Managing eHealth
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MANAGING EHEALTH
From Vision to Reality
Managing eHealth
From Vision to Reality

A Tribute to Jean-Claude Healy

Edited by

Magdalene Rosenmöller
IESE Business School, Spain

Diane Whitehouse
The Castlegate Consultancy, Malton, UK

and

Petra Wilson
CEO, International Diabetes Federation, Brussels, Belgium
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Foreword

It is my great pleasure to introduce this inspiring “tour de table” on eHealth, written by leading experts in the field. Their multi-faceted views show the increasing relevance of eHealth and the changes it is already making to health promotion and the healthcare landscape. More important, the insights brought together here can help citizens, health professionals, information technology (IT) people and policy-makers to plot a future course for the full exploitation of eHealth in Europe.

This book comes at a very timely moment. European eHealth strategy is accelerating its speed: it is building on a good knowledge base and the considerable existing capacity for innovation in eHealth. Numerous initiatives now deal with how to translate remarkable technology advances into reality. They are really adding value to patients, professionals and healthcare systems by improving health and organisational outcomes, user satisfaction and, last but not least, the efficient use of resources.

In order to achieve this level of progress, an appropriate degree of policy support and the engagement of all actors, not least individual citizens, are essential.

With Horizon 2020, and its ambitious changes to European Union (EU) research and innovation, these two developments are now materialising. For example, the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing has been successful in bringing regional, and other, eHealth champions together to foster networking and an exchange of practical experience. The EU eHealth Action Plan, which is also looking ahead to 2020, focuses on making eHealth actually happen. It addresses some remaining challenges for eHealth, such as interoperability, deployment, digital skills and literacy, international co-operation and research and development.

Beyond that, the ongoing and future challenges must include big data, brain-related research, genetic developments, mobile health, nanotechnology, photonics and sensorial techniques, just to name a few. My own hope is that Horizon 2020 will focus on creating innovation in IT health tools, encouraging user-centred treatments and increasing the evidence available about eHealth’s positive impacts.

This book opens with a wonderful account of the beginnings of eHealth in Europe, and the way in which early leadership on European eHealth actions was undertaken by Jean-Claude Healy of the European Commission and World Health Organization. Professor Healy worked tirelessly on the realisation of the eHealth dream, which – with his prescience and energy – enabled us to get as far as we have today.
True to this spirit, the European Commission continues to play its role in advancing healthy and active ageing in Europe, supported by information and communication technologies. If all citizens join forces, we will realise the huge potential promised by eHealth, revolutionising health and care for Europeans in a wide range of different fields.

Robert Madelin
Director, Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (Connect)
European Commission
October 2013
Preface

A Tribute to Jean-Claude Healy, a visionary and founder of eHealth in Europe

Writing a tribute jointly from the perspectives of a daughter and a colleague is not easy. The role of a father in shaping the mind and spirit of a child is of course far more significant than his influence in professional life, and a collection of essays is not the place to reflect on the memories of a daughter. Yet the lasting impression of Jean-Claude Healy’s work in eHealth can perhaps be compared to the nurturing gifts of a father to a child. A father supports the early steps of an infant, teaches core vocabularies and provides guidance on fundamental values, which go on to shape the adult who will then live an independent life.

“When I was five years old”, reflects Claire-Marie Healy, “my father would bring me to the Museum of Modern Art in Saint-Etienne, France, where we used to live. We would look at the paintings together and play at guessing their titles. I was always coming out with suggestions closer to the artists’ choices. To his greatest surprise, the connection between the vision of the world of artists and the innocent eye of a five-year-old seemed more natural and evident than that of an adult. Jean-Claude never stopped experiencing this state of child-like wonder and curiosity – reflected well in the twinkle of his eye. Putting judgements and rules aside, this enabled him to come up with (sometimes) crazy but innovative ideas. Whatever the situation, you were always creating together more than one solution to your problem.”

With this collection of writings from friends and colleagues of Jean-Claude, the editors have sought to provide a small glimpse of the impact of that same sort of support, teaching and guidance that he gave to the discipline of eHealth.

