

Interview with DocLife's Vijay Paul

Sep 11, 2015 | 0



| [education](#), [Medical education](#), [ontheblogs](#)

Author: Vijay Paul

How did DocLife start? Tell us a bit about your team

DocLife was founded by 3 doctors, colleagues and friends. I suppose we can't talk about DocLife without talking about our team. The three of us, Puminda, Nish and I (Vijay) started working together in Bankstown Hospital. Puminda and Nish knew each other from med school days and I met them in Bankstown during internship. We all had different backgrounds but you know, we've all been there, in med school, at work (internship, residency, specialty training) needing resources, wanting to find different useful things. Like oh I need to cram for my anatomy final, where are some good images and notes? Or I start my Orthopaedic term in 2 weeks, wouldn't it be nice to look at 50 distal radius fractures and 100 NOFs just to familiarise. Plus we were children of the social media and internet generation and digital learning is the norm. So when we met, we hit it off and talked about various projects we could do outside of just clinical practice. And one day, in late August 2013, it was just one of those things that happen when you are talking about random stuff and this idea takes hold and then you find yourself pouring hours, blood, sweat and tears while it just takes on a life of its own. We were just a small team, the 3 of us, but we decided quite early on that a good social media person was essential for a website, especially one that focuses on community and networking. That's when we met Fiona Dixon, social media guru, mother of 4 and generally just crazy enough to follow through with us on this dream. She's non-medical but has intimate knowledge of the system as her daughter was a premie baby and Fiona started and maintained a blog with info and support for years. So we all make a good fit, a band of 4 for now and looking to expand soonish. DocLife is supposed to be THE medical hub. For every doctor, everywhere. And we want to connect every single doctor in the world together. A marriage of content (education) and networking. Some days we think we bit off more than we can chew (lol) but then you put another piece of the jigsaw in place and you find that inspiration.

Talk to us about DocLife

Well DocLife, is for now, a module based website. So we sat down and wrote out what do we want, ideally, in a medical website with resources. But now the boring type resource sites that exist out there, all text and no images, or general listings or old school kind of database query type site. Right off the bat, we went heavy with multimedia content. So we have image and video galleries. Image gallery is a no brainer for xrays, CTs, MRIs and others. Then we have videos, which really give you a lot of scope to put on resources about procedures, clinical skills interviews, examination techniques and even just lectures explaining concepts in video. Take the ECG tutorial series for instance, it's amazing. Then we have DocLife blog - which is a blog aggregator and a DocLife blogging tool rolled into one. We imagine that the community will upvote a popular blogger when we get big enough and we can have a vibrant blogging community. This sort of opportunity for students and doctors to share their thoughts, I think it's amazing. Imagine being able to reach out to a community of peers

just like that and have them comment on your ideas or thoughts. Then we have DocLife Events, which has had amazing feedback from our users. We've basically brought all the medical conferences into one calendar. Every conference around the world, in one place, so you can search, find and attend. For now, those are our resource modules. Then we thought about what would be great for networking. And that is why we made DocLife Groups and the Community module. DocLife Groups is a great module where you can create a private group of members, which can mirror study groups, PBL groups and in that forum you can discuss or upload stuff, share notes, images whatever. And you are automatically assigned to the global groups like Emergency medicine, Surgery, General Practice when you sign up. And the community module is a modified search module for members and hospitals and is built around a Google Maps platform. The dots are expanding, and it's going to be amazing. But as you can see, there are gaps, and that we acknowledge in our coming soon area. Those other modules aren't too far away and they are going to make DocLife a more complete place - we have Notespool, Publications, Bookshop, News, Forums, Recruitment. Our biggest problem at the moment is the lack of mobile responsiveness and we are working hard and fast in delivering the mobile friendly version and also a stand-alone app. So, exciting times ahead for us.

What is your community like, what do they tell you?

They are great you know. We have half and half at the moment, as members, I'll say of doctors and students, even though there are clearly more doctors around. And I think that's because students are very excited about new things around medicine and learning and community and generally students have been open and welcoming to these sorts of ideas. I suppose they are the younger generation and that certainly helps. We find a lot of doctors like us, but you know, you are so flat out with work and sometimes a little jaded with either over-information or overselling from lots of people demanding your time. We understand that ourselves and you certainly feel for them. So while everyone likes us, not all doctors join us, but the ones that do have been great and full of suggestions and criticisms and praise. We try to take all of it on board, certainly we have a huge revamp on the way, to make it way more interactive and user friendly. And we want to get to a place where everyone sees what an amazing thing we have going on, and wants to join. Look at facebook, slow uptake but now no one can live without it.

What does DocLife think about FOAMed

It's exciting isn't it? I mean, the learning part obviously, for students and doctors alike, but also the movement. Because it certainly is a movement now. We are such a global community now and a student is a teacher is a student. You share and consume both. In terms of blogs, notes, podcasts, videos, images etc etc. It's like open source coding and crowdfunding and things that exist as an ideal and as a community. I think Life in the Fast Lane is a real trail blazer of sorts. It's such a huge thing now and really, though I've never met Mike Cadogan, its quite genius isn't it? And here we are, continuing that tradition. And I'm so excited to be part of this space, to add to FOAMed, and for DocLife to take FOAMed even further, in new and exciting ways. Like Newton said, If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants.

What is next for DocLife?

We intend to give it everything we have. I think when you are passionate and excited about an idea and an ideal you owe it to yourself and the idea to make a good run of it. Nish and I going to take next year off to concentrate full time on DocLife and we are looking to put together a team. A small team of maybe 3 or 4 people (in addition to the 4 of us now) to do full time programming and designing and some people to do full time content contributions and we are all going to sit down and work day in day out to make DocLife as huge as we can. We are going to start by working on the up and coming modules I mentioned earlier, and more on the interactivity and user interface. And we are going to be providing high quality content and services to our community. We are going to be big on our community next year. DocLife plans to attend some educational events for students, conferences for doctors, and engage and modify as we go. 2016 will be a game changer.

Related Blogs

- [FOAM and the junior doctor \(Part 2\)](#)
- [FOAM and the junior doctor](#)

Tags: #DocLife,#FOAM,#medical education,#online resources,#resources