

Book Review

Informatics and Nursing: Opportunities and Challenges, 4th edition

By Jeanne Sewell and Linda Thede
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Reviewed by June Kaminski

“What is informatics? Isn’t it just about computers? Taking care of patients is nursing’s primary concern, not thinking about computers!” These opening lines of chapter 1 set the stage for a practical and comprehensive journey through the ever-evolving field of informatics in health care. Right from the start, the context of this book is firmly situated in the real world of nursing practice. This is the kind of book that should be required reading on every nursing unit, in preparation for imminent system implementation and to cultivate a culture of inquiry and exploration into the possibilities introduced by informatics.

As expected, the book begins with a definition and overview of informatics, asserting that it is more to do with information management than with computers. Since nursing practice revolves around information management, in every task that nurses undertake and in every encounter they experience, informatics is a natural fit for every nurse, in every practice setting. The authors present informatics through a three-pronged lens: information management, computer competency, and information literacy. Using these perspectives, they make a convincing argument for how naturally information technology fits into the day-to-day activities of professional nursing. A comprehensive history of the evolution of computers and informatics theory and practice is also framed within these perspectives, followed by an overview of common software, including operating systems and group and networking programs. Subsequent chapters focus on computer components and software frequently used in professional and personal lives, including word processing and network programs.

The book is organized into 25 chapters presented within seven units. Unit III focuses on information literacy, walking nurses through the basics of accessing information through electronic means: specifically, the Internet, digital libraries, and mobile technology such as smartphones,

PDA's (personal digital assistants), and tablets. Units IV through VI delve into the way that health care is evolving, with a strong focus on information technology use in a variety of settings and processes. Topics range from the empowered consumer who accesses health information through information technology to the use of electronic health records and computerized medication administration systems. The final unit, VII, covers the use of informatics in education, administration, and research, concluding with a chapter on the legal and ethical issues of using technology in health care. Each chapter conveys the message that informatics supports nursing, wherever it is applied.

The print version of the book is bound in a compact way, with standard page size and flexible soft cover, making it easy to carry and to read. The online version, available from the publisher through thePoint, is presented in an aesthetically pleasing way, closely replicating the graphically attractive layout of the print version. This format makes for a significantly enhanced reading experience compared to plain-text-on-white-background e-texts. Either version will serve as a practical resource for both practising nurses and nursing students. Online student and instructor resources offer a variety of supplemental information, including relevant articles in pdf format, PowerPoint presentations, test-generator questions, objectives, illustrations, and teaching strategies.

To conclude, *Informatics and Nursing: Opportunities and Challenges* is a highly recommended book. The authors, both nursing informatics experts, offer a seasoned and encouraging approach to applying informatics to professional nursing as well as to nurses' personal lives. They provide a realistic view of the benefits and pitfalls associated with using computer equipment and electronic information in health-care settings. They do so by threading the essence of information management and literacy through each of the chapters. The result is a very usable and valuable book for both nursing practice and education.

June Kaminski, RN, MSN, is Program Coordinator, BSN post-baccalaureate program, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, and a PhD candidate in Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.

