

Your healing is complete. You may now unplug the doctor

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A couple of weeks ago I dropped my phone on a scorching pile of sand as one does when trying to manoeuvre a small niece (toys included), an extra-large beach tote, fishing gear, keys, lunch, water and coffee. Naturally, I grabbed the phone while fighting off a panic attack because the coffee fell right on top. Praying in several religions and dimensions, I exhaled when the screen still worked and freaked out when it read:

“Quiet your mind. Relax your body. Be in the moment.”

It turns out I tapped on a “mindfulness” health app. In all honesty, I never knew I had one on my phone. My phone, it’s funny how we all say phone now, not ‘smartphone’, not ‘device’, or iPhone or Android, just phone.

We’re living in a time where a sophisticated computer/ stereo/ clock/ television/ camera/ video recorder/ calculator/ tape measure/ digital assistant/ doctor/ a gazillion other things/ and something you call with, fits in your hand and is just “the phone”. I’m an infamous Generation X Slacker sticking fingers in a dial on a box and twirling to call, also sticking a Bic pen in another hole and twirling a tape to hear music. There were lots of holes and twirling in my analogue time, I even had a beeper (Google it). It only took 20 years, like, from school to college. I predict in less than 10, when I drop my phone (or cortical implant) the thing gives me a brain scan and reports me to the authorities for tech abuse. Evolution is honestly that simple.

Right now scientists are growing live organs from human tissue that they’ll be trial testing in the next 5 years and transplanting in people in the next 10, developing nano-robot “things” that swim in your blood to clean it out and remind you to buy milk on your way home. There is Artificial Intelligence available now that looks at you and can tell if you’re happy, sad or suicidal and help connect you to get professional help. Your refrigerator, TV, phone, car, keys, house and shoes already talk to you and some even measure your vitals. Doctors have technology available that can help them help you from miles away.

Soon, it won’t matter how everything works or how it’s interconnected, users won’t care what’s going on behind the curtain, and maybe even in my lifetime all disease will be curable. Health won’t just mean keeping people alive but making sure people are at their 1000% absolute best concerning everything and anything from conception to whatever ‘expiration’ will (or will not) be, and it’s all going to be as simple and standard as using “the phone”. Maybe the stop sign will give us a daily health screening, maybe my bad back will get physio while my car drives me to work, maybe my iron deficiency will be regulated when I beam to my mother’s to hear how all her other girlfriends have grandchildren and when is she, or maybe I’ll make her hollo-grandchildren in the oven. Who knows?

Witchcraft you say; well there is a little magic to anything worthwhile I say. There is also danger. History and human nature show us anything that we come up with to create we can use to destroy. How do I make sure the tiny robots cleaning my gut won’t be hacked to make me twerk in a board meeting? How do we stop the evil villain from rigging all the health ports to make everyone’s hair turn blue? Patient safety is, and always has been, the first and foremost focus of healthcare professionals since my man Hippocrates was grinding up herbs and spit to heal ancient Greeks. The truth is we’ll try long and hard to make sure people are safe and no one abuses science and technology and there will always be a risk. We cannot and should not delay technological evolution.

I work for the [eHealth Forum](#) to pay rent and buy the occasional pair of to-die-for shoes, but mostly because, until I can get a physical from my nail polish, I have found my purpose and my way to serve. I can dress up what we do in fancy terms and tech jargon but it really comes down to finding ways to help everyone involved understand and accept the simplicity and inevitability of ehealth changing how we live and thrive. Doctors, politicians, businesses, scientists, moms, dads, grandparents need to see that soon one of our devices may very well be prompting us to “unplug the doctor to avoid over healing”.

So, this October from the 19th to 24th, we will be promoting ehealth through an international event in the centre of Athens, at the swanky Technopolis Athens venue, where we’ll take on several of the hot topics with key stakeholders in this annual celebration of digital health innovation and advancement.

We at the eHealth Forum are on a mission to involve all digital health stakeholders but also everyday people to build a community that will learn and engage with digital technology in health and medicine. Therefore, one day in the future when we talk about our health it will mean something simple like “where’s my charger, my doctor is running out”.

eHealth Forum, October 19 to 24, will feature the following:

Dhealth Conference

Tech Exhibition
Start Up Garden

Digital Health Literacy

Hackathon

HIMSS Europe information on accreditation

The European arm of the US based Healthcare Information and Management Systems

Supporting partners HL7 Hellas, Greek Network EIP on AHA, Hellenic Healthy Cities Network (EDDYPPY), IHE-Europe, HL7 International, Hellenic Health Informatics Association (HHIA), Open Health Alliance, ICS-FORTH, Association of Information Technology Companies of Northern Greece (SEPVE), Hellenic Society of Health Services and Education (EEMEPY), Greek Biomedical Informatics and Health Informatics Association (GBHI), Athens Chamber of Commerce and Industry (EBEA) will be there to answer your questions and learn from your ideas.

For full details on the above and the rest of the programme go to: www.ehealthforum.org

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