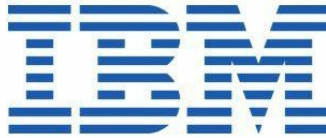## IBM Buys Merge Healthcare

IBM has agreed to buy Merge Healthcare Inc. in a cash deal expected to give the medical imaging company an equity value of approximately $700 million. The deal is expected to close sometime this year, subject to regulatory approval.

Merge Healthcare provides medical image handling and processing services to clinical research institutes, pharmaceutical companies and health-care sites. With this new partnership, IBM will now be able to utilise the client base of Merge and use Watson's health platform which it launched in April, to view historical images, electronic health records and data from wearable devices. The ultimate goal is to provide more personalised approaches in diagnosis and monitoring in radiology, cardiology and orthopaedics and to increase the handling of health related data.

IBM has already unveiled three other partnerships this year - with Apple Inc, Johnson & Johnson and Medtronic Inc. and has also acquired two medical data software companies. These steps are in line with IBM's evolving strategy to pool and analyse data from other companies and to use its experience in data processing and apply it in healthcare. Watson Health is engaged in analysing both scrambled and aggregated patient data to facilitate the provision of individualised healthcare and work towards improving outcomes and cost-reduction.

IBM expansion in the healthcare IT sector continues with this new partnership as this deal is its third major

health-related acquisition since Watson Health unit. "Organically, we will continue to build and invest from a research perspective in core technologies," said Stephen Gold, vice president, IBM Watson.

The new acquisition will enable IBM to gain access to 7500 U.S. healthcare sites and will help physicians and researchers collate and analyse data including medical records, family history, clinical data, research, trials and outcomes. Source: Wall Street Journal, Yahoo Finance

Image Credit: Wikimedia Commons

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