

E-Quality Update

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Hot Topics

The Access Revolution is Over: The Hard Part is Building a New Health Care Civilization

By Susannah Fox

The online health revolution is over. We no longer need titles like “e-patients” or “health seekers” to describe who’s looking for health information online. We should call the people who are part of this widespread phenomenon what they are: people.

Now comes the hard part. The health care system must build a new civilization on this revolution. Patients are now partners in their own health care. They are invested; they are engaged; they are armed with information; and they are talking. Humans are instinctively social. Technology is helping to enable the human connection in health care, and the Internet is turning up the information network’s volume.

In the past, someone may have called a health professional, someone’s mom, or a good friend for health care advice. They now are also reading blogs, listening to podcasts, updating their social network profile, and posting comments. And many people, once they find health information online, talk with someone about it offline.

Right now, there are countless online communities made of real-live patients and caretakers sharing advice, support and accurate, helpful information about health care. They help each other quit smoking or sleep better; they post gluten-free cooking recipes; they offer tips on managing chemo’s side effects; and they share new pharmaceutical advancements. And, with mobile internet access exploding in the last few years, these conversations are often happening in real-time — in the grocery store, at work, at home, and everywhere in between.

What will happen when the untapped knowledge of every patient, of every caregiver, of everyone who has something of value to share actually has the opportunity to share it? That’s the next frontier. It is no longer about access. It’s about uploads. It’s about inputs. It’s about learning from each other. It’s time to change our frame of reference; all information — even health care information — has become [portable, personalized, and participatory](#).

You might worry about people giving each other medical advice. That’s got to be dangerous, right? So far, no. Of



KP Corner

Five Leading Health Systems Create New Care Connectivity Consortium

[Kaiser Permanente](#), the [Mayo Clinic](#), [Geisinger Health System](#), [Intermountain Healthcare](#), and [Group Health Cooperative](#) have joined together to securely share electronic health data while protecting patient confidentiality. View the press conference [here](#).

"Our five organizations share the common mission of improving health care in the United States, and our belief is that when doctors have real-time data about patients, care is better and more effective," said George Halvorson, chairman and chief executive officer of Kaiser Permanente.

Walking: The Best Path to Fitness and Health

Walking 30 minutes a day, five days a week is the first step toward better health. This simple, take-charge message comes from health advocate Kaiser Permanente, who announced [Every Body Walk!](#), a public awareness project aimed at starting a national conversation about the health benefits of walking.



Kaiser Permanente Opens Center for Total Health in Washington, D.C.

The [Center for Total Health](#) is an interactive learning destination where individuals can come together and talk about health. The Center serves as an educational event and conference center, with flexible spaces and a mock exam room to simulate a physician visit. The facility is also

internet users who go online for health reasons, [60 percent say they've been helped by health information found online](#), which is up from [31 percent in 2006](#) — just 3 percent say they've been harmed.

[Technology is not an end, but a means](#) to accelerate the pace of discovery, widen social networks, and sharpen the questions someone might ask when they do get to talk to a health professional. People are still often looking for, and linking to, authoritative source material. It's up to the experts to seed the online conversation with data, with science, with evidence.

The first page of the white paper "[E-Patients: how they can help heal health care](#)" published in 2007, contains a quote from Charles Safran, MD, President of the American Medical Informatics Association:

"[When patients] participate more actively in the process of medical care, we can create a new healthcare system with higher quality services, better outcomes, lower costs, fewer medical mistakes, and happier, healthier patients."

Each of us in the health care sphere has a marvelous opportunity to help build a new kind of online civilization, based on the human instinct to share with each other. The bottom line is that a good number of patents ([but not all](#)) are actively participating in the process of medical care.

The Internet widens a patient's neighborhood, expands their networks, and speeds up the pace of conversation. And people say they feel better because of it.

Susannah Fox is an associate director of the [Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project](#), a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization. Neither Ms. Fox nor the Pew Research Center endorse policy options, companies, or technologies.

Hot Off the Press

New National Coordinator for HIT Named

[Farzad Mostashari, MD](#), has been named National Coordinator for Health Information Technology. He replaces David Blumenthal, MD, who is returning to Harvard University after leading the office for the past two years.

HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius [appointed](#) Mostashari, who has served as the deputy national coordinator for the office since 2009. He previously worked at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene as assistant commissioner for the Primary Care Information Project.