It has been a huge honour to work on this book and to draw together these chapters. In the first part of the book, they seek to explore the development of eHealth policy; in the second part, to explore the impact of eHealth on the key players in healthcare; and, in the final section, to look at the way in which eHealth is now changing the provision of healthcare.

The purpose of this preface, however, is not to enter into the detail of this collection of papers, but rather to highlight some of the sentiments and emotions, which came to the fore as the authors and editors worked together.

If one were to draw out one word which was evoked by almost everyone who worked on this collection in recalling their memories of Jean-Claude, it is passion. Jean-Claude knew that passion was his driver, and firmly believed
that everyone should possess it. He even referred to passion as his stabiliser: he advised that everyone needed at least three commitments to be happy – their work, their family and friends and their inner passion. Jean-Claude's enthusiasm for eHealth was infectious; it fuelled many ideas and launched many careers.

One colleague, Diane Whitehouse, reminisced when working on this collection about how Jean-Claude's vigour translated into his daily work, remembering how he could not abide a bureaucratic mentality or laziness or lethargy about the status quo. She recalled how he sought constantly to bring the future into the present and was always able to capture huge ideas simply and graphically. As many of his colleagues from the European Commission will remember, those graphics were then often the guide for a new tranche of work as they re-grouped around an idea which resulted from a weekend spent by Jean-Claude at home with his family. Jean-Claude would emerge refreshed on a Monday morning, ready to take his team forward with the next eHealth conceptual model or set of actions.

That human passion and engagement is also fondly remembered by Joan Dzenowagis of the World Health Organization (WHO). She recalls: “working with JCH, as he used to sign his messages, brought home to me the power of the human network. Above all, he treasured people as the ultimate source of knowledge: the experiences, relationships, insights, spirit and expertise that are passed on and shared, person to person. This for him... was the magic of the connected world.”

That magical element is noted also by Denise Silber, who worked with Jean-Claude as a consultant on numerous occasions, in recalling that his vision and hard work, which did so much to give legitimacy and prominence to eHealth worldwide, was always delivered with a twinkle of the eye.

Similarly, Magda Rosenmöller evoked Jean-Claude's mix of vision, enthusiasm, hard work and sense of achievement that was so fundamental, not only for the eHealth world but also for all those who had the honour to enter his sphere of influence. Jean-Claude made plans for people’s future, putting forward curious – and apparently impossible – objectives. The fact that he believed in people reaching whatever future they put their mind to had the potential to pull them much further forward than they had originally thought possible.

The collection of essays and memories presented in this volume is therefore not only a chronicle of the key achievements accomplished that have paved the eHealth journey, but is also a testament to the abiding impact of Jean-Claude’s vision. This was perhaps crowned in 2005, at the Ministerial eHealth Conference, when Jean-Claude jumped to the podium with a big smile on his face exclaiming: “Habemus resolution”. What we had was his masterpiece: Resolution 58.28 of the World Health Assembly, 2005, adopted unanimously. It urged the WHO Member States to take initiatives to promote eHealth,
requested the WHO to promote international collaboration and provide more electronic information and technical support to its members.

As his colleague Ilias Iakovidis noted in 2008, the eHealth community lost a free thinker, a true optimist and a humanitarian who worked tirelessly towards a new era of eHealth in Europe and beyond. With this collection, however, we do not seek to dwell on our loss. Instead, we celebrate the growth of eHealth, as both an academic discipline and a practical reality, which has done so much to change the face of healthcare over the past 20 years.

To recall one of Jean-Claude’s own favourite quotations, we hope that this book will keep alive his passion and the twinkle in his eye, as he urged us all to be unreasonable in our demands of ourselves, whether he was speaking to us as a friend, colleague or father:

The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man.

