



A hypertext resource for self-directed learning

David G. King

Dept. of Anatomy & Dept. of Zoology, Southern Illinois University Carbondale



Introduction

SIU School of Medicine hosts an instructional website for introductory histology, characterized by extensively hyperlinked text and images to facilitate efficient self-directed learning.

You are invited to consider how similar resources could complement traditional media, especially in a problem-based curriculum.

This resource has been reviewed and listed by:



Background

Learning resources should be appropriate to the curriculum environment in which they are used.

Self-directed learners, when they first encounter an unfamiliar subject, may not appreciate the value – or even the existence – of introductory concepts and vocabulary.

But conventional media are seldom designed for use in a self-directed, problem-based curriculum.

Conventional media (e.g., textbooks) are designed for the context of traditional courses.

Textbooks introduce key concepts in a linear order, chapter by chapter.

Although an index can direct students to particular facts, students may also need structured guidance toward background needed to apprehend those facts.

Even internet resources commonly just reproduce conventional media (text chapters, lecture notes), without exploiting the advantages of hypertext.

Hypertext resources can offer intuitive nonlinear navigation of unfamiliar material.

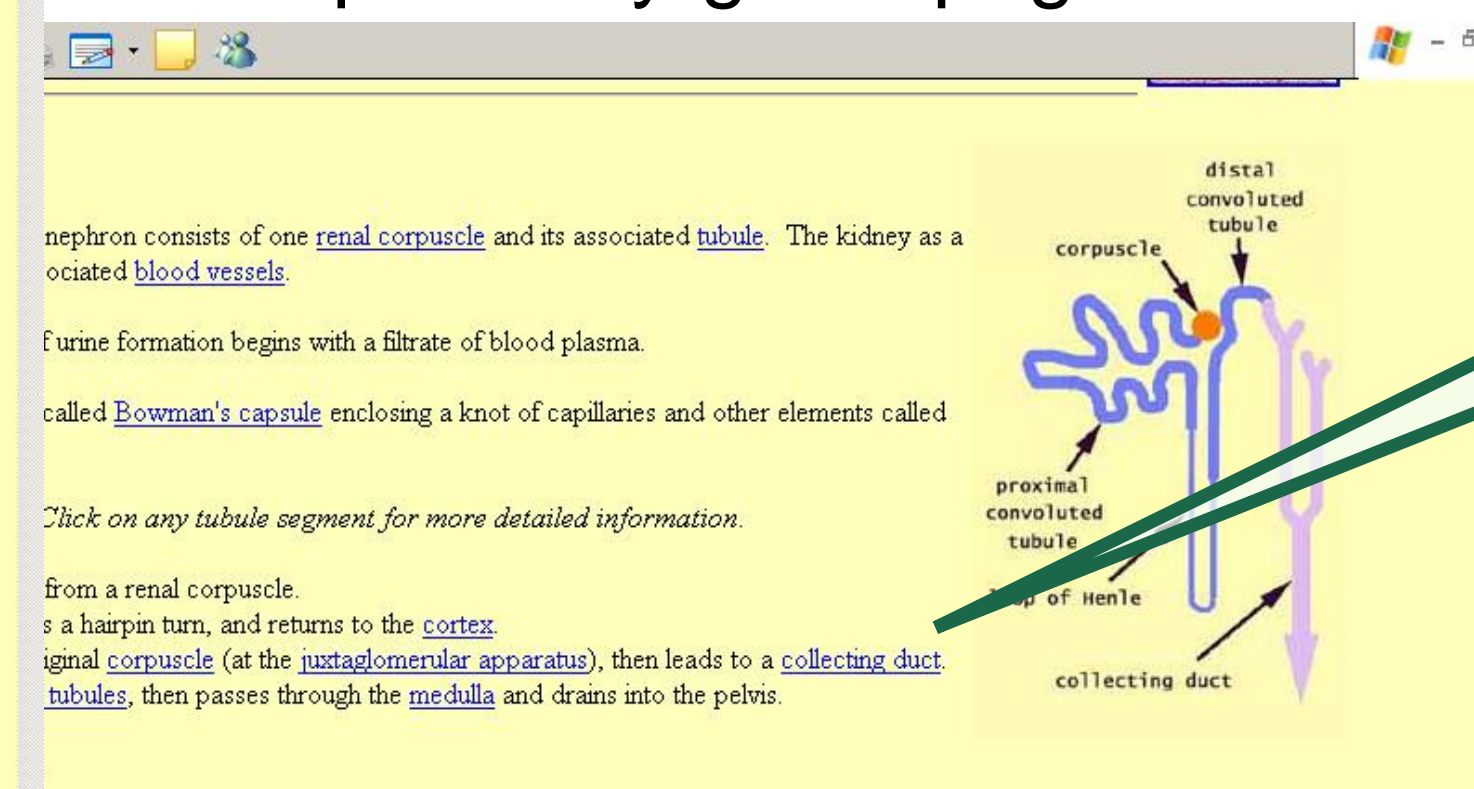
Hyperlinks can supply cross references from any particular content location to all associated supporting concepts, with frequent pointers back to basics.

