

INSIDE EDGE

Using Social Media in Healthcare

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It took the advent of social media, but after years of being baffled as to why doctors—mostly older ones—resisted using computers in care, I finally get it. The concept of physician resistance is no longer a mystery. That's because I suddenly find myself in a similar posture vis á vis social media. I'm an old dog resisting a new trick.

It's a quixotic mission, of course. Like physician resistance to IT, all resistance to social media is, as they say, futile. Social media is already a rushing-river-becoming-a-torrent that is changing healthcare as it does everything else in its path. In an admittedly old-fashioned nutshell, social media uses Internet-based platforms like blogs, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google Buzz, Wikipedia and DIGG for interaction and networking. These and a myriad of other tools and websites provide the most voluminous and yet nuanced conversation that's possible on a web-connected globe.

As Cerner Senior Strategic Analyst Doug Wager tells us in this issue of SI's Inside Edge, social media and "Web 2.0" is moving rapidly into healthcare. We also talked to two CIOs at SI member organizations: Ed Marx at Texas Health Resources, and Bruce Smith at Advocate Health Care. A profile of the Mayo Clinic's social media initiatives rounds out our discussion.

When it comes to social media, an old dog's salvation may be that we're all in this together.

Social Advocate

As CIO of Advocate Health Care, an Oak Brook, Ill.-based integrated delivery system with nine acute care hospitals and two children's hospitals, Bruce Smith may be emblematic of the ambivalent attitude toward social media held by hospitals and health systems. "We're facing a little bit of a collision between our need for a secure network and the need to take advantage of new forms of communication. We've locked a lot of things down. We're in a bind as to what to do."

Not sitting still, Advocate has established a communications task force with people from PR and marketing as well as IT to establish organizational guidelines. "The marketing people want to open up the network to everything," he says. "But a couple of months ago, Twitter had a security violation," and such threats to privacy keep CIOs awake at night.

Advocate's task force expects to produce a general set of social-media recommendations and guidelines later this year. One possibility is to create a tiered network that separates the secure patient-data channel from the wide-open social-media channel.

Still, Smith says it's not black and white. He's worried about the gray areas in which social media tools prove incredibly convenient for a nurse to notify a physician that her "patient looks good" or "please call in," which would eliminate the need for paging and a follow-up telephone call. "That's a potentially powerful tool. All the doctor really wants is a quick update," he says.

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Centura Health is the largest health care network in Colorado, formed in 1996 by sponsors Catholic Health Initiatives and Adventist Health System. It operates 12 hospitals, seven senior living communities and home care and hospice services throughout the state, from Boulder County and the mountain communities, to Metro Denver, Colorado Springs, Pueblo and Canon City, and surrounding rural communities. The fourth largest private employer in the state, Centura Health employs more than 13,000 associates.

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They're only human

Another worry is human behavior. If every employee has a device with Internet access, it can be difficult to maintain productivity. "I get calls from managers asking me to turn off all Internet access in their departments because employees are online instead of doing their jobs. It's easy to get seduced by it," says Smith.

Advocate Health Care



**Bruce Smith, CIO,
Advocate Health Care,
Oak Brook, Ill.**

Still, there's that tension. If you're not social-media savvy, Smith says, "People think you're a dinosaur." The alternative is not any more appealing. "Before you know it you're one of these geeks at a restaurant tapping away on their smart phone. At least 25 percent of people are not even talking to each other because they're on their phones. Sometimes they're sending messages across the table. In some of the meetings I attend there's a sub-meeting going on among certain people messaging each other on how poor the speaker is," he says.

Still, it's impossible not to see the potential advantages of social media to the health-care setting in streamlining processes and improving communication. That's where the two-tier network could provide a good start by providing a firewall between the structured patient-data side and the "Wild West" side, as Smith terms the social-media area. Each would have separate access points for Advocate employees similar to how the health system carves out its WiFi network. Familiar icons for Facebook, MySpace and Twitter would be available for workers.

Traditional enterprise-software vendors are also fueling the move toward social-media-like applications. Microsoft SharePoint, a collection of software products that allow workers to collaborate in a web-based environment, is an example of another tool that drives sharing over Advocate's network, notes Smith.