George Bernard Shaw

Claire-Marie Healy and Petra Wilson,
29 November 2013
Acknowledgements

The idea for *Managing eHealth: From Vision to Reality* was born during a great eHealth gathering, the HIMSS World of Health IT, organised together with the EU Ministerial Conference in Barcelona 2010, where we discussed the idea with the editorial team and some of the contributing authors. Since then, numerous people have supported the initiative and helped to make this publication happen.

We are extremely grateful to all the authors for their personal engagement and the enthusiasm they bring to the eHealth arena and to this project. Together with their teams, they are involved in researching eHealth and healthcare, designing health policies, managing and providing healthcare, and/or representing some of the many eHealth related stakeholders. They took the time to provide their joint experience, insights and evidence and help to make this volume so valuable for the reader.

We would also like to recognize the invaluable contribution of a series of different people who have provided editorial support during the period the book project has been ongoing: Christiane Haberl in the initial stage, Wendy Wisbaum bringing the project close to the finishing line and Marta Ribeiro and Lucile Danglas from CRHIM (Centre for Research in Health Innovation Management at IESE Business School) for their tireless support and enthusiasm for finally getting this publication out.

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Notes on Contributors

**Albert Alonso** is a senior researcher at the Innovation Directorate, Hospital Clinic Barcelona. He holds a PhD in Medicine and a postgraduate degree on Management and Organisation of Information Systems. He has been a main contributor to the development of integrated care services at the Hospital Clinic and the area served by the hospital. At present, he is involved in Project Integrate that benchmarks existing approaches to integrated care models in Europe. He is vice-chair of the International Foundation for Integrated Care (IFIC), and a member and an active participant in the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing action group (B3) on Integrated Care.

**Jörg Artmann** is a research consultant with Empirica Communication and Technology Research in Bonn, Germany, where he is working on eHealth innovation projects, in particular on the formulation of ePrescription guidelines for cross-border interoperability and the monitoring of eHealth implementation progress across the EU. He holds an MSc in International Relations from the London School of Economics and the Institut d’Études Politiques de Paris.

**Birgit Beger** is the Secretary General of the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME). Holding law and political science degrees from the Freie Universität Berlin, she is a qualified registered lawyer with the Brussels and Berlin bar. In Brussels, she has been working for over ten years in Public Affairs and Law, inter alia with the European Parliament, a law firm and European non-governmental organisations in the field of human rights, social policy and professional policy.

**Niels Boye** is a physician and specialist in Internal Medicine and Endocrinology and is currently working as a consultant at a major Danish hospital with clinical and ICT supported care of chronic diseases. He has been participant, evaluator and reviewer in several EU projects in ICT for Health and Ambient Assisted living for more than a decade and served two years in the Ambient Assisted Living Joint Programme build-up phase at the Central Management Unit in Brussels.

**Célia Boyer** is the executive director of the Health On the Net Foundation (HON) – a non-profit and non-governmental organisation that promotes and guides the deployment of useful and reliable online health information, and its appropriate and efficient use. She is recognised as an expert in quality
assessment of medical information on the Internet, and has since 2000 taken part in several projects at both European and international levels. Her latest achievement is her participation as a workpackage leader in the European Commission funded project Khreshmoi (http://www.khresmoi.eu/). The project started in 2010 and aims to develop a multi-lingual, multi-modal search and access system for biomedical information and documents.

**Don Eugene Detmer** is Professor Emeritus and Professor of Medical Education in the Department of Public Health Sciences at the University of Virginia and Visiting Professor at CHIME, UCL. He is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Colleges of Medical Informatics, Surgeons and Sports Medicine. Don is past President and CEO of the American Medical Informatics Association. He is a recipient of the American College of Medical Informatics Morris Collen medal and the Walsh McDermott medal from the Institute of Medicine.

**Vanessa Díaz-Zuccarini** is a lecturer in bioengineering at University College London. She holds an MEng degree (University Simon Bolivar, Venezuela) and a PhD in Automatic Control and Industrial Informatics (Ecole Centrale de Lille, France). She started working for Imagine, S.A., a consulting and software developer company and was awarded a European Fellowship to work on the coupling of biologically oriented lumped parameter models as boundary conditions for 3D models of cardiovascular applications at the University of Sheffield. Vanessa is currently the Principal Investigator of several European Union, EPSRC and Royal Society grants. She won the UCL Consultants Award in 2012 for her work in the project “DISCIPULUS”, an initiative established by the European Commission in 2011 to set up a roadmap for the “digital patient”.

