The Internet/Web is used in the following ways:

Communication:

Associates at my organization use Yahoo! Messenger and MSN Windows Messenger to communicate with each other informally. This is a less cumbersome tool than email when associates need to ask for assistance from their team leaders while they are on the phone with patients or health plan members. It alleviates the need to place the customer on hold to call the supervisor, and it also allows them to view their availability readily. Associates have been able to invite others into conversation where the immediate information is also pertinent to them. Leadership entities hold short meetings and conduct presentations with external clients using Microsoft Office Live Meeting (previously known as Placeware).

Learning and Teaching:

We use the Internet a great deal in our day-to-day training endeavors. When implementing our services in counties and states not previously serviced by us, instructional designers, trainers, the research team and other stakeholders use the Web to gather information from government sites to learn more about eligibility requirements, application processing, and restrictions regarding programs that can assist hospital patients. All non-classroom training is exported via the Web and can be accessed by learners onsite, as well as those at a distance.

Is the current use satisfactory to all parties/involved?

Most employees enjoy using these tools. The use that causes our Information Systems and Human Resources departments the most concern is the use of the instant message tools. Unlike email, there is nothing in place currently that allows for the recording of these informal conversations. That opens up a can of worms regarding possible violations of company policies (i.e. harassment, HIPAA, etc).

How will Internet use likely to change in the future? What will drive this change?

We are planning on incorporating a website for Learning and Development where associates can click to view course offerings, training humor, the training newsletter, and team information. There will be a link to message board where we will have educational update threads and associates can post discussions. The message board ideally will have a chat component.

As our staffing becomes more geographically diverse, we need these tools to communicate and train more effectively. Human Resources, IS and Learning and Development is driving the change.

I am very comfortable with the direction that we are headed in, but the speed leaves a lot to be desired. It is difficult for the “more tenured” leaders who learned via “baptism by fire” to understand why others cannot learn as effectively in the same manner. So much
of the time is being spent “selling” our ideas through proposals and internal marketing campaigns.