With the increasing usage of Internet communication by all, there is an expectation of online presence of institutions by the community. Consumers expect information to be available online and readily accessible by search engines. The younger generation assume that this is the case, with the older generation adopting it slowly. I overheard my 7-year-old telling her friend to simply type ‘www…’ to access an online game and even my 68-year-old father has a Facebook page!

The initial frustration of access speed has improved with ADSL and 3G connections, and more recent reduction in bandwidth costs making transfer of large data files (e.g. audiovisual data) ubiquitous.

This is also true of the medical professional. Most have home and office Internet access and many carry smartphones with Internet connectivity options. Busy clinical commitments make 24/7 communication via email ideal. Remote radiology review avoids unnecessary visits to the radiology suite and solves the irritation of patients arriving without X-rays or MRIs. Immediate distribution of pathology results via email allow prompt reaction and reduce the piles of printed results being binned or taking up space in folders.

Online medical publications are another huge step forward. I still remember the pain of searching through the Index Medicus during my undergraduate days, where articles were listed in one volume per year. Now this is all offered online, with services such as Pubmed offering abstracts of articles listed by Medline. A quick simple search can provide a literature survey of the required topic in a matter of seconds. Abstracts can be reviewed and even full text downloaded if available.

It has become a matter of urgency to get our articles online. In December 2009 we submitted our application to Medline. It can take about a year to get a decisive answer from them. We therefore decided to approach the Academy of Science of South Africa. They have their own online facility by the name of Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO), which is an open access facility.

Their standards for publications are about the same as those of the South African Orthopaedics Journal (SAOJ). SciELO is linked to Google. This is an enormous step forward for our Journal and it gives us great pleasure to bring the good news to our readers.