Cerner sees a movement

SI sponsor Cerner is keen to social media trends and uses multiple tools to track them, including <http://ebennett.org>, a website that maintains a list of health-care organizations using social media. "In just the past six months, the number of healthcare organizations using YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and blogs has climbed from 473 to 540," says Doug Wager, a senior strategic analyst at Cerner.

"We are seeing a change in how organizations are trying to reach their potential customers as well as keep their existing patients engaged," he says. "There is rapid growth and diversified use of social media, which has transformed the internet from an institutionally-driven repository of information into a dynamic communication and collaboration platform. Web 2.0 is all about empowering the consumer. Anyone can be a spectator, a publisher and a critic. Previously inaccessible expertise is now easily tapped in discussion forums and blogs. This isn't a small thing. It is a massive movement."

This year Wager has been busy at Cerner on a team that rolled out a business social-networking platform called uCern for the company's associates, business partners and clients. "We've gone from zero to more than 18,000 people collaborating on uCern in the last year, including now more clients than associates," he notes. "For the first time, all of our associates have access to all of our clients and vice versa. We had to overcome the fear of people getting

distracted, or doing inappropriate things in order to have more transparency in our collaborations with clients. So far, the open approach has been very successful.”

Face of a hospital

Hospitals and health systems are rapidly embracing the new media initially as a brand resource. For example, Children’s Mercy Hospital in Kansas City uses Facebook as a place to share the services they offer and let former patients share their stories. “Children’s uses a Facebook fan page where people can see and comment on stories, photos, resources and discussions related to Children’s. By becoming a fan, people can share their support of Children’s with others. This is the best kind of free marketing you can get – enabling your customers to recommend you to their friends,” says Wager.



Doug Wager, senior analyst, Cerner, Kansas City, Mo.

“With over 300 million people on Facebook, it isn’t hard to understand why businesses are establishing a presence, and it is hard to tell how Facebook might impact healthcare directly, but social media presents some interesting new opportunities,” he says.

One thing organizations should be doing is listening to what’s being said about them in social media. For example, Cerner watches Twitter posts that include or reference Cerner. “You can learn a lot about what people are thinking by paying attention to what they share online,” says Wager. Twitter is a service that allows anyone to use either the web or phone text

messages to broadcast 140 character messages to everyone who is “following” them. He urges those who haven’t done so yet to go to www.twitter.com and search for their organization’s name—someone has likely tweeted about it!

Wager notes that Google Search is one of the primary healthcare resources on the Internet. “You can enter a series of almost any symptoms in a Google search and find resources that list potential conditions and solutions. The problem is being able to discern good information from bad. Regardless, there is an unprecedented amount of healthcare information available to the general public that wasn’t available 10 or even five years ago.”

Return of the e-Patient

The “e-Patient” concept offers a framework for this shift of power from the provider to the consumer [a whitepaper “e-Patients: How They Can Help Us Heal Healthcare” is available on the website <http://e-patients.net>].

“The observations in the e-patient study suggest a shift in perspective from the provider being the only trusted resource of understanding a person’s health to the person becoming an expert on their own health, and a partner with the provider,” he says.

People partnering with providers on their health is a necessity of the future. “It is just physically impossible for a physician to keep up with the amount of new information being created about healthcare every day,” says Wager. “Fortunately, people now have access to resources that can help them take more control of their health by being more educated and more proactive.” Physicians are increasingly seeing diabetes patients, for example, who are becoming more knowledgeable about their disease through online communities like <http://www.dlife.com> and

continued

In fiscal year ended June 30, 2009, Centura Health:

- Provided \$57 million in charity care
- Underwrote \$156.6 million in government care for the elderly and poor
- Operated the largest trauma network in the state, helping in 320,428 emergencies
- Provided 82,883 hospital stays
- Made 938,505 outpatient visits
- Welcomed 10,932 newborns

Centura Health received ColoradoBiz magazine’s Top Company Award for 2009 for its exceptional achievement and performance.

Welcome Gary S. Campbell, FACHE, president/CEO, Dana Moore, SVP, CIO, and the entire Centura Health team.

