

# HEALTH IN THE DIGITAL SOCIETY DIGITAL SOCIETY FOR HEALTH

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 HIMSS Europe

## Empowering Citizens in the Digital Health Society

**The digital citizen: pessimism or being realistic?**

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## **History and time: are we being realistic about the change process we're in?**

How recently have we had a) the internet b) home computers for the majority of citizens c) the mobile phone and associated digital technology?

People can quickly learn to use simplified tools to communicate with, but how long will it take for us to understand what the cultural implications will be?

Is faster always better? What about technology enabled time-wasting?

Are we left with any time to think about what we're doing?

## **The current perspective:**

**there are many problems to be tackled: for example -**

- giving people data doesn't necessarily empower them
- the shiny toy – is your tech. genuinely innovative or does it simply reinforce the traditional paradigm?
- 'love your tech.' The problem of engagement and ownership. Why early end-user (clinicians also) engagement in product design really matters
- digital literacy is part of the learning – for citizens and professionals

## Barriers to Change: the Clinicians



Ironically, at a recent Conference on Mobile Health, Industry experts report that in their opinion, it is resistance from clinicians that is a major barrier to implementation of mHealth solutions

## Barriers to change: health literacy and communication skills



But learning to communicate and to listen effectively represents a two-way street: citizens aren't exempt! Indeed effective methods to increase the health literacy of the population represent a major challenge

**Barriers to  
Change:  
industry  
attitudes**



**"This really is an innovative approach, but I'm afraid we can't consider it. It's never been done before."**

## **The digital citizen: a few final thoughts**

Under the radar of conventional public health monitoring: how do we assess the impact of social media?

Social networks competing with orthodox organisations – ‘messy’ knowledge (cf. Christensen’s disruptive innovation – quality is lower, but its cheap and widely accessible and undermines traditional models)

Data protection is all about controlling change – people will sacrifice privacy for efficacy – they want to own their data and use it as they wish, for good or ill. Look what happened with alcohol and prohibition!

In health especially, digital tools can’t just be add-ons: we have to think in terms of digital *systems*. Ask yourself – is it happening?