**Joan Dzenowagis** is an international health policy specialist with experience at the country, regional and global levels in public health, policy and strategy development. At the World Health Organization for over 15 years, she has held posts in disease surveillance, information technology strategy and research, as well as managing an international public–private partnership in information and communication technologies and health. Currently she is responsible for eHealth governance and Internet affairs. Her work covers global and regional developments in new technologies in the health sector, ranging from eHealth policy and ethics to health information on the Internet.

**Antoine Geissbühler** is Professor of Medicine, Chairman of the Department of Radiology and Medical Informatics at Geneva University, Director of the Division of eHealth and Telemedicine at Geneva University Hospitals. He is also President of the Health On the Net Foundation, the past president of the International Medical Informatics Association and Fellow of the American College of Medical Informatics.
Nick Goodwin is Co-Founder and CEO of the International Foundation for Integrated Care (IFIC), a not-for-profit membership-based foundation dedicated to improving the science knowledge and application of integrated care across the world (www.integratedcarefoundation.org). He is Editor-in-Chief of its scientific periodical, the International Journal of Integrated Care (www.ijic.org). Nick also works as a Senior Associate at The King’s Fund, London.

Avrille Hanzel is Senior Manager, mHealth Alliance, United Nations Foundation. Avrille brings over five years of experience in the non-profit sector to her role at the mHealth Alliance, where she provides overall management for strategic initiatives and internal operations of the Alliance. She has a diverse background in grant management, events and conferences, fundraising and project management support for in-country and global partnerships. Avrille holds a BA in Sociology and Anthropology from the University of Michigan.

Nicholas R. Hardiker is the Director of the ICN eHealth Programme and is Professor of Nursing and Health Informatics and the Associate Head (Research & Innovation) of the University of Salford School of Nursing, Midwifery & Social Work, UK. Nick has nearly 20 years’ experience of theoretical and applied research in eHealth.

Chelsea Hedquist is the Senior Communications Officer at the mHealth Alliance. Before joining the Alliance, she spent three years working for the WHO Regional Office for Europe, based in Copenhagen. She previously worked for a DC-based education advocacy group, as a publicist for the Sundance Film Festival and as a radio reporter/executive producer. She graduated from Stanford University and received her master’s degree in journalism from Columbia’s Graduate School of Journalism.

Ilias Iakovidis is Acting Head of Unit of Digital Social Platforms, DG Connect, at the European Commission. He holds a PhD in Applied Mathematics and undertook postdoctoral training in biomedical engineering. From 1993 to 2010, he contributed to the European Union’s research and policy developments as well as international co-operation in the eHealth domain. Currently, he leads the EU programmes on technological research and innovation in the areas of active and healthy ageing and integrated care. In 2001, he was elected fellow of the American College of Medical Informatics.

Tom Jones is Director, tinTree International eHealth Leadership and Development, South Africa; Director, TanJent Consultancy, UK; Senior Consultant, Strategy, Projects and Evaluation, Greenfield Management Solutions, South Africa. Tom developed the eHealth Impact tool based on cost benefit analysis, and specialises in eHealth economics and finance. He manages the tinTree Economic Evaluation Database. An accountant with a degree in psychology, he
is a member of the Royal Society of Medicine and the Royal African Society. He works in Europe and Africa.

Dipak Kalra is Clinical Professor of Health Informatics and Director of the Centre for Health Informatics and Multiprofessional Education (CHIME) at University College London. Dipak is President of the European Institute for Health Records (EuroRec), a Director of the openEHR Foundation, and a Fellow of the British Computer Society. He is a British Standards Institute representative to CEN and ISO on electronic health record interoperability, and a strategic advisor to the European Commission on semantic interoperability.

