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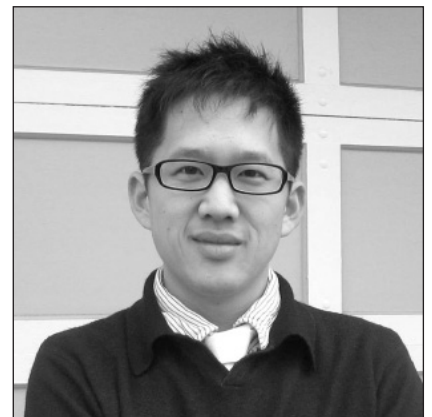
# In My Practice

## *Plugging In: Rolwing® on the Internet*

**By Matthew Hsu, Certified Rolfer™**

*Editor's Note: In this issue we profile two of the Rolfers who assist our community so much through their technical savvy. We owe them a big round of applause for keeping the Rolf Forum up and running and for birthing RolfBB and RolfHub.com.*

I credit my old 4.6-megahertz computer for my career in Rolwing. I started using a computer at the age of about six and remember the advent of the turbo button on the old tower computers. I remember when a good friend of mine got a 133mhz computer with a 56k modem, and we all clamored to spend an evening at his house playing strategy games using his amazing 8MB video card. I grew up with computers, learned to communicate on computers, became good at manipulating and understanding data with computers, and was basically crippled at the age of



twenty-one by flare-ups of debilitating hand, wrist, and elbow pain from the use of computers. In short, I sometimes really hate computers, and I sometimes really love computers, but I'm definitely comfortable working with them. So I was surprised when the word "blog" elicited so many blank stares at the 2008 annual meeting of the Rolf Institute® of Structural Integration (RISI).

Since then, I've spent more man-hours than I care to admit working with other Rolfers and the Ida P. Rolf Research Foundation to help remedy our lack of professional presence on the internet. There are, after all, entire generations growing up with iPhones in hand before puberty, and they aren't going to take the time to hunt down a brochure or book when they're curious about what we do. So I'd like to introduce three projects that are relevant to our entire community: RolfHub.com, the RolfBB, and the Ida P. Rolf Research Foundation's new website.

As a prospective client a few years ago, I found it incredibly hard to find any kind of useful information about Rolwing®. I could find only individual practitioner's pages explicating their own particular and sometimes poetic spins on Rolwing, and all I really wanted to know was how this Rolwing thing was going to help me in simple, no-frills, nuts-and-bolts fashion. If I hadn't eventually found a Rolfer who had a simple and straightforward website, I would've just moved right along. I am not an anti-poetic boor, but having spent four years in university close-reading British and German literature, and then spending time living and working in Japan, I value lean, pragmatic, and simple language over untranslatable, culture-specific ostentation (especially when explaining something new to someone!). I strongly believe that if we intend to reach more people, we need to be able to explain clearly, succinctly, and logically what Rolwing is and what it can do for potential clients (no matter where they are and what metaphors happen to suit their mother tongue).

Toward that end, longtime Rolfer Owen Marcus and I have combined our efforts to create RolfHub.com – your source for everything about Rolwing structural integration. We envision it as a place where prospective clients, clients, and practitioners are able to channel their energies so that questions, doubts, and concerns are met with the wisdom of a diverse group of

Rolfers, clients, and prospective clients – all without the sales pressure of an individual practitioner's website.

The site aims to be simple, concise, informative, and professional so that Rolwing becomes a more visible therapy. We've integrated a bulletin board aimed at clients and prospective clients so that there is a centralized place on the Internet where anyone can see unbiased and unfiltered Rolwing experiences. We hope that other Rolfers and their clients will join us in providing more content for the site as it grows, so if you fancy yourself a writer of some kind, please do get in touch.

The second project, the RolfBB, is related to the first. It's geared toward facilitating better communication between practitioners of Rolwing. As our visibility as a community grows, I believe we will need to be prepared to deal with the new challenges our clients bring us. Fix-it work is always challenging, and a great number of pathologies are bound to cross our paths. As a relatively new and shiny Rolfer, I've found the community on the Rolf Forum to be quite helpful in dealing with new client issues, but I find the email interaction to be loathsomely archaic (or gouge-out-my-eyes irritating). For those who actually need explanation, let me explain.

