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The David And Goliath Of Health Care: Apple's Siri Vs. IBM's Watson

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In every strength lies a weakness and in every weakness a strength. This maxim has held true throughout history – from biblical days to the battles of modern times.

And it holds just as true in the information technology (IT) “arms race” that’s playing out in American health care today.

In Malcolm Gladwell’s newest work “David and Goliath,” he suggests that when we fail to recognize both the strengths and weaknesses of different alternatives, we risk not seeing the best solutions. Gladwell argues that we tend to overvalue one particular trait, such as Goliath’s size, while failing to recognize a seemingly less powerful skill, like David’s slingshot ability. The important thing is that each holds a tactical advantage, depending on the conditions of battle.

There is much discussion about how technology can solve the health care problems our nation faces. One proposed solution is application of “big data,” (sets of data that are too varying and complex to process with commonly used software tools). Another high-tech solution comes by way of the algorithmic care that’s already available in mobile technology. Think of these two solutions as Watson and Siri. Big and strong vs. small and nimble. David and Goliath.

IBM’s Watson has artificial intelligence capability embedded in a computer the size of a pizza box. It can answer complex questions posed in natural language. Apple’s Siri contains a complex set of algorithms available in every new iPhone sold and can respond to a huge array of queries on a broad range of topics.

Which of these technologies will prove most powerful in helping improve health care delivery?

It’s easy to assume Watson would be the winner. After all, this Goliath-like computer beat Gary Kasparov at chess, Ken Jennings at “Jeopardy!” and can run through millions of pages of content every second.

But much like Goliath’s opponent David, Siri (and her Android-based sisters) have qualities we can’t obtain from Watson. Siri may not have as much computing power, but the application is inexpensive, easy to use and travels just about everywhere.

Perhaps most importantly, relatively few tasks in clinical medicine require the the analytic speed and breadth which Watson offers.

As in the biblical story, the victor will depend on the conditions of battle.

[For the full story, please click here.](#)

Hot off the Press

Medical Data a New Target for Criminals

As the **use of medical devices has increased**, so has the

number of security breaches of these devices according to

A Med News. The data security firm **ID Experts** studied the

data security breach trends over the last 10 years and found

that personal medical information is the new target of hackers

and criminals. Rick Kam, president and co-founder of ID

Experts, said, "Every study [I have] seen indicates that medical

records hold an average black market value of \$50 per record."

Kam also stated that one way companies can protect against

data security breaches is to "train employees to better protect

and secure the medical data."

Health 2.0 Continues to Spotlight Technology Innovation

The seventh annual Health 2.0 conference took place in Silicon

Valley in October highlighting innovative technology solutions

for providers, patients, and payer groups. Matthew Holt and

Indu Subaiya, conference co-founders, **identified several**

major trends this year including: applying new high-tech

inventions to health care, provider system engagement in new

technologies, and the influence of top-down policies on cost

control.

Slow and Steady Makes for Better Regulations

A **coalition of 15 patient groups** wrote a [letter](#) to the FDA

Safety Innovation Act workgroup in response to a call for

comments asking the group to take its time when developing a

balanced risk- based health IT regulatory approach. According

to Fierce Health IT, the coalition asked the workgroup to

"...produce a statutory framework for regulation of health IT

based on risk while supporting innovation and patient safety."

Jacob Reider will serve as acting national coordinator on an interim

basis.

Kaiser Permanente News

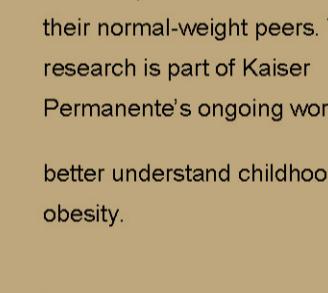
Kaiser Permanente CEO: Setting a Healthy Example



In *The Wall Street Journal's* video interview with Kaiser Permanente CEO Bernard J. Tyson, he speaks about the importance of modeling health behavior to encourage his employees to live a healthy lifestyle. Tyson also explains the importance of transparency and freedom of speech to allow Kaiser Permanente employees to feel empowered to share their opinions the same as they would outside the work environment.

"What I Want" ads help

Kaiser Permanente Members Thrive



The 10th season of the **Thrive campaign** highlights the benefits of being a Kaiser Permanente member as individuals enroll in health care, particularly if they are enrolling through the health care exchanges. The new ad campaign uses a wide spectrum of media channels, including TV, radio, out-of-home and online channels. The campaign includes three new television spots to drive consumers to [kp.org](#). In addition, viewers can use the Shazam app when watching the commercials to access a bloopers reel.

Research Roundup

Kaiser Permanente Finds Correlation between Weight and Asthma

Findings from a Kaiser Permanente study on obesity and asthma were published in the *American Journal of Epidemiology*. Children who were overweight and obese were more likely to develop asthma and experience more frequent and severe episodes of asthma than their normal-weight peers. This research is part of Kaiser Permanente's ongoing work to better understand childhood obesity.

Electronic Health Records Linked to Improved Care for Patients With Diabetes

Kaiser Permanente researchers found the use of electronic health records in clinical settings was associated with a decrease in emergency room visits and hospitalizations for patients with diabetes.

The findings, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, show patients visited the emergency room 29 fewer times per 1,000 patients and were hospitalized 13 fewer times per 1,000 patients annually after the implementation of the Kaiser Permanente HealthConnect® EHR system.

Where are all the Health IT workers?

The 2013 HIMSS Workforce Survey found that many health IT projects remain delayed due to a shortage of health IT workers.

The unemployment rate for IT workers is well below the unemployment rate at 3.3 percent and many employers are outsourcing IT work as the number of projects is

growing faster than the employee pool. Other strategies used by employers are training and

promoting IT workers internally.

EHR Leaders Separating from the Pack

Healthcare IT News reports that physicians are favoring a short list of eight EHR vendors to replace their current systems. The Black Book Rankings survey found Practice Fusion, Care360 Quest, Vitera, Cerner, Greenway,

ChartLogic, GE Healthcare, and athenahealth to be the most popular EHR vendors.

Eighty-eight percent of respondents had at least two of these organizations on their short list when looking for replacement vendors.

The survey was a follow up to providers who stated they were unsatisfied with their current vendors due to underperformance and the

solutions not meeting the provider's needs.

Health IT Happenings

mHealth Summit

December 8-11 | Washington, D.C.

25th Annual National Forum on Quality Improvement in Health Care

December 8-11 | Orlando, FL

For more information, or to send to a colleague, please contact e-quality@kp.org.