Zoi Kolitsi has been involved in clinical work and research in the field of medical physics and biomedical engineering for 17 years. She is currently an affiliate member of the Information Security Lab of AUTH. She contributes to national eHealth through posts with the relevant health authorities and major EU co-operation initiatives including epSOS, eHGI and eSENS. She has led the CALLIOPE Thematic Network and also chairs the national Sectoral Standardization Committee for eHealth. Zoi holds a PhD in Medical Physics.

Ada Kwan is a consultant for the mHealth Alliance and a researcher in the Division of Health Economics at the Mexico National Institute of Public Health. Her research experience and interests are in multi-country economic, impact and efficiency evaluations primarily for HIV/AIDS interventions and pay-for-performance schemes in Africa. She has additionally contributed to research and policy work on the benefits of leveraging information and communication technologies to improve health. She obtained her MHS degree in International Health from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and her BSc degree in Neuroscience from the University of Michigan.

Patricia Mechael is the Executive Director of the mHealth Alliance, which is hosted by the United Nations Foundation, as well as a faculty member at the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs and Earth Institute. She has been actively involved in the field of International Health for 15 years with field experience in over 30 countries primarily in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. She has worked on research, programme design and implementation, strategic planning and policy development for mHealth and eHealth initiatives as well as Reproductive Health and Women’s Health and Rights. Prior to joining the mHealth Alliance, she was Director of Strategic Application of Mobile Technology for Public Health and Development at the Center for Global Health and Economic Development at the Earth Institute.

Josep M. Piqué has been a physician and investigator in the field of digestive diseases, acting as Chief of Gastroenterology Service at Hospital Clinic Barcelona for 10 years. He has published over 300 papers and has acted as
member of Research and Telemedicine Committee in The World Gastroenterology Organization. Since 2005, he has been involved in healthcare management at Hospital Clinic Barcelona, where he was appointed CEO in March 2011. He has been involved in a profound transformation of the Hospital Clinic’s organisation, orienting it to improve healthcare process management, and research and innovation. He is also currently the president of MIHealth Forum of Fira Barcelona, and a member of the Board of Trustees of Biocat.

**Mayoni Ranasinghe** worked in multiple disciplines including paediatrics and sexual health in Sri Lanka for over five years before moving to Geneva, Switzerland, where she joined the Health On the Net Foundation (HON). She has a Master’s in Public Health from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. She currently resides in Toronto, Canada, where she continues to work for the HON.

**Jean Roberts** is Director (Standards) of the UK Council for Health Informatics Professions (UKCHIP) and a member of EU eHealth Stakeholder Group. She is an international health informatician with extensive multi-faceted experience in management of complex programmes and projects, in informatics and e-health business areas. She has worked in operational healthcare, commercial solution providers and consultancy, and in academia over her career. She has been active internationally in health informatics since 1974, being involved in the inaugural UK Current Perspectives in Health Computing event, the initial Medical Informatics Europe congress and chaired the global MEDINFO 2001 congress. She was also the first ever local NHS District Computer Services Officer in the UK. Jean obtained her first degree in Computer Science in 1971 and a doctorate in Health Informatics (2005) with a subsequent Post-graduate Certificate in Research Supervision (2008).

**Magdalene Rosenmöller** is Professor of IESE’s Operations Management Department, University of Navarra, Spain. A German by nationality, she holds an MD (University Louis Pasteur, France), a PhD in Health Policy (University of London, UK) and an MBA from IESE Business School. Her main areas of expertise are health management, managing information technology and innovation in healthcare, European health and research policies and global health issues.

**Niels Rossing** is an MD affiliated with MedCom, the Danish Health Data Net. Niels was chief physician at the Copenhagen University Hospital until 1988 and was also a consultant on national hospital planning. Serving the European Commission from 1988 to 1994, he was in charge of the AIM (Advanced Informatics in Medicine) research and development programme. Following this, he was CIO of the Copenhagen hospitals until his retirement in 2002. In 1994, he became Honorary Fellow of the European Federation of Medical
Informatics. In 2010, he received the HIMSS Europe Award for leadership in eHealth.

