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HEALTH DIGITIZATION & THE INTERNET OF THINGS: IMPACT ON NEXT GENERATION HUMAN HEALTH & WELL-BEING ON A GLOBAL SCALE

The last few decades have been marked with rapidly changing demographics, major destabilization of global economies, ongoing environmental disasters and other unpredictable events, such as the Fukushima accident, global climate change impacts, ongoing terrorist activities and warfare. These events emphasize a need for healthcare that is more cost-effective, affordable, timely, and most importantly, able to effectively coordinate efforts among different nations, disciplines and organizations. Traditionally, health service providers and healthcare workers are often regarded as key guardians of the health and well-being of global citizens, yet a need for community-relevant, self-administered healthcare services is now overwhelming, for the insured as well as the “non-insured”. In an era of low-cost smart technologies and wireless communication capabilities, many countries will now be looking for a new generation of well-trained and engaged users of these new and innovative e-health technologies. These users will include both the healthcare professionals and patients, as well as other end users in varying and unpredictable roles, such as community healthcare workers, family members, military and non-governmental organizations. These users, large in numbers and diverse in roles, will now require a certain level of knowledge and skills when working with these new e-health technologies, so that the possibility of delivering healthcare in an unstable context with large-scale effects. Referred to as e-health informatics competencies, they provide a significant advantage over wasteful, poorly coordinated and expensive conventional medical procedures, and hold the potential for leveling the playing fields in terms of delivering care where and when it may be most critically needed, especially for the underserved. Understanding the e-health informatics competency challenges and trends is therefore a critical step towards identifying the various roles that could or should be played to aid policymakers, vendors, and/or researchers in this age of the Internet of Things.

Biography

Joseph Tan formerly Wayne C Fox Chair of e-Business Innovation and currently, professor of eHealth Informatics, DeGroote School of Business, McMaster University, is the founding and ongoing editor-in-Chief, International Journal of Healthcare Information Systems & Informatics with a professional background that spans a broad spectrum of interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary research area. A lead investigator in redefining the frontiers of multidisciplinary Submissions and Health IT knowledge development, management and expansion, including active involvement in collaborative research and multidisciplinary joint-grant submissions. He has demonstrated skills and ability to serve in both academia and industry. He has also achieved recognized scholarship in teaching and learning with students' nominations for teaching excellence awards. His overall career focus is on reshaping the landscape of IS/IT applications and promotion in e-Health informatics through cross-disciplinary thinking/project partnering with diverse practitioners, clinicians, researchers, and a variety of user communities.

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