

BYOP: Bring Your Own iPad

Last night I had the privilege of attending a seminar given by [Dr. Daniel Kraft, MD](#), a national speaker who explores consumer demand, what's trending in technology, and how this is changing the way health care is delivered. Watch his TED talk below.

In his opening comments he immediately challenged the audience to consider where technology could take health and medicine. He spoke to the opportunities that exist in a new era that is enabled by technology.

Dr. Kraft is a very dynamic speaker, and had my undivided attention from the moment he took the stage. His topics ranged from understanding one's own biology to lessons that we could learn from aviation for healthcare; but by far the single item that impacted me the most was this notion of becoming the CEO of your own healthcare. The idea that your healthcare experience doesn't have to just "happen" to you. Think about that. You are empowered, you are in control and you get to customize your own healthcare experience and optimize your own care. But how?

Simply put: technology. Today smart phones and tablets are being utilized as a mobile health tool for clinicians. iPads have already been adopted by a convincing 30% of physicians. It's how they are communicating with each other, and it's how they already are and will continue to communicate with patients. And the only "tool" we (as patients) need to be able to actively engage is probably already in our pockets (or on our laps). All we need to do is embrace the technology that is upon us.

We've all heard the phrase "there's an app for that", right? If not; well, the answer is "yes, there is". There's not only "an app for that" there's a "[healthcare app for that](#)". Twenty thousand of them in fact. Besides being blown away by that figure, I was intrigued by the opportunities for self-managing one's own healthcare experience that these apps provided.

Most of us would probably agree with the statement that the "best way to treat medicine is to prevent it". Well, what if the prescription you are given is for an app, not a drug? For an app that monitors your blood glucose level in real time. Or an app with the capability to provide an EKG of your heart that can be sent to your physician. Even an app that takes a photo of your skin or eyes that can be sent for diagnosis by your dermatologist or optometrist.

How many of us make resolutions each New Year to lose weight or exercise more? How many of us keep those? Downloadable apps (like [Fitbit](#)) are now making activity tracking easy and fun.

In last night's lecture, Dr. Kraft mentioned the fact that we are entering an era that can be coined "the Facebook of medicine". Afterwards we asked him exactly what he meant by that. He responded by stating, "New technology is creating participatory medicine, which allows patients to find others like them who they can share information and support with".

By now my point is probably becoming painstakingly clear: we need to be more connected for better health.

Dr. Kraft also spoke about finding ways to apply design thinking. For me this hit home in regards to finding new and purposeful ways to incorporate technology into our product solutions. So imagine my delight when just moments after this topic was introduced, Dr. Kraft shared an image of Pocket as a great example of “applying design thinking”. It’s almost as if he knew that Pocket with the arm designed for iPad is available for order on Monday.....

At the conclusion of the evening we had the opportunity to catch up with Dr. Kraft and ask him what his overall impressions were from the event. He responded with, “Good things happen the more engaged health consumers are. While new health and wellness technology can be intimidating, these innovations help consumers develop better health habits and benefit from feedback loops”.

Don’t be scared. Embrace the “good” that is here.

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