimally invasive surgery to surgeons worldwide,” said Paul Allan Wetter, MD, FACO, FACS, professor emeritus of the University of Miami School of Medicine, chairman of the SLS and developer of the SLS Web site. “From the beginning, the Web site was 95% open access and 5% closed, but today it is 100% open access. We felt that having an open-access Web site was the best way to accomplish our mission.”

In addition to two journals—the *Journal of the Society of Laparoendoscopic Surgeons (JLS)* and *Laparoscopy Today*—two medical textbooks are available. The first edition of “Prevention and Management of Laparoendoscopic Surgical Complications” is available online and has been translated into Chinese, Portuguese and Spanish. This edition also is available for download to personal digital assistants and cell phones via real simple syndication (RSS) feed. The second edition can be purchased on the Web site, and the third edition is now being written and will be available in print and online versions.

The other book is “History of Endoscopy,” by laparoscopic surgeon Camran Nezhat, MD, FACO, FACS, deputy chief of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and clinical professor of surgery and obstetrics and gynecology at Stanford University Medical Center in Palo Alto, Calif.

“The SLS has taken the pioneering lead in teaching endoscopic surgery as a ‘one-stop shop.’ Abstracts, articles, books, video surgery, all under one umbrella” said Dr. Nezhat.

In September 2009, the society launched SLS TV, which offers educational videos of the latest minimally invasive surgical techniques. The initial group of videos on SLS TV comprises award-winning videos

presented at the SLS Endo Expo in Chicago in 2008 and Boston in 2009.

Along with providing an RSS feed, which allows the latest SLS information to be sent directly to a computer or smart-phone, visitors to the Web site also can conduct searches (powered by Google, through the Scholarly Laparoscopy Search page) in the first edition of “Prevention and Management of Laparoendoscopic Surgical Complications,” *JLS*, *Laparoscopy Today*, SLS meetings, SLS

continuing medical education and online support materials, or any other topic. Visitors to the Web site are free to copy, distribute and transmit information as long as they indicate where the information was obtained, do not use the material for commercial purposes, and do not alter, change or add their own information to the work.

*JLS* has ranked in the top 100 for full-text downloads out of 10,000 scientific publications on IngentaConnect

in April, June, August, November and December 2007; March, June and August 2008; and February and March 2009. “The Web site receives about 30,000 hits per month,” Dr. Wetter said.

“This is quite honestly the most impressive information available to surgeons today,” said Richard M. Satava, MD, Professor, University of Washington Medical Center and senior science advisor to the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command.



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