SI TELECONFERENCES

March 23

Quality Reporting under Meaningful Use and its Relationship to Core Measures

- Mathew Bates, senior VP, Products & Solutions, Healthcare, Thomson Reuters
- Lou Diamond, MD, VP and Medical Director, Healthcare, Thomson Reuters

March 26

Effective Business Intelligence - A Key to Survival for Healthcare Providers

- Dean Miller, principal, Healthcare BI and DS Practice, Deloitte Consulting

March 31

IT Service Quality Delivered Meaningfully, Part 3: CHRISTUS Health Case Study

- George Conklin, VP and CIO, CHRISTUS Health
- Mike Wilson, senior IT director, Clinical Information Systems, Compuware
- Kristen Allmacher, ITIL subject matter expert, Compuware

April 1

Next Generation Clinical Desktop at Spectrum Health

- Scott Dresen, VP, Enterprise Technology Services, Spectrum Health
- Rob Faix, principal, Impact Advisors

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should engage those patients more in their self-management.

“In the near future,” he says, “I’ll be able to use my mobile device to review my personal health record (PHR), track my daily activities related to my health, review any new test results and schedule an appointment with my personal physician—without ever having to take the time of physician office staff. Before my physician sees me, she’ll be able to look at new health information coming from multiple sources that have been aggregated in my PHR, and copy relevant information to her EMR. She may ask me to enroll in an online health program that her practice offers to help me manage a condition.”

To meet Meaningful Use requirements and obtain related stimulus money, health providers will need to be able to publish information to a person’s PHR. “That requirement has potential to drive a lot of changes,” says Wager.

Getting closer to e-care

The challenge to healthcare providers is that insurance does not cover people emailing their doctors and thereby eliminating the need for some office visits. However, new models of charging patients for convenience are emerging, and it may be that for every email transaction consumers will pay a fee. A possible scenario is for a consumer with diabetes to pay a small monthly fee to an organization to maintain on a secure website data such as their blood-sugar levels, diet and other relevant information, and track their progress against goals that will help keep them healthy. Programs like this will be built around evidence-based medicine.

“It is much less expensive to help someone manage most conditions than to pay for the consequences of them not being managed,” he says. The cost of participation

in a health program could potentially be covered by your insurance plan to prevent high-cost medical expenses.

The family health manager, a role that mom traditionally plays from age 30 to 50 for children, husband and parents, will likely change too, as personal health sites emerge that allow adult children to better manage the health of their parents who live in other states.

The social web is changing how we consume almost everything, and healthcare will not be an exception. In two to five years, Wager predicts, every physician will receive a public star rating like the ones www.RateMDs.com already gives to 200,000 physicians. “Physicians and other healthcare providers should begin getting proactive in managing their online presence and reputations. With the social web, everything about your practice from facts to opinions will be one click away,” he says, adding that, on the positive side, there will also be many more online tools available for providers to help people manage their health.

Texas Social

When a CIO invites you to read his latest blog entry entitled “Why I Fired Myself,” you know the world has changed. As you ponder that truth, the CIO, Edward Marx of Arlington, Texas-based Texas Health Resources (THR), announces if you want to continue following his blogs you must now follow him on twitter. The world just changed again. Perhaps CIOs have too and we just don’t know it yet.

“I see social media as a way for THR to really expand its brand,” he says. “I learned early on MySpace and Facebook. I also read a lot and think about how we can leverage social media to benefit our health system because social media is new and healthcare is conservative.”



Ed Marx, CIO, Texas Health Resources, Arlington, Texas



TEXAS HEALTH RESOURCES

Marx began delving into the social media space a year ago when there were not a lot of pioneers at least

from the healthcare side. “It was clear that social media was here to stay,” says Marx. He and Ferdinand Velasco, MD, VP and CMIO at THR, began experimenting by building sites on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook. “We saw the benefits, like we could be a lot more collaborative and expand our brand.”

Charlie Dierker, THR’s consumer portal manager, and Reace Alvarenga Smith, public relations manager, also contributed to the effort.

Morning tweet

“We tweeted [posted a Twitter message] about a minimally invasive brain surgery this morning,” says Alvarenga Smith. A THR public relations person posted the Twitter message, which is limited to 140 characters or less, to various Dallas-area media people who “follow” her on Twitter that she was attending the surgery. The post is not directed at the media people, but they read it because they have chosen to be part of the current 1,005 followers of THR’s Twitter page.

