for health care organizations in developing better communications with their clients (patients, customers, etc.). The author identifies four stages of Web site development through which most health care organizations progress: (1) having a site which is an online version of current print materials; (2) containing content targeted to various sub-markets and allowing for some interaction such as electronic mail; (3) facilitating transactions to occur through the Web site and collecting data into a database for use in a decision-support system; and (4) individualizing to each customer/user with the Web site being programmed to allow for user-based variations. This "stages" approach suggests the type of message the health care provider should consider and also helps to identify drawbacks and traps of using WWW communications. Specifically, Fell discusses the importance of not standardizing and also of having techniques for measurement of satisfaction and behavior changes in order to permit evaluation of accountability and return on investment.

Perhaps Fell's greatest contribution is in identifying the areas of information that customers want to access on the WWW. These applications include general health and wellness information, provider directory and referral service, health and community news, member update features, individual benefits information, access to health care professionals to ask questions, personalized health information, and online feature events. The author seems to suggest that a differential advantage can be gained by having as many of them on site as possible.

Tracy Tuten
Randolph Macon College


In an article titled to get the reader's attention, Vickie Phillips presents a collection of information about various types of distance education programs designed for members of the medical community (physicians and executives) interested in further education while managing the demands of full-time employment. The article is primarily anecdotal in nature, but through the various vignettes the author identifies the major types of distance education. She also presents observations from members of the academic community who are engaged in distance education.

Programs from five major universities across the country are briefly described in the article—including their addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, Web sites, and costs. Interestingly, and in contrast to the title of the article, three of the five described programs are not in schools of business and four of the five are not MBAs. The schools and programs are the University of Colorado's MS in health administration; University of Minnesota's MS in health care administration and MHA; University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill's MPH with a concentration in management and MS in health care administration; University of Tennessee's Physician Executive MBA; and Virginia Commonwealth University's MS in health administration. Phillips references a book that she co-authored as the source for the program descriptions.

Finally, the author presents a checklist developed by the director of the Virginia Commonwealth University programs identifying eight questions to ask prior to enrolling. Their topics include accreditation, reputation, skills, required campus time, admission criteria, faculty commitment, software/hardware requirements, and learning style match.

—Tracy Tuten


This article discusses a research project conducted by the authors which involved surveying students at four different universities regarding their opinions about the believability of various sources of health-related information on the topic of AIDS. The study included components that made it both a replication and a combination of other studies. In particular, Raymond, Tanner, and Eppright measured both the believability and the likelihood of using 33 various sources of AIDS information ranging from doctors (highest on both) to television soap operas (lowest on both). The sources identified most frequently in both the believability and likely to use category were, in order, television news, doctors, newspapers, leaflets, television talk shows, public service announcements, and the Surgeon General.

Measures of the believability and likely use of information from a person with AIDS and from a television talk show were both found to have increased significantly in this study due, the authors suggested, to the announcement of HIV status by basketball player Magic Johnson. The authors also noted that two different tasks were part of the HIV/AIDS prevention communication process—education and motivation. It was their opinion that most college students were fairly well educated about HIV/AIDS transmission and effects, but what was needed was information/encouragement from believable sources that would motivate (or reinforce) healthy behaviors. Government sources, CDC information, and public service announcements were suggested as most effective, particularly when juxtaposed with popular situation comedies.

David W. Glascoff
East Carolina University


This article reports issues and experiences in the creation and delivery of a distance learning course on Total Quality Management (TQM) via the Internet by faculty at Cleveland State University. The article begins by identifying and discussing policy issues related to the course such as: intellectual property issues (who "owns" the materials—the faculty member, the university, or is it really public domain?); tuition charges (in-state vs. out-of-state?); faculty availability (does the instructor need to be on campus or can there be a "virtual university with virtual faculty?");