

GENERAL SURGERY NEWS

In the News

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Surgical Journal Access: Anywhere, Anytime

New App Gives Surgeons Easy Gateway to JSLS Archives

By Marilyn Fenichel

While waiting for a Lufthansa international flight, Paul A. Wetter, MD, founder and chair of the Society for Laparoendoscopic Surgeons (SLS), noticed that popular magazines and newspapers were available on an app that the airline offered free of charge to its first-class passengers. The app was ingenious: Not only could passengers download the publications, but they were theirs to keep and could be read even when internet service wasn't available.

Dr. Wetter had a "Eureka!" moment. He realized he could use the same technology to create an app for the *Journal of the Society for Laparoendoscopic Surgeons (JSLS)*. He was convinced that such a device would be welcomed by SLS's 6,000 members representing a range of disciplines, including surgical endoscopy, gynecologic laparoscopy and endourology. Turning to his tech-savvy team, Dr. Wetter spearheaded the development of the app, called "JSLS Anywhere," which launched in November 2016.

JSLS Anywhere includes all the articles in the entire archive of the society's popular journal, offering busy surgeons access to cutting-edge research that could make a difference in their practice. The beauty of the app is that this information is available anywhere—on airplanes and other forms of public transportation, and in parts of the hospital where internet service is spotty—and can be shared easily with colleagues.

SLS has long been a leader in open access. Its journal is available at no cost to SLS members and has an impressive record of downloads—more than 1.2 million from PubMed Central, making it the most-read journal in minimally invasive surgery.

But for Dr. Wetter, even that level of access wasn't enough. He wanted to do more.

"The world of medicine is changing rapidly, and surgeons no longer have the time to travel to meetings to learn about the latest developments in their field," Dr. Wetter said. "With the app, surgeons can get the information they need, which can make a difference in the quality of care they deliver. For example, if they need to know the latest about wound closure, the information is right there. And the app allows them to do more than just read about the latest research; they can also annotate studies and share them with colleagues."

For Apple users, once the app is downloaded onto one device, it is automatically synced with all others. For Android users, the information on the app can be viewed as a PDF. All surgeons who have the app get an email alerting them whenever new information has been added.

Raymond J. Lanzafame, MD, MBA, a general surgeon based in Rochester, N.Y., and scientific chair of SLS, a member of the board of trustees, and a member of the editorial board of *JSLs*, said he is confident that *JSLs Anywhere* will fill an essential niche. "It gives busy professionals the opportunity to be productive and avail themselves to information," he noted. "There's only so much time in the day, so we all have to pick and choose what needs to be accomplished. With the app, it's easy to put my fingers on what I need, when I need it—especially important for someone like myself who is juggling clinical work, consulting, research and device development."

Another advantage of the app is it is interactive and brings people together to share ideas. "After reading something on *JSLs Anywhere*, the logical next step is to post online what works, what doesn't and what complications may occur," Dr. Lanzafame said. "This tool can stimulate conversations about how to prevent complications and manage them if they occur."

For Dr. Wetter, *JSLs Anywhere* represents an important innovation and milestone in publishing. "Surgeons want and need to know about the latest developments in research," he said. "The app will help ensure that key studies get the attention they deserve, potentially leading to improved outcomes for patients."