



Creation of mHealth content aimed at medical students

William Melton

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A new challenge: The training of eHealth professionals, innovative actors of eHealth

Dear Sir

There is a burden of ageing population on health provision in industrialised countries. At the same time, internet, game consoles and all the derived digital tools, have revolutionised our lives. Technological developments used for these everyday tools have been quickly put to use in the field of health provision, explaining the exponential growth of what is called eHealth. In the field of gerontology, successes made possible by these technological advances have become legion, opening a particular field of eHealth allowing, for instance, rehabilitation in virtual spaces or with serious games or development of smart Zimmer frames. A complete field dedicated to monitoring is also emerging: connected pedometers or blood pressure monitors, smart clothes, mobile applications, telemedicine, etc.

The hospital, in the conventional sense of the term, seems to gradually disappear in favour of the development of a hospital 'at-home'. This notion is based on these self-monitoring technologies, but mainly on the development of these communicating tools such as telecare and online support. Indeed, these new technologies challenge the daily medical practice and create new relationships with patients. These changes lead to the emergence of new needs and it is important to clarify the range of competences of the personnel who will receive and analyse these data in order to take medical decisions: this creates innovative actors who will need to be trained.

In the same way, even if a patient's daily life is invaded by these new technologies, other health professionals should not feel helpless in the face of these innovative techniques for practising their profession (Wyatt & Sullivan 2005). Otherwise, we run the risk of disinvestment or withdrawal (Booth 2006). Therefore, it appears essential to provide help and support to staff to introduce these changes. The primordial issue therefore

appears to be the training of these new eHealth professionals in close collaboration with industrialists and providers of new eHealth services. It also requires the presence of teachers and trainers able to meet the challenges they face in ensuring a skilled and educated workforce of new professionals.

In conclusion, we need to be aware of the problem. It is time to move from a system based on individual skills in this innovative field to a formal recognised and effective system. This seems to be the only way to ensure that the adaptation of the area of health provision to these new technologies do not come at the expense of its actors.

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Creation of mHealth content aimed at medical students

Dear Sir

In the recent article 'Health professionals as mobile content creators: Teaching medical students to develop mHealth applications', the author (Masters, 2014) presents his findings from his work encouraging students to create mHealth content aimed at patients. I read this article with great interest as a medical student at The University of Manchester who has recently created an iBook aimed at educating other medical students.

I wanted to supplement and enhance the clinical skills teaching at the Manchester Medical School (MMS) by creating an iBook to give students a definitive guide to performing a Cardiovascular Examination. With a small amount of help from the faculty and no previous experience of content creation I was able to write an iBook using the iBooks Author application available for Apple computers.

I chose the iBooks Author application as all students at MMS are supplied with iPads upon entering their clinical years. Therefore by using the MMS iTunes U course and the Apple iBooks Store it was quick and easy to distribute the iBook to students who wanted the additional help with their learning.

iBooks Author is an intuitive and simple piece of software. It was easy to create an attractive and professional text in a relatively short amount of time. In a four week Personal Excellence Pathway (PEP) I was able to film the critical parts of

the examination, photograph the clinical signs seen in the Cardiovascular Examination and write all the text required for the iBook. After being reviewed by two senior cardiologists at the University Hospital of South Manchester the iBook is now included in the MMS iTunes U course as a part of the cardiology curriculum.

Therefore perhaps it is worth expanding the program available at the Sultan Qaboos University to include the different methods of creating mHealth content (applications, ebooks, web content and others) and expand the potential targets of the mHealth content to include Medical Students and Doctors.

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Response to ‘Creation of mHealth content aimed at medical students’

Dear Sir

Mr Melton’s letter response to my article is encouraging: it bodes well that medical students are reading *Medical Teacher*,

and the initiative shown in his developing the iBook demonstrates that students are pushing medical teachers in the direction needed.

Mr Melton’s line “With a small amount of help from the faculty and no previous experience of content creation” sums up, I think, the experience of many medical students who wish to pursue this kind of work.

The expansion into other applications, as suggested by Mr Melton is certainly on the cards. Although the target audience of most of our apps were patients, our students were free to choose their target audience, and some apps were aimed at other students.

Other platforms: As Sultan Qaboos University does not issue students with devices, and offers only minimal technical support for m-learning and mHealth (Masters & Al-Rawahi 2012), we need to take into account cross-platform compatibility or at least equivalent systems to iBooks Author (e.g. Book Creator for Android). This is so that project evaluation and grading may be fair.

Similarly, I sincerely hope that Mr Melton’s project may alert faculty at his institution to build such initiatives into their formal curriculum.

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Masters K, Al-Rawahi Z. 2012. The use of mobile learning by 6th-year medical students in a minimally-supported environment. *Int J Med Educ* 3:92–97.