Appropriately hyperlinked web-pages can emulate the guidance that a personal tutor might provide.

the home page



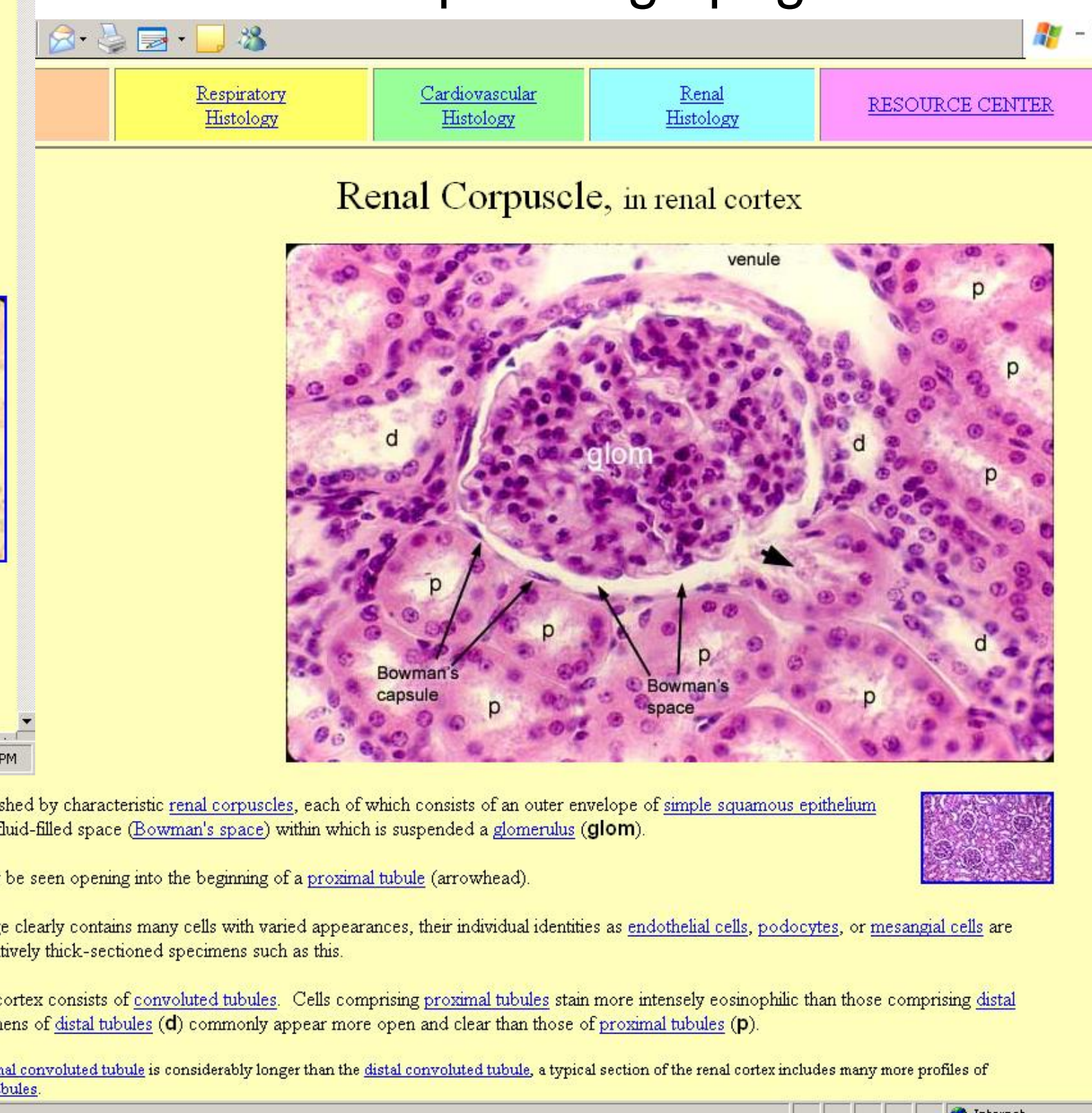
sample study-guide page



Questions? 
Contact dgking@siu.edu

Lots of links

sample image page



Lots more links

Thumbnail links to full-size images

Principal features

Guidance to introductory concepts is readily available from any point.

Most content-specific terms are active hyperlinks.

These abundant links offer easy access to background explanations as well as definitions and examples.

All topics are multiply interlinked.

On every page, a top menu links to several "hub" pages.

Every topic is accessible from any other via a minimal number of links.

Additional features

Content is essentially self-contained.

This site offers the scope of an introductory textbook, with about five hundred individual pages.

Effective use does not depend on consultation of traditional resources.

Built-in search engines provide efficient indexing.

Interactive self-assessment exercises are incorporated.

Content is enriched with links to appropriate external sites.

Website development

Simple formatting avoids expensive software development.

This website was created using only the most basic features of Dreamweaver™, with original micrographs adapted in Photoshop™.

Multiple small files are easier to manage than large files.

Small, single-topic pages can load quickly.

Multiple pages with hierarchical file organization facilitate addition and revision.

Nevertheless, ambitious websites involve substantial resource investment.