Email is for urgent and temporary things and is best for one-to-one interaction. It is akin to one of those old tin-can/wire phones that I'm led to believe children used to play with at some point in the twentieth century. You'd attach two cans with a string and pull it taut and then talk to each other through your functional (but low-fidelity) phones. You couldn't leave voicemail. Or text. I'm not sure what you could do with it. But if the other person wasn't on the other end, it

likely wasn't a fantastic experience, and too bad if you wanted an answer to a question you had already asked. You'd have to start throwing rocks at your friend's window (and hope he didn't throw rocks back). Now imagine having a group discussion with tin-can phones.

All this is to say that the email format is terrible for group discussions and is not useful as a standing reference for anyone who happens to miss the discussion when it happens. It often leads to over-charged exchanges because of the perceived/actual urgency (as topics rise and die rather quickly). The archives we have with the Rolf Forum are also woefully inadequate. As a result, the same discussions repeat every three months as if they hadn't ever happened before (and all with the same heated emotions).

The RolfBB is a big change. Interaction there need not be urgent to the point that it interrupts your work flow. You can schedule a set time every week to check in on topics of interest to you, rather than having a deluge of emails in your inbox to sort through every day. It is an Internet version of a real bulletin board except that it also operates as a searchable library. Messages are posted and can be viewed by others later on, and topics are also organized and automatically archived and made searchable. New topics get highlighted based on what an individual has already seen (new to you is not new to me if I'm on the BB every day and you're only there once a week). New responses are brought to your attention. Hyperlinks to other Internet sites as well as file-sharing capabilities are all there. If you find a resource online about arthritis, for example, you can share it there with everyone. Years down the line, when Joe Rolfer encounters someone with arthritis, he will be able to search for "arthritis" and find your resource and build upon your contribution (rather than simply rehash and rehash and rehash as is currently done via email). As an added bonus, it's all remote – meaning you can log in from anywhere on any computer and have access to everything without downloading anything to your computer. This is a huge boon to any of you who have experienced the tragedy of having a hard drive die. And, yes, it is free.

With Michael Vilain's gracious assistance, the Rolf BB now includes all the emails from 1996 to 2004, which means you can do a search on what was discussed over a decade ago and see what wisdom can be gleaned

**RolfHub:**  
<http://rolfhub.com>  
 The online source for everything about Rolwing structural integration.

**RolfBB:**  
<http://structuralintegration.info/rolfbb>  
 The meeting place for Rolfers and their crazy ideas.

**Ida P. Rolf Research Foundation:**  
<http://rolfresearchfoundation.org>  
 Charting the science of structural integration.

from even those who no longer participate on the Rolf Forum email list. The archives have already helped me several times in my practice and saved me from asking redundant questions. They've also given me some much-needed perspective on the ongoing issues within the community beyond the one-off emails that come in an occasional stream of debate.

Ultimately, the Rolf BB will help us all stand on each other's shoulders, rather than constantly clambering about around each other's hips. Plus, future RISI graduates born after 1980 (like myself) will be more grounded practitioners as they will have been spared the truly traumatic experience of being time-warped back into the technological dark ages of the mid 1990s.

Finally, the last project is the revamp of the Ida P. Rolf Research Foundation web site. The new site is up, and it's nice. I was asked to give some input into the development of the new site, and the Foundation took it and sprinted away. The new site is professional and informative and has a very easy donation-making process, which I invite you to try! Really. Take out your credit card, go to the site, click on "Donations" and see just how easy it really is. I'll wait. I know you want the field of structural integration to grow, so I'll give you the next five minutes.

Done? Okay. That about sums up the community Internet projects. If you'd like to get involved with any of them, please get in touch.

As for my private practice as a fledgling Rolfer, it has been growing reasonably well (in spite of the Great Depression Redux) thanks to a lot of focused semantic retooling on my web site, a lot of reading, the application of some tech tools to deal with scheduling, and a lot of experimentation with various business and marketing tactics. If you'd like a little more detail, head on over to the RolfBB and search for my posts. If you have any tips to give me, I'm always open to hearing them, though I'd prefer that you just post them to the RolfBB so everyone can benefit from them.

*Matt Hsu practices in San Francisco (and anywhere else that will have him). He believes technology is a finicky and abusive mistress but can't seem to break off the affair. In his free time he is on skates with a stick in hand, at the gym, on the floor with a book, or at the computer with sore wrists.*