Meaningful Use Spec Sheets Help to Sum Up Standards

[CMS posted online](#) a series of [24 specification "tip" sheets](#) to help users understand meaningful use standards. The one- to two-page guidance documents are summaries of each meaningful use measure and how CMS expects it to

equipped with technology to facilitate virtual conferences.

Computerworld Names Two Kaiser Permanente Leaders to Premier 100

International Data Group's [Computerworld](#) announces [Kaiser Permanente](#)'s Lisa Caplan, vice president and business information officer, care delivery, and Mike Brady, senior vice president, infrastructure management group, as [2011 Premier 100 IT Leader](#) honorees. This year's Premier 100 spotlights IT leaders from both the technology and business sides of companies for their exceptional technology leadership, innovative ideas, and well-executed IT strategies.

Kaiser Permanente Honored for Electronic Health Record Implementation

Kaiser Permanente continues to lead the nation in the number of Stage 7 Awards from the [Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society](#). The Stage 7 Award honors hospitals that have achieved the highest level of electronic health record implementation. In the last three years, Kaiser Permanente has received a total of [35 awards](#) in recognition of its health information technology expertise. The 11 additional awards were presented at the [HIMSS 2011 annual conference](#) in Orlando, Fla.

Phil Fasano Receives Health Information Technology Man of the Year Honor

[Phil Fasano](#), Kaiser Permanente executive vice president and chief information officer, was honored as a [Health Information Technology Man of the Year](#) as part of [Healthcare IT News'](#) second annual Health IT Men and Women Awards. Fasano also received an honorable mention in the "Enhancing Patient Care Through Health IT" category.

Research Roundup

Commonly Prescribed Osteoporosis Drug Associated with Very Low Risk of Serious Jaw Disease

[Researchers](#) from the [Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research](#) and [HealthPartners Research Foundation](#) have found a commonly prescribed osteoporosis drug is associated with a slightly elevated risk of developing the rare, but serious condition, osteonecrosis of the jaw. Nonetheless, the risk remains extremely low. The new paper, published in the [Journal of Dental Research](#), examined electronic medical records of 572,606 patients from 1995 to 2006.

Cancer 2.0

[Pew Internet's](#) research finds having a chronic disease

be defined and understood.

Study Shows Health IT Efforts Worthwhile

[Researchers](#) with the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology reviewed 154 studies about health IT and found that 92 percent were positive overall. [Government officials hope](#) this latest research, with its predominately positive results, will encourage more health care providers to adopt electronic systems.

Health IT Has Big Impact on Rural and Minority Communities

Rural and Native Americans, ethnic minorities in poor, urban communities, and Alaskan Natives often [suffer negative health outcomes](#) disproportionately due to a lack of access to various health IT tools, according to five research studies published in [Perspectives in Health Information Management](#).

Time Magazine: Googling Symptoms Helps Patients and Doctors

[Time columnist Zachary F. Meisel, MD, writes](#): “Whether the Internet is a useful or dangerous place to get health information is not a novel question. Information overload, biased sources, complicated jargon, conflicting recommendations, and stories that always seem to invoke nightmare scenarios are well-known [reasons](#) to be wary of Googling your symptoms. Yet there is no question that patients routinely benefit from going online before visiting the doctor.”

increases the probability that an Internet user will share what they know and learn from their peers. Two waves are crashing together – an increase in use of technology and an increase in chronic disease – and both are driving engagement in online health resources.

Global mHealth Developer Survey

According to a [study](#) released by global market research company, [research2guidance](#), mobile health care application developers say smartphone penetration is the main driver for the growth of the mobile health care market. Lack of standardization, regulation, and market transparency are the main barriers to mHealth.

Study: Caregivers Strong Adopters of Health IT

[Caregivers believe](#) personal health record tracking can help them keep track of a patient’s history, symptoms, medications, and test results, according to a [survey](#) from UnitedHealthcare and the [National Alliance for Caregiving](#). Seventy-seven percent of respondents rated personal health record tracking as very or somewhat helpful.

Health IT Happenings

- [The Institute for Healthcare Advancement's 10th Annual Health Literacy Conference](#)
May 4-6, 2011 | Irvine, Calif.
- [Patient Experience Summit](#)
May 22, 2011 | Cleveland, Ohio
- [HealthCampDC at the Kaiser Permanente Center for Total Health](#)
June 8, 2011 | Washington, D.C.

If you have an upcoming event you would like to see in our next newsletter, contact e-quality@kp.org

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