The Biomedical and Life Sciences Collection

Online, animated, audio-visual lectures published by Henry Stewart Talks Ltd.

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Abstract

The Biomedical and Life Sciences Collection is a commercially produced online resource of specially prepared, seminar style, animated, audio-visual lectures accessed on subscription by academic institutions, research centres and pharmaceutical/biotech companies. The content of the collection and how it is used is described, and examples of the talks presented. The business model followed enables relatively high set-up and operational costs to be spread across multiple subscribers at a low charge per institution for unlimited use.

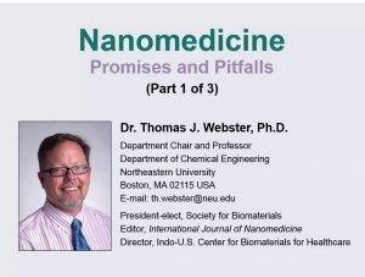
The Biomedical and Life Sciences Collection

The Biomedical and Life Science Collection (TBLSC) is an online resource of specially prepared, animated, online, audio-visual, seminar style talks by leading authorities published by a UK company, Henry Stewart Talks Ltd (HST). The talks are mainly organised into series supplemented by individual talks on topical issues. The talks are further classified by subject category e.g. Biochemistry and therapeutic area e.g. Neurosciences. A search function is provided to identify subject matter, editors, speakers and institutions. Currently the collection contains over 100 series and 2,000 talks with new series and talks published monthly. Each series has one or more editors with established reputations in the field while speakers are acknowledged experts. The collection can be accessed at:

http://hstalks.com/main/index_category.php?c=252

HST is part of the Henry Stewart Group which has almost forty years' experience in publishing peer-reviewed journals and the provision of continuing professional education. HST published its first talks in 2004.

Example of a talk in TBLSC



Nanomedicine: promises and pitfalls - part 1 of 3

Prof. Thomas Webster, Northeastern University, USA

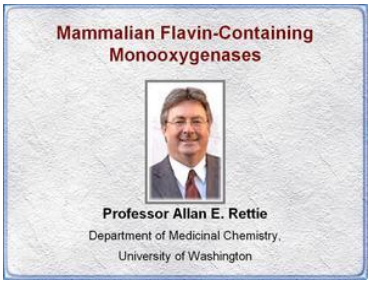
Each series may be likened to a multi-authored book prepared under the direction of one or more editors. Talks range in length depending on the subject matter and take the format of a 'synchronised voice over slides' with video inserts when appropriate. Each talk is presented with a summary of its contents, a list of slides and downloadable printouts to use when taking notes. Talk details also contain advice on how to cite the talk in published works together with the speaker's biography. The HST production department creates the animated slides based of speakers' suggestions and both edits and enhances the sound recording. The HST permissions department handles the task of obtaining copyright and other permissions. Options to include the talk narrative in English and foreign languages (Portuguese and Russian) was introduced in 2014. The average cost of producing each high quality talk exceeds $3,500.

Editors and speakers receive royalties based on the presence of their work in the collection. HST's business model is to make the collection available on annual subscription to universities, colleges, medical schools and pharmaceutical/biotech companies. Most talks are at a level suitable for active researchers, faculty teachers, and the most advanced undergraduates, with some introductory talks suitable for students at an earlier stage. The collection has been reviewed by 'Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries'[1] which concluded: "This database would be a good fit for universities with a heavy medical focus and for medical libraries. **Summing Up:** Recommended. Upper-level undergraduates through professionals/practitioners." A listing of 1,000 testimonials may be viewed at http://hstalks.com/dl/brochure/1000_Recs_on_The_Biomedical_and_Life_Sciences_Collection.pdf.

A small sample of talks in TBLSC

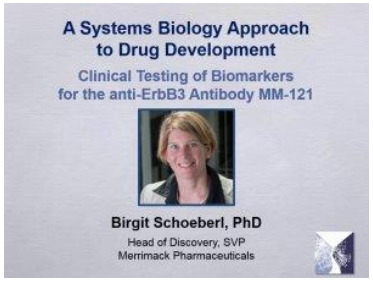
MAPK signalling regulation and cancer: lessons from fission yeast

Prof. Reiko Sugiura, Kinki University, Japan



Mammalian flavin-containing monooxygenases

Prof. Allan Rettie, University of Washington, Seattle, USA



A systems biology approach to drug development

Dr. Birgit Schoeberl, Merrimack Pharmaceuticals, USA

Pathways regulating bone resorption

Prof. Tim Arnett, University College London, UK

Standard pricing for unlimited usage at an academic institution with on and off campus access on desktops and a range of mobile devices is $9,975 per year. HST seeks to hold its charges year to year meeting increased costs through the expansion of its subscriber community.

