

# **Noah's library: does consumer health information mean anything in animal health?**

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Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons

[www.rcvs.org.uk](http://www.rcvs.org.uk)

# Structure

- Consumer health information generally
- Information in the human-animal relationship
- A survey of existing resources
- A way forward?

# Consumer health information (CHI)

- A growing area:
  - NHS Direct (UK)  
see Bob Gann's  
paper this morning
  - Medline Plus  
(USA)
- Driven by:
  - Consumerism
  - Self-care
  - Economic factors
  - EBM (EBVM?)
  - Government  
backing

# Why CHI in animal health?

- Unsolicited enquiries
- Growing interest in animal health issues:
  - Recent outbreaks of animal disease
  - Heightened interest in animal welfare
- Increasing cross-sectoral, cross-domain working in LIS

# Why is animal health important? (1)

## Economic importance of animals

- Food source
- Clothing and textiles
- Cosmetics, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, fertilisers

## Cost of animal disease to the economy

- FMD 2001: cost £8 billion (c € 12-13 billion)

(National Audit Office)

# Why is animal health important? (2)

## Zoönotic disease

- rabies
- leptospirosis (Weil's disease)
- benign lymphadenitis (cat-scratch disease)
- BSE (not!)

# Why is animal health important (3)

- Scientific uses of animals:
  - pharmaceutical research (both human and animal)
  - household products research
  - weapons research
  - psychological research

# Why is animal health important (4)?

- Entertainment and recreational:
  - zoological gardens or wildlife parks
  - television
  - circuses, racing
- The working animal:
  - defence and security
  - guide dogs
  - transport
  - tracking and sensing

# Why is animal health important (5)?

- Health benefits of pet ownership:
  - Psychological: animal therapy
  - Cardiovascular benefits: reduction in stress, exercise

# Intermediaries

- Care of animals not confined to veterinarians, but shared by all those have any sort of responsibility

# To illustrate the problem...



- Bubble and Squeak catch up with the literature....

8<sup>th</sup> European Conference for Medical and Health  
Libraries, Köln, 20<sup>th</sup> September 2002



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# Eustace seeks information for the senior cat...



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# Animals need information intermediaries

- Just as do children, the confused elderly, those with learning difficulties...etc

# What resources currently exist?

A taxonomy



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# Resources (1)

- Veterinary organisations:
  - AAHA: <http://www.healthypet.com/>
  - AVMA: Care for animals:  
<http://www.avma.org/careforanimals/>
  - BSAVA PetZone:  
<http://www.bsava.com/petzone/welcome/welcome.htm>
  - New Zealand  
<http://www.vets.org.nz/Your%20Pet/dogcare.htm>

# Commercial sites

- Drs Foster and Smith  
<http://www.peteducation.com/>
- Waltham <http://www.waltham.com/>
- Merial: <http://uk.merial.com/>
- Pfizer: <http://www.patent.com/>

# Veterinary schools

- Washington State University Pet Health Topics
  - <http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/ClientED/index.html>

# Practice sites

- Bradley Viner:  
<http://www.blythwood.com>
- National Pet Week:  
<http://www.nationalpetweek.org.uk>

# Medline Plus

- Medline Plus on Pets and Pet health  
at:  
[http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/  
petsandpethealth.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/petsandpethealth.html)

# Government sites

- DEFRA (Department of Food the Environment and Rural Affairs—was MAFF):

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/animindx.htm>

# Species specific

- Cats: Feline Advisory Bureau
  - <http://www.fabcats.org/>
- Dogs: National Canine Defence League
  - <http://www.ncdl.org.uk/factsheets.asp?structureid=76>

# Species specific: Horse

- Bayer: Your Horses Health:  
<http://www.yourhorseshealth.com>
- [http://www.nixonandmarshall.co.uk/dental\\_equines.html](http://www.nixonandmarshall.co.uk/dental_equines.html)

# Subject specific

## Geriatric

veterinary  
medicine:

- Senior Dogs

Project:

<http://www.srdogs.com/>

## Oncology:

- Animal Health

Trust Cancer fact  
sheet:

<http://www.aht.org.uk/fsheets/fsheets2.html>

# Media

- The Times Vet:  
James Allcock's  
Pet Forum:  
<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,642-398267,00.html>
- Blue Peter Vet:  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/bluepeter/experts/vet\\_teeth.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/bluepeter/experts/vet_teeth.shtml)

# A way forward...

- Huge demand
- Some excellent resources
- Duplication
- Information professionals have yet to be mobilised

# Any solution...

- Must bring together a large number of providers across a wide variety of domains and environments
- Must be scalable to cope with growing demand
- We're not the NHS...

# How to achieve it

- By a consortium of existing providers (and bringing in new ones)
- Phase 1: mapping existing provision
- Phase 2: user needs
- Phase 3: pilot

# The librarian's role

- Location, evaluation, organisation and distribution of resources
- And the greatest of these is.....