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2005

Health Information Systems: Design Theor, Principles, and Application

Sandra M. Richardson
University of Central Florida, srichardson@bus.ucf.edu

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ABSTRACT

Can a system be designed to increase user autonomy? This question, which is especially important in the healthcare industry are addressed in this project. Advancements in medical knowledge have resulted in patients living longer with chronic disease, an increased number of treatment options, and more complex decisions for patients. Patients are increasingly relying on information technology to obtain information regarding their healthcare decisions. As a result they are more informed, more autonomous. Autonomy is the ability to make decisions for oneself without undue influence or duress. Two dimensions of autonomy have been identified as being important to patients; decision-making and information gathering. It is proposed here that patient decision support systems can aid patients in gathering information in order to make informed decisions, resulting in a more autonomous patient. The design science paradigm frames this project. Design principles are developed to address a void in the literature regarding the evolution of information systems in the healthcare industry. The principles embrace the current principles and ethical guidelines in both the medical and computing professions. The instantiation of these design principles results in a patient decision support system for advance directives. The impact of the system on user autonomy will be tested at medium sized hospice in Central Florida. Contributions are made to both theory and practice through the development of a set of design principles and the application that embodies them.