

## *The Role of iSchools in Medical Informatics*

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Similar to iSchools, healthcare is an interdisciplinary field that encompasses heterogeneous environments (e.g., hospitals, clinics, home) and perspectives. However, medical informatics research focuses mainly on technical solutions to narrow problems. Often, this leads to the design of systems that solve one problem but do not fit the general work practices in a setting. In response, there is a growing movement in the community to start investigating organizational and social issues that impact the design, implementation, and use of information technologies (Reddy and Bradner 2005; Kaplan and Shaw 2004). This trend will only increase as healthcare documentation in the US increasingly moves from paper-based to electronic systems.

iSchools are uniquely positioned to benefit the medical informatics community due to our interdisciplinary foundation. Taking the theoretical paradigms and methods from various fields will allow us to address the interplay between people, healthcare technologies, and healthcare organizations. Some areas could include:

- Design and evaluation mechanisms to account for the ways different stakeholders interact with systems.
- Workflow analysis to understand how information is used for various activities in preparation for a systems implementation.
- Developing and implementing systems that deliver the right information to the right people at the right time.

iSchool research can also help expand the focus of the medical informatics community to examine other important issues such as the digital divide in healthcare and protecting patient privacy. By working together, the iSchools can train the next generation of researchers providing needed interdisciplinary insight into medical informatics issues and extend into new territories. Healthcare is characterized by multiple stakeholders and teams that are separated by time and space that are information-dependent; therefore, iSchool research in this field can also impact research in related areas. Besides being a rich setting for conducting research, healthcare impacts our lives on a daily basis.

The hosts of the roundtable will discuss how iSchools can get involved to incorporate more interdisciplinary research in the medical informatics area. In particular, we will focus on the following questions:

1. What are the interesting medical informatics research problems from an iSchool perspective?
2. How can iSchool research impact the medical informatics field?
3. What are the challenges iSchools face in this field?

### **Hosts**

Saira Haque (<http://snhaque.wordpress.com/>) has held a variety of healthcare management positions, including consulting and hospital administration. She is the doctoral student member at large of the American Medical Informatics Association and a Diplomate of the American College of Healthcare Executives. Her research focuses on coordination of interdisciplinary work across healthcare settings.

Carsten Østerlund (<http://blogs.iis.syr.edu/osterlund/>) has studied documenting work in healthcare settings over the past decade. He explores how the materiality of different document genres (e.g., paper, electronic, wall mounted) interact with the distributed collaboration among various professional communities.

Madhu Reddy (<http://faculty.ist.psu.edu/reddy/>) has been involved in the medical informatics community for a number of years. His research has focused on collaborative technologies in healthcare. He is currently the co-chair of the Organizational and Social Issues Working Group, International Medical Informatics Association.

### ***References***

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