“Our traditional approach is to call reporters and pitch a story and then arrange for different media to cover it. In this medium it’s not even a pitch. It’s just an informative 140-character missive. It was the media people who jumped on it,” she says.

Dierker loaned his Flip digital camera to the effort and opened up network access

to all employees. “That was something of a watershed. We did it as an executive action,” he says.

THR brought in a communications consultant and social media expert Shel Holtz in late spring 2009, which has helped catalyze the initiative, and has just published social-media policy guidelines.

Yammering employees

THR has also enlisted social media tools like Yammer to empower its more than 18,000 employees, to date registering more than 1,000 Yammer users. Employees have been meeting in an iPhone-application user group to foster communication among them and to experiment with a Facebook Fan Page, among other efforts participating in a corporate bonding initiative around minimally invasive surgery called “Show us your scar.” Says Marx: “We’re encouraging off-the-wall activities.”

Of THR’s 13 hospitals serving north central Texas, some in the Dallas/Fort Worth area are only 30 minutes apart. So, the health system targets the west side of the metro area, for example, for event notification by selecting its Facebook Friends only in that geographic area.

Using the social-media tool Skype—a software application that enables users to make voice calls over the Internet sometimes with video conferencing—THR developed SkypeBaby, a service that allows a pregnant woman in Texas to communicate with her husband in Iraq. “With their permission we decided to tweet that event and four different TV stations, two radio stations and a newspaper picked it up and did a story. The impact was not just branding but had a really positive effect on our employees who were very proud that THR could provide such a service,” says Marx.

Yammer has accelerated employee communication, collaboration and morale.

continued

April 5
New Options for Meeting Meaningful Use for Community Physician Practices

- David C. Kibbe, MD, MBA, senior advisor, American Academy of Family Physicians, and Chair, ASTM International E31 Technical Committee on Healthcare Informatics

April 6
The Health Story Project: Exchange Basic Records and Meet Early Meaningful Use Requirements

- Bob Dolin, MD, chair, Health Level Seven and principal, Semantically Yours, LLC

April 8
HL7 and Personalized Medicine Part 1: It starts with Family Health History

- Grant M. Wood, Intermountain Healthcare Clinical Genetics Institute, LDS Hospital, Salt Lake City, Utah, and HL7 Clinical Genomics Work Group

April 20
IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL)

- Carol Chouinard, director, Deloitte Consulting, LLP
- Jeff Hersh, specialist leader, Deloitte Consulting, LLP

April 21
Spectrum IS Service Excellence

- Scott Dresen, VP, Enterprise Services, Spectrum Health
- Heather Strickland, Strategist, Spectrum Health

To register for any of these teleconferences or to listen to ones from our archives, go to www.scottsdaleinstitute.org.

CONGRATULATIONS

Heartland Health (St. Joseph, Mo.) received the prestigious \$100,000 Foster G. McGaw Prize for Excellence in Community Service. Two other SI members were named finalists: Alegent Health (Omaha) and St. Vincent Health (Indianapolis).

This award recognizes healthcare organizations that serve as role models for improving the health and well-being of the people in their communities.

“An employee said he was always aware of being part of a hospital, but now with Yammer for the first time he felt part of something bigger. Last night we had a big fitness event where you had to belong to a team. At 9:00pm I posted that if anyone needs me I’m available. At 10:00pm I get a response, ‘We need you.’ That could never happen in an email world,” he says.

Your friendly CIO

Marx also uses Facebook to make himself more accessible to employees. “It increases transparency. I’m Facebook friends with a lot of employees. As recently as December I recognized a person in the hallway and said, ‘You just had a baby in October and got your MBA in August.’ It can deepen the quality of relationships.”

In another example, he recalls, “I was on Facebook and an employee began chatting and gushed that she had never before been able to converse with a senior executive. She would never have sent me an email. Social media really does break down walls and increase connectedness.”

From a senior executive’s perspective, Marx says social media is particularly powerful in extending a personal brand throughout an organization. “I have 835 friends on Facebook. I’m on Yammer twice a day and can let IT staff know that I’m at such-and-such a hospital. Then you connect to a brand by leveraging Twitter, Facebook and blogs.” He is an infectious blogger who notifies his loyal readership via Twitter each time he posts another blog, the topics of which range from the aforementioned “Firing Myself” to “Why Healthcare IT Lags” and “The Lost Art of Mentoring.”