TBLSC is a commercial venture which does not receive grants and is not reliant on external funding. Marketing is by direct introduction to potential subscribing institutions which usually take advantage of a free trial before subscribing. Institutions in over 59 countries hold current subscriptions and HST offers access without charge to universities and colleges in sub-Saharan Africa outside South Africa in a programme which is, in part, supported by some editors and authors donating the royalties they would otherwise receive. Additional services that are provided by HST include MARC records for librarians and a wide range of content listings for incorporation in the discovery services accessed by libraries as well as banners, posters, email templates and other material for librarians and others to promote awareness of the collection throughout their institutions. HST also provides a free consultancy service available to faculty at subscribing institutions identifying talks suitable for inclusion in existing and planned courses.

HST has a formal three year talk review policy in which editors and speakers are approached and asked to declare whether series and individual talks should remain in the collection without change, be updated by revising slides and/or the commentary or withdrawn. If the

speaker agrees a talk that is withdrawn is placed in an accessible 'archive'. It is anticipated that this archive may, over time, become a repository for a number of historically important lectures. Already there have been requests for permission to play talks at remembrance services for departed speakers.

In addition to the series and topical talks complete course modules are prepared e.g. Genetic Basis of Neurological Disorders (http://hstalks.com/main/landing_neuro.php) and Agricultural Genetics. Supporting the audio-visual lectures additional learning material is available to faculty teachers with: resources for workshops, journal clubs, projects and seminars as well as multiple choice questions and answers, end of course exam questions and model answers and recommended additional reading (research papers, review articles and book chapters). All the lectures and additional material can be included in Moodle, Blackboard and other online learning environments. Drag and drop, cut and paste and other embedding options enable the talks to be included in many different formats including digital notes and workbooks kept by students. This facility extends to defined sections of talks as well as to the talk in its entirety.

Experience of use

Based upon feedback from researchers, teachers and students the uses made of the collection are much as expected. They include: to embed in advanced level courses and to set as supplemental learning material, to fulfil a similar purpose as inviting guest speakers to deliver talks, to quickly access talks by leading experts as and when required, to keep abreast of developments in a subject area, to rapidly immerse oneself in a new subject area, to create and support courses for a few or even a single student, as continuing professional education (accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education in the USA and the Royal College of Physicians of the United Kingdom) and to enable scientists in industry to more easily access seminar style talks by leading academic researchers and vice versa without the need to rely on infrequent, time consuming and expensive attendance at conferences. This application has proved valuable to PhD students and post-doctoral researchers for whom the opportunity to attend international conferences is limited.

The talks have proved suitable in flipped learning classrooms and blended learning programmes. They have also enabled the most committed undergraduates to pursue their interests in particular subjects beyond the confines of courses they are following. Graduate students have, in many cases, been able to 'attend' both lectures by researchers, including Nobel Laureates, who undertook work fundamental to the projects they are currently pursuing and talks on the latest thinking and developments in those fields by leading, currently research-active, practitioners. The greatest limiting factor on use has proved to be 'awareness'. Online audio-visual lectures are a relatively new development and specially prepared presentations, as distinct from recordings of live presentations, even more so. It is therefore important that libraries and digital resource providers in institutions ensure that

the existence of resources such as TBLSC is well known to faculty, research staff and students.

Summary

This paper has described The Biomedical and Life Sciences Collection of online audio-visual lectures, the manner in which they are made available and used by researchers and faculty teachers at universities, colleges, medical schools and pharmaceutical/biotech companies under a subscription model.

Extensive, high quality digital resources are expensive to produce but can make a wider range of specialist expertise available than it is possible for any single institution on its own to provide. They can meet the needs of large communities, small groups and even individuals with diverse interests. Meeting these objectives is only possible if the cost is shared across the user community. The subscription model is a means by which the load can be shared.

1) Review by Sheffield KM, Clemson University; June 2014, Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries.