



BY JOSEPH S. EASTERN, M.D.

## MANAGING YOUR DERMATOLOGY PRACTICE

# Effective Web Searching

A lot of things have changed in my office in the 24 years I've been practicing medicine, but nothing quite so much as the way I look for information.

Finding the latest articles on a rarely encountered disease used to entail a search through multiple textbooks, shelf after shelf of old journals, perhaps the hospital library, or even the med school library across town. It was tedious and time consuming, and all too often a hit-or-miss affair.

No longer. Nowadays I can find all the medical data I need—or indeed, any category of information at all—in a few minutes on the Internet.

The problem, of course, is that there is so much information located online, finding exactly what you need takes experience, practice, and often a bit of luck—unless you have mastered some shortcuts. I do a lot of searches, both medical and nonmedical, and here are some of the tricks I've picked up for finding all sorts of information both quickly and efficiently:

► **Don't limit yourself to one search engine.** While Google is obviously the engine du jour (and has been for quite a few years now), there are lots of other options,

**If you're researching metastatic disease, you probably don't want thousands of extracts aimed at the general public, lawyers, etc.**

each with its own variations and advantages. If you're not finding it on Google, AltaVista, AlltheWeb, Teoma, Yahoo, Lycos, or HotBot, or one of dozens of others, might have what you want—and might even be

better suited to your style. I'll be referring mostly to Google because it's so popular, but most of the techniques that follow will work on most search engines. (As always, I have no financial interest in any of the companies or Web sites I discuss in this column.)

► **Put quotes around words you want searched as a phrase.** This is an old trick, but an important one. If you want to know if melasma has been linked to isotretinoin therapy, search "isotretinoin and melasma" so that Google won't waste your time finding a million Web pages containing the word "isotretinoin" and another million containing the word "melasma."

► **You can also exclude words, by putting a hyphen (think of it as a minus sign) before any word you want screened out.** For example, if you're researching tigers, you'll have to wade through scores of baseball sites unless you design the search as tigers-Detroit. Conversely, if you are looking for information about the baseball team and want

to exclude anything relating to big cats, the search should be tigers +Detroit, meaning the word "Detroit" must be present.

► **You can widen your search by putting the tilde symbol before a word to get pages containing that word and anything similar.** For example, ~tigers will pull up tigers, lions, leopards, and many other kinds of cats.

► **Another way to widen a search is with**

**an asterisk at the beginning or end of a word.** Searching acro\* yields any word beginning with those four letters—"acorchordon," "acronym," "acrocytosis," and so on. Searching \*genic yields "cryogenic," "photogenic," "dysgenic," etc. (AltaVista seems to do this best.) You can also use an asterisk as a wildcard when you can't remember every single word in a phrase or name that you're seeking. For example \*lupus erythematosus will yield "sys-

temic," "discoïd," "drug-induced," etc.

► **Phrase your question in the form of an answer.** Many people have been taught the opposite—to ask questions as questions—but you're not looking for Web sites that ask your question, you're looking for the answer! So "capital of California is" works much better than "What is the capital of California?"

► **For medical searches, consider limiting domains.** If you're researching



## ONE CLASS IV TOPICAL HANDLES MANY OBSTACLES

### TREATMENT VERSATILITY

- Luxiq® (betamethasone valerate) Foam, 0.12%, handles a range of scalp dermatoses including eczema, seborrheic dermatitis, psoriasis, and contact dermatitis

### EXCELLENT SAFETY

- Class IV, mid-potency safety comparable to other forms of betamethasone valerate<sup>1,2</sup>
- In a multicenter, randomized study, Luxiq showed no evidence of inducing adrenal suppression<sup>1,2</sup>

Luxiq is a mid-potency topical corticosteroid indicated for relief of the inflammatory and pruritic manifestations of corticosteroid-responsive dermatoses of the scalp.

The most common adverse events associated with the use of Luxiq are mild and transient burning, stinging, or itching at the application site.

Please see brief summary of full prescribing information on the next page.



connetics

References: 1. Luxiq NDA. 2. Franz TJ, Parsell DA, Halualani RM, et al. Betamethasone valerate foam 0.12%: a novel vehicle with enhanced delivery and efficacy. *Int J Dermatol*. 1999;38(8):628-632.

The foam dollop and the "V" logo are trademarks, and the interlocking "C" logo, Connetics, VersaFoam, Luxiq, and the foam icon are registered trademarks, of Connetics Corporation.

© 2004 Connetics Corporation PRM-LUXI-121R1 12/04 Printed in USA

Luxiq®

(betamethasone valerate) Foam, 0.12%

THE MULTI-OBSTACLE VEHICLE

www.luxiq.com

DELIVERED IN



VersaFoam®

metastatic disease, you probably don't want thousands of extracts from cancer patient chat rooms, or commercial sites aimed at the general public, lawyers, etc. To pull only those pages posted on academic sites, use the "site:" syntax tool to limit your search to the .edu domain—in this case, metastasis site:edu. Avoid a space after the colon, or the engine will consider "site:" as a separate search word.

► **You can search news articles using the same techniques.** Say you need to know what your patients are reading about a particular drug—isotretinoin, for example. Click "news" on the Google home page and search the same way you would

search Web sites. If you want to see all new articles on a particular subject as they appear, go to Google Alerts and type "isotretinoin" and all its brand names into the search box; Google will e-mail you each time a story on that subject shows up online.

► **Search for clinical photographs in the same way.** Say you're tapped to give a talk on short notice. On the Google site, go to "Images" and search the subject of your presentation. Narrow your search to PowerPoint files by using the "filetype" syntax tool (for example, psoriasis filetype:ppt), and you'll often find entire presentations, ready to download!

► **If you click a link and get the dreaded "Error 404, Document Not Found" message, do not despair.** The message confirms that the site exists, and the Web page you want may still be there. Delete the last part of the address until you come to the next "/". Hit enter and see what you get. If it's another error message, repeat the process. Eventually you'll end up on the home or index page, which may very well have a search box, or a link to the page you're looking for.

Finally, keep in mind that in many cases, the Web sites at the top of your search result are there because the owners of those sites have paid for prominent place-

ment. Some search services are clearer than others about what has been paid for and what has not. Take the time to read the "help" section, which usually spells out the service's policies, and frequently offers valuable tips for making the most efficient use of that particular engine. And check back regularly; the best services frequently add new features to keep up with cut-throat competition. ■

DR. EASTERN practices dermatology and dermatologic surgery in Belleville, N.J. To respond to this column, write Dr. Eastern at our editorial offices or e-mail him at [sknews@elsevier.com](mailto:sknews@elsevier.com).



## CLASS I POWER THAT TACKLES ANY TERRAIN

### ALL-TERRAIN VERSATILITY

- OLUX® (clobetasol propionate) Foam, 0.05%, is proven clinically effective for both non-scalp psoriasis and scalp dermatoses<sup>1</sup>
- Ideal for large body surfaces (torso, arms, legs) and small body surfaces (scalp, elbows, knees)

### ALL-TERRAIN SIMPLICITY

- One prescription for scalp and non-scalp areas simplifies treatment and can reduce co-payments
- Evaporates quickly, no oily or greasy residue
- Fragrance-free and preservative-free

OLUX is a super-potent topical corticosteroid indicated for short-term topical treatment of the inflammatory and pruritic manifestations of moderate to severe corticosteroid-responsive dermatoses of the scalp, and for short-term topical treatment of mild to moderate plaque-type psoriasis of non-scalp regions excluding the face and intertriginous areas.

Treatment with OLUX beyond 2 consecutive weeks is not recommended and the total dosage should not exceed 50 g per week because of the potential for the drug to suppress the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis.

OLUX is not recommended for use in children under 12 years of age.

The most common adverse events associated with the use of OLUX are burning, dryness, and other reactions at the application site.

Please see brief summary of full prescribing information on the next page.



connetics

Reference: 1. OLUX [prescribing information]. Palo Alto, Calif: Connetics Corporation; January 2004.

The foam dollop and the "V" logo are trademarks, and the interlocking "C" logo, Connetics, VersaFoam, and OLUX are registered trademarks, of Connetics Corporation.

© 2004 Connetics Corporation PRM-OLU1-069R1 12/04 Printed in USA



(clobetasol propionate) Foam, 0.05%

THE ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLE

[www.olux.com](http://www.olux.com)

DELIVERED IN