Dierker notes social media is particularly helpful in establishing a tone for employee groups. “It’s all about openness and information sharing. Social media empowers people. The tools are at hand and they

create an inclusive and engaging atmosphere.”

Mayo Media

If the venerable Mayo Clinic is at the forefront of social media, it’s something that comes naturally. “We’ve been around 140 years,” says Laurie Wilshusen, Scottsdale-based director of marketing at the Mayo Clinic, “largely because of word of mouth recommendations. We do research with our patients all the time on the stories they tell.”

According to recent Mayo patient surveys:

- 91 percent have said good things about Mayo to somebody outside the institution;
- On average they tell 43 people something good about their experience;
- 86 percent have recommended Mayo and have advised an average of 24 people to come to Mayo;
- Six of those actually come;
- 24 percent have used Facebook, 21 percent YouTube and 4 percent Twitter.

“Word of mouth is how we exist and providing an outstanding experience” for patients and their families, she says, ensures that communication is positive.

“What we’re learning is that it’s a modern world, so part of what we do is provide tools for patients to tell their stories,” says Wilshusen. Those tools include a blog <http://Sharing.MayoClinic.org> as well as a Mayo Clinic YouTube channel. Mayo also has a Facebook page.

Mayo Clinic is becoming more involved in supporting private, invite-only Facebook pages so patients with particular diseases like ALS can communicate with each other. These pages provide support groups for patients who are physically unable attend a support group onsite. “So, we’re using modern tools to do old-fashioned communication,” she says.

Friends and family

Mayo Clinic contracts with www.CarePages.com as a way for patients and caregivers to create secure web pages to communicate with family members and friends about the patient's status without having to contact each one individually. "It's a virtual bulletin board to which you can post pictures and messages. We're averaging 110,000 visits to CarePages a month. While this volume isn't as high as for mayoclinic.org, which has 1.3 million visitors per month, it has been steadily growing solely by patients' efforts," says Wilshusen, predicting that social media will soon eclipse traditional media.



Laurie Wilshusen,
Mayo Clinic,
Scottsdale, Ariz.

It's important to develop a strategy so as not to be overwhelmed. "I've learned some good lessons. One is to hire a company to track it by aggregating social-media sites. Otherwise I'd spend all day chasing down every social-media feed." Mayo Clinic uses a tool called Radian6 that can be configured to an organization's needs to help sort out the feeds and make sense of them. "Word clouds" graphically depict the most frequently used words used by people on social media in reference to an organization's brand, radiating out from the center according to frequency of use.

"That's really cool. It's something that would have taken me weeks or months two years ago that you can now do in a minute," Wilshusen says.

Social media also helps with traditional media and employee communication

through internal blogs. For example, Mayo Clinic doctors can produce a three-minute video to easily and quickly explain a clinical topic to employees.

"What I see in the future is a lot of these tools being simplified and consolidated. I think people are getting overwhelmed by multiple feeds," she says. "Also, physicians are getting younger everyday and using these tools themselves. A great example is www.Sermo.com, an online Facebook for physicians. FastCompany magazine cited it as one of the most innovative companies. That's a good direction to go."

Conclusion

In some cases, healthcare providers seem to be more willing to go in the direction of social media than toward clinical IT.

"It's really weird how people are learning this stuff," says Advocate CIO Smith. "We have docs who refuse to enter a CPOE order but who are very active in social media. I tell them what you're doing is much more complex than CPOE. Social media is set up more toward an intuitive flow whereas clinical IT is much more structured because it needs to be precise," he says.

The divide is also generational. "In Facebook you don't worry about how you spell a word. I use punctuation and capitalization in my emails. My daughters send me messages with no capitalization, using abbreviations for everything and run-on sentences," says Smith.

Language changes in a social revolution, even if it's IT-enabled. "What it comes down to," says Cerner's Wager, "is that Web 2.0 and social media afford a lot more transparency, for me to learn what others have learned and to share very personal stories for the benefit of the larger community. But it's also for healthcare organizations to listen to consumers and learn from them. In the future healthcare is going to be social."

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