Book review

Introduction to Health Informatics: A Canadian Perspective
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Introduction
The author of this textbook aims to fill a gap in the literature about Health Informatics by presenting the topic from a uniquely Canadian perspective. While this goal is achieved, an examination of perspectives from outside Canada could add richness to the student experience while increasing the relevance of this textbook for use in international education.

The book is organized around two learning frameworks (*The Five Senses of Academic Success* by Professor Alf Lizzio and *The Growth Mindset* developed by Professor Carol Dweck). These are designed to encourage active learning and are explained in the preface.

The format is one that has, since my early higher education days, been a feature of North American academic texts. It is clearly written. Each chapter begins with clear objectives and ends with a self-test to ensure the student has assimilated the required knowledge. Tests are followed by reflective activities to develop students' understanding beyond rote learning and regurgitation of facts. The written information is supplemented with Power Point slides, which can be used as the basis for lectures or student revision. The learning session ends with a practical activity, which enables integration of theory and practice. It is one thing to understand the theory behind, for instance, database design. Real learning occurs when theory is combined with practical application. To use a cooking analogy: no one ever became a great chef just by reading cookbooks. Finally, there is an interview with a professional in the field related to the chapter's topic. Each interview has three main foci: advantages, challenges and future implications.

Section I: building blocks
Chapters 1–5 take the reader from the history of computing through the significance of data systems in modern healthcare, education and commerce to the human factors, which facilitate or inhibit successful integration into health information management.

Section II: health informatics systems
Chapters 6–10 provide a wide lens on health informatics. Starting with hospital systems and ending with public health, the section explores telemedicine and telehealth, personal health devices and virtual health-related communities. The section ends with an introduction to Canadian public health informatics including the Global Public Health Intelligence Network.

Section III: challenges and emerging trends
The final two chapters (11 and 12) address contemporary issues such as digital security and data mining and provide a window into a digital future where smart homes, health-enabling apps and the use of game technology as a tool for well-being have become ubiquitous.

Evaluation

This textbook is exactly what it purports to be: a Canadian perspective and herein lies both its strength and weakness. For Canadian students, this is a highly focused text, which relates topics to current policies and legislation in Canada. This enables an exploration of the current state of health informatics, as well as highlighting future directions in Canada. However, the scope of information contained in this book, and the way in which it is presented to move students away from a dependence on didactic learning styles are universally relevant. Indeed, the challenges of the digitization of health and every other aspect of modern life are global. I would like to see an edition of this textbook with a focus reflecting this, as an addition to, rather than a replacement for, the current edition.

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