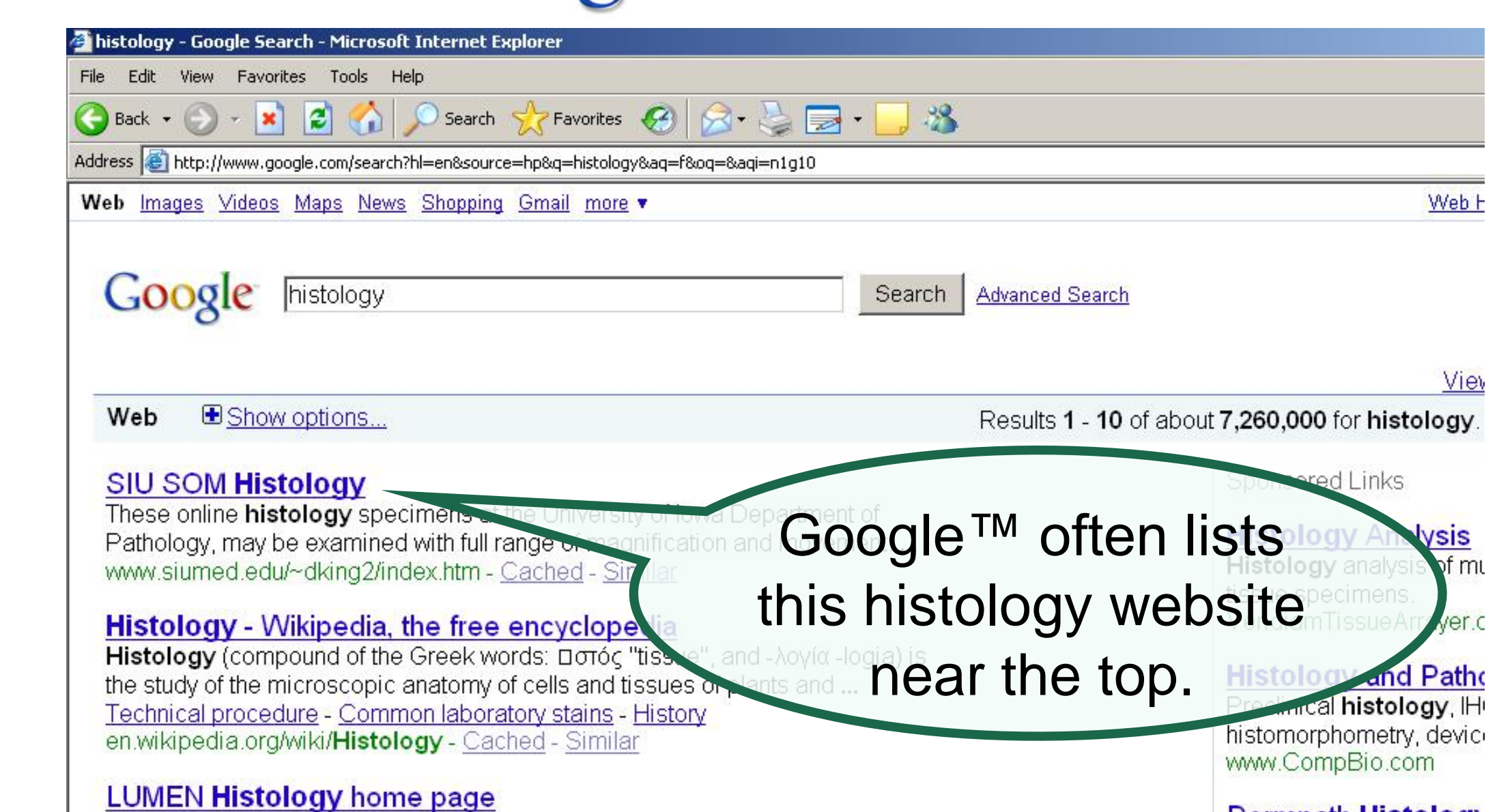
This resource, occupying about 0.3 GB of server memory, represents three years' development effort.

Hypertext adaptation of preexisting materials, such as handouts, should be relatively less time-intensive.

Visit this website:

<http://www.siumed.edu/~dking2/index.htm>

or just Google "histology".



Google™ often lists this histology website near the top.

User comments (unsolicited)

Your site was a godsend. . . I can tell you care about students.
medical student, Illinois

Your website has helped me tremendously! It is very coherent and well planned out. The links are fabulous.
student, Canada

After going through some sections of your website I realised how good the website really is. It has everything we need to know for our Histology exams and it's very easy to navigate as well.
medical student, Pakistan

. . . laid out beautifully. Absolutely superb!!!!
pathology resident, California

My \$90 Patho text book doesn't compare to your site... I have been to a lot of other anatomy / physiology sites on the web and yours simply "draws me in."
nursing student, Illinois

An amazingly comprehensive yet easy to understand website! Sure beats boring textbooks!
medical student, Canada

Your website is a wonderful resource.
epidemiology professor, Maryland

. . . such beautiful work that has made our learning a delight.
medical student, Canada

Probably the best resource I have yet come across this year in any subject.
medical student, SIU

Great histology reference for review.
pathology resident, Texas

An awesome site. . . I am charmed by the logical progression.
premed student

Great teaching material!
pathology instructor, Israel

I would like to congratulate you on your wonderful site. . . I am sure that students around the world appreciate it immensely.
medical student, South Africa