

Understanding Development Methods from Other Industries to Improve the Design of Consumer Health Information Technology

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Target Population: General

Summary: Consumer health information technology (IT) products, such as those designed for information seeking, retrieval, storage, archiving, and health monitoring, can enhance the quality of health care by empowering consumers to play a more effective, collaborative role in their own care. However, despite the potential power of consumer health IT, health care consumers have been less eager to adopt technology than consumers in other industries. According to the literature, one potential reason for the slow adoption of consumer health IT products is simply the lack of robust commercially available tools that recognize the complexity and diversity of personal health information management (PHIM) practices. PHIM practices are influenced by a variety of user and contextual factors, including demographics, attitudes, the user's goals and objectives, and the range of tasks that the user wants to perform.

A project team of staff from Westat's Center for Health IT, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and the Center for Health Information and Decision Systems at the University of Maryland will build upon an earlier Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality-funded project, Personal Health Information Management and the Design of Consumer Health Information Technology. The current project will strive to identify methods to develop better-conceived and more widely used consumer health IT. To that end, the team will conduct an environmental scan and literature review to locate research, tools, methods, opinions, and other material that reveal how methods of other industries could be applied to the design of consumer health IT. The project team will convene a technical expert panel (TEP), comprised of leaders in proven product development approaches and methods, to generate insights and innovative ideas related to the design of consumer health IT. Lastly, the team will interview key informants with expertise in consumer product design in other industries, to provide additional perspectives that are likely generalizable to the design of consumer health IT.

The combination of the environmental scan, literature review, TEP, and key informant interviews will provide a better understanding of development methods from other industries and will inform a set of recommendations to guide consumer health IT vendors and developers in improving the future design of consumer health IT.

Project Objectives:

- Convene a TEP to bring together leaders in proven product development approaches and methods to generate insights and innovative ideas that are most likely to generalize to the design of consumer health IT. **(Ongoing)**

- Conduct an environmental scan and review of relevant grey literature to locate research, tools, methods, opinions, and other material that reveal how the methods of other industries could be applied to the design of consumer health IT. **(Ongoing)**
- Conduct key informant interviews to solicit innovative product development approaches that are likely to generalize to the design of consumer health IT. **(Upcoming)**
- Develop a set of recommendations to guide consumer health IT vendors and developers in the design of health IT tools. **(Upcoming)**

2010 Activities: The project began September 15, 2010. The primary focus of activity during the first quarter of the project was on administrative and personnel activities in order to rapidly initiate the project. The TEP members have been identified and the first expert panel meeting was held on November 10, 2010. The environmental scan is underway. Interview tools have also begun to be developed.

Preliminary Impact and Findings: The project team has identified some products to review and characteristics to highlight. The team has also identified design methods and draft criteria to describe them.

Strategic Goal: Develop and disseminate health IT evidence and evidence-based tools to support patient-centered care, the coordination of care across transitions in care settings, and the use of electronic exchange of health information to improve quality of care.

Business Goal: Knowledge Creation