**Denise Silber** is President of Basil Strategies digital health consultants and organizers of the *Doctors 2.0 & You* conference series in Paris. An international healthcare social media influencer, Denise pursues her mission to improve conditions for patients thanks to digital health through consulting, events, public speaking and writing. Denise is a graduate of Smith College and Harvard Business School.

**Veli Stroetmann** is a senior research fellow with empirica Communication and Technology Research in Bonn, Germany. She obtained an MD from the Academy for Medical Sciences in Sofia, Bulgaria, as well as a PhD in Medical Informatics. She is project co-ordinator or principal investigator for European Commission initiated studies on eHealth policies, strategies, validation and impact assessment of eHealth applications. She leads work on business modelling in a European Union Network of Excellence on semantic interoperability. She is an evaluator and consultant on various topics including comparative effectiveness research, cross-border interoperability, uptake and sustainability of integrated care for people with chronic conditions.

**Mats Sundgren** is Principal Scientist in Biometric & Information Sciences in AstraZeneca R&D. He has more than 26 years’ experience in the pharmaceutical industry (in discovery, development, marketing and patents). He is currently working within the area of R&D strategy focusing on implementing strategies for bridging Health Information Technology with clinical research. He is Co-ordinator for the ongoing EHR4CR project as part of the IMI programme. He is a Senior Research Fellow at Chalmers University of Technology & IT University of Gothenburg, Sweden, in areas of Innovation Management, Medical Informatics and eHealth, and a member of the evaluation board for VINNOVA (the Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems).

**Rainer Thiel** is Senior Research Consultant with empirica Communication and Technology Research in Bonn, Germany. He holds a PhD in Political Science from the Free University Berlin. He leads the research on clinical and socio-economic impact as well as technology assessment in many Virtual Physiological Human projects. He is also responsible for eHealth and Digital Patient business and exploitation planning as well as public policy and political health systems research. He has been designing assessment frameworks for the application to innovative and disruptive health technologies and ICT infrastructures.

**Michèlè Thonnet** works for the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, in Paris, France. She is a neuropharmacologist, with a PhD, and also graduated in applied mathematics and medical informatics, political science and public
law from the Industrial Strategies Institute. Michèle is a health strategist with more than 20 years’ experience and the author of over 190 papers. She contributes to eHealth strategy and policy developments at both national and EU levels. Currently she is a member of the strategic committee of the health technologies national network, and is the official representative of France, actively involved in European projects (such as CALLIOPE, epSOS, eHealth Innovation, SemanticHealthNet and e-SENS), as well as in international committees (OECD, HON). She leads the European Interoperability Roadmap of the eHealth Governance Initiative and is a member of the eHealth Network.

Diane Whitehouse is a founding partner of The Castlegate Consultancy, which specialises in research, policy and deployment in eHealth. She previously worked in the European Commission’s DG Connect in these same areas of expertise. Her career has spanned action research, academic research/teaching, civic and human rights, policy formation and publishing. Her academic background covered information systems, organisational theory and behaviour and political science.

Michael Wilks is Forensic Physician, having worked previously as a general practitioner. He chaired the British Medical Association’s Medical Ethics Committee for nine years, and was a chief officer of the BMA for three years. He was President of the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME) from 2008 to 2009: during his presidency, the CPME became – and continues to be – deeply involved in eHealth. Michael has been a member of the Executive Committee of the European eHealth Governance Initiative since its inception, taking the lead especially on issues of trust and acceptability for users of eHealth applications.

Petra Wilson is Chief Executive Officer of the International Diabetes Federation. She has a PhD in Public Health Law from Oxford University, UK, and over 20 years’ experience in the eHealth sector as senior director in Cisco’s Connected Health team, and previously as European Director of the European Health Management Association. She has also worked for the European Commission in its eHealth unit. Originally trained in law, Petra spent several years as a lecturer at Nottingham University, UK, specialising in healthcare law.