Chapter 30

Ubiquitous Information Therapy Service through Social Networking Libraries:
An Operational Web 2.0 Service Model

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ABSTRACT

This chapter introduces a model for Information Therapy service through social networks. It discusses how health care providers including physicians, medical specialist and residents can prescribe reliable, evidence based health information to the patients in web 2.0 environment. How evidence based health information incorporated into freely available health information sources? How health information is disseminated to general public through collaboration of health information professional and health care professionals? How health literacy can be improved through social networking health information? And, how user driven health information is disseminated through web 2.0? Recent advances in Information and Communication Technology especially social applications of web 2.0 have given new possibilities and abilities to librarians in rendering better, faster and ubiquitous information services. At the same time, it has created an equivalent right to information for patients/care givers and health providers. Nowadays, the importance of availability and accessibility of health information in healthcare system is realized and emphasized by healthcare providers, policy makers as well as consumers. Provision of reliable, timely, evidence based, right health information to patients/caregivers/consumers in the course of Information Therapy is a necessity for National Health Systems in all countries. This chapter deals with the definition of Information Therapy, importance of information therapy, changes in the preference of information users on how to access right information, Web 2.0, application of Web 2.0 in rendering Information Therapy Service, and a proposal model for Information Therapy service through Web 2.0.

INTRODUCTION

Recent developments in applications of Web 2.0, social networking and mobile computer technology have created radical change in communication in any sector and field. Web 2.0 tools are used in health and medicine to provide rapid and ubiquitous services for health care consumers and health care providers. Web 2.0 applications have influenced most of today's professions and reshaped their practice, direction and relationships. Medicine 2.0, health 2.0 and library 2.0 are instances of application of web 2.0 tools in practice of medicine, healthcare and library services.

The clear fact is that in none of the new born facets of medicine, healthcare and library built in 2.0 environments, the philosophy and the nature of medicine, healthcare and library are changed. Web 2.0 makes services more social, democratized, connected, available, transparent, interactive and user-centered.

In conventional medicine, physicians always are at the top of pyramid, from which knowledge and practice flow to the patients. They diagnose, they give treatment, information and instruction to patients, and patient should only do whatever is prescribed. In other words, conventional medicine was physician centered and patients were known as passive segments in health care systems rather than active partners.

In the same track, with one way traffic approach, the library's rules and regulations are rigid. Human knowledge and information are organized with controlled vocabularies (pre/post coordination) like MeSh (Medical Subject Headings) that gives some key terms to user to retrieve the information or access the library's material. In other word, in order to access information a user have to think (set his mind) in a way that librarians have already thought and organized the information in that order. In the traditional library and information service, particularly in developing countries, librarians/information pro-

fessionals, play a passive role rather than active in information services.

One of the most substantial achievements of Web 2.0 is that the relationship of the segments in the Web 2.0 based environments is, being two-way/interactive, virtual/remote rather than being in physical contact. Flow of service, knowledge and information is free, transparent, integrated, shared, more democratized, unbiased, participated and more interacted, rather than paternal relationship. It is the right platform for patient centered medicine and user centered library service.

In the course of patient-centered medicine the emerging Information Therapy approach requires a more accessible, rapid, easy, free from commercial bias, transparent, everywhere and every time available, right and timely health information at the moment of care for both patients and physicians to ensure a risk free and shared/right decision making about health problem.

"The challenge is to ensure that everyone in the world can have access to clean, clear knowledge - a basic human right, and a public health need as important as access to clean, clear water, and much more easily achievable." (Pang 2006)

Today, 1.3 billion people lack access to basic health care services. And many more are at risk of receiving poor quality care. A major contributing factor is lack of access to relevant, reliable healthcare information. (HIFA2015, 2008)

To make correct and clear information available for patients and public, librarians prove to have a pivotal and indispensible role to play. Medical/Clinical Librarians, Subject Specialist Librarians in academic, public, medical and health libraries providing information and evidence for physicians and patients through conventional library service(Davidoff and Florance, 2000; William and Zipperer, 2003; Feldman 2003; Weightman 2005), SDI and in some cases through new born Library 2.0 services like library's wiki, Blog,

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