

College of Nursing and Health Professions



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Essentials of Nursing Informatics, 4th edition

edited by Virginia K. Saba, EdD, RN, FAAN, FACMI, and Kathleen A. McCormick, PhD, RN, FAAN, FACMI; New York: McGraw-Hill, 2006; 705 pages, \$49.95

As someone who has eagerly embraced technology in practice, teaching, and research, I was determined to read this book from beginning to end to find out if I really understood what nursing informatics is all about. I read all 705 pages — even the smallest print.

It became apparent from the first several chapters that this book provides a complete, in-depth source of information on the history of computers, nursing and computers, and nursing informatics. Getting through the first chapters was tough, but a comprehensive 10-page table that outlines landmark events in computers and nursing — with titles, sponsors, coordinators, and locations — helps the reader follow the various developments in the field.

The book is organized into 11 sections and 42 chapters. The chapter authors go into great depth and offer extensive bibliographies in addition to cited references. Also included are lists of multiple health care and nursing dataset systems, organizations, and the many abbreviations and acronyms associated with health care informatics. Just having all of these in one source adds to the usefulness of this volume.

This text will be useful in efforts to accomplish the profession's goals for technology competency. It identifies important concepts along with the various definitions that exist, and it presents multiple standards from national and international organizations. Detailed discussions of current issues and applications in information structures, information processes, and information technology are identified and explored.

The authors provide multiple perspectives from the point of view of nursing, other disciplines, policy, and consumers. President Bush's mandated electronic health record (EHR), endorsed by the secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services in 2004, is discussed thoroughly. Conflicting evidence that has led to controversy about the impact of the EHR on patient safety is presented.

Nursing informatics transcends all aspects of nursing practice, teaching, and research, including multiple aspects of health care policy. This fourth edition of the *Essentials of Nursing Informatics* is a scholarly and comprehensive reference book recommended for graduate nursing students and faculty. The many facts and figures provided, along with detailed background information and explanations of the multidimensional aspects of nursing informatics and its applications, make this a fundamental choice for professional libraries.

reviewed by Joan Rosen Bloch, PhD, CRNP, assistant professor, College of Nursing and Health Professions, Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA

MEDLINE: A Guide to Effective Searching in PubMed and Other Interfaces, 2nd edition

by Brian S. Katcher; San Francisco: Ashbury Press, 2006; 148 pages, \$31.95

This is a concise, well-written, easy-to-use resource for those who want to improve their ability to do effective searches in PubMed/MEDLINE and other interfaces with MEDLINE. It is a wonderful text for beginners and can help prevent many commonplace errors. Even librarians, researchers, teachers, and graduate students who are long-time, intermediate-level users of MEDLINE will find that it provides hints and strategies that will increase the precision of searches.

This second edition begins with facts about the origins of MEDLINE and its development. In this way, the reader is helped to understand the structure of the database and problems that lead to unproductive searches. Issues related to the selection of words for creating queries, the role of linkages among databases, and semantic mark-up are demystified.

Throughout the book, the author builds on this foundational information, teasing out details and identifying approaches for getting the most from the database with the least amount of frustration. Discussions on key indexing elements used to characterize articles, in-depth descriptions of medical subject headings (MeSH), and information on conducting searches by publication type are valuable. Each chapter includes extensive references for those who wish to explore specific topics further.

The final chapter is a practical guide to conducting searches through each step of the process: writing out the key concepts; identifying the MeSH terms that will best capture the concepts; framing the question so that the search is adequately narrow or broad; the benefit of reformulated searches; criteria for evaluating results; sorting through conflicting information; and avoiding common pitfalls. Two appendixes, "MEDLINE Interfaces and Related Resources on the World Wide Web" and "Journal in the Abridged Index Medicus," complete the book.

This book is easy to read and can be completed in a few hours by most people. The author stresses that it supplements, but does not replace, the online tutorials provided by MEDLINE. Although each topic is explored fully, the material never becomes tedious and complex applications are presented clearly. The jargon one often finds in technical writing is avoided.

Numerous practical examples help tie concepts together and provide concrete applications for the material. Anyone who struggles with using PubMed/MEDLINE, and those who want to improve the efficiency of their searches, will find that reading this book is well worth the time.

reviewed by Margaret Miller, PhD, RN, assistant dean, student and faculty services, University of North Carolina School of Nursing, Chapel Hill