

A profile of end users of online information retrieval systems in the health sciences

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This paper reports the interim results of a research study exploring the adoption behaviour of end users of online information retrieval systems in the health sciences. The aspects of adoption behaviour measured included reported use patterns as well as groups of individual, contextual and perceived attitudinal variables. Data were obtained in two stages. The first stage involved an exploratory case study of the Canadian Medical Association / Telecom Canada iNet 2000 market trial in which 22 physicians and 2 pharmacists in 14 different practice settings across the country were given access to gateway services and online information providers for an 8 - month period. Data gathered through telephone interviews and electronic messaging with this group were used as a basis for constructing a second-stage mailed questionnaire which was sent to the market trial participants as well as 126 additional Canadian health professionals who were identified as users of online information systems. A response rate of 83% (n=124) was achieved and the data were used to prepare the group profile of early adopters of online information technology reported in this paper. Analysis of the nature and strength of the relationships between adoption behaviour and the various individual, contextual and perceived attitudinal variables measured is ongoing and will be reported in a subsequent paper.