

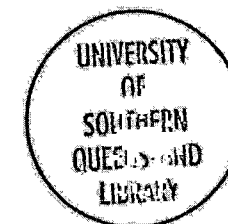
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# Health Informatics

## Transforming Healthcare with Technology

Moya Conrick

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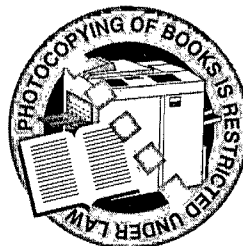
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## Preface

Technology is one of the most pervasive and ubiquitous tools in healthcare today. It is not only transforming healthcare but also the professions within it. For those of us teaching health informatics over the years, being unable to steer students and other interested people to a comprehensive text on the subject has been trying. The idea for this text was conceived during a meeting with a broad range of stakeholders; it was born from frustration and nurtured by a number of people engaged in health informatics – some without even realising they were!

This book provides information, knowledge and skills necessary to understand the collection, storage, retrieval, communication and optimal use of health-related data, information and knowledge. It addresses a wide range of the most essential and current areas of health informatics and is divided into seven sections:

- Chapter 1* introduces the basics of health informatics to the uninitiated.
- Chapter 2* discusses the building blocks of data, information and knowledge and how these are modelled and manipulated for use in health information systems.
- Chapter 3* considers the issues of leadership, planning, management and economics that are central to successful informatics implementations.
- Chapter 4* builds on the fundamentals to introduce the ins and outs of information systems that might be employed in or used across health institutions or practices.
- Chapter 5* considers the most pressing of the human factors in informatics, including workforce, consumer and philosophical issues.
- Chapter 6* presents case studies from lived experiences of health informatics. These are wide-ranging and originate from the other side of Katherine (remote Australia) to the corridors of policy-making.
- Chapter 7* concludes the text with a glimpse at informatics in genomics and a healthcare future increasingly dependent on technology for quality, cost effective outcomes.

It also recognises that health informatics is a tool that supports healthcare while demonstrating the interdependent and interconnected technologies that would be falsely isolated from each other.

I am still flabbergasted that I took on this task and can only look back on the merriment of the afternoon as the answer. However, the encouragement and help received during this project have made it worthwhile and very satisfying. Finding a name for the text was not difficult in some ways but challenging in another. Information technology is obviously transforming healthcare but the name health

informatics often produces a 'glazing over' from the uninitiated or enthusiastic noises from the geeks!

My hope is that this text will have wide appeal to all healthcare workers as it is written in a reader-friendly style that makes it accessible and a resource that can be used at any time. It also exposes health informatics as the tool of practice that it is and not something for only the technically savvy.

Regards,  
Moya

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## Acknowledgements

A book like this does not just appear. It takes a lot of effort from many dedicated people and I would like to thank them all for their hard work.

I would particularly like to acknowledge the understanding, help and support of my sons Michael and Gerard because without it this book would still be a thought. I would also like to thank my late night companion, Blu, who kept me awake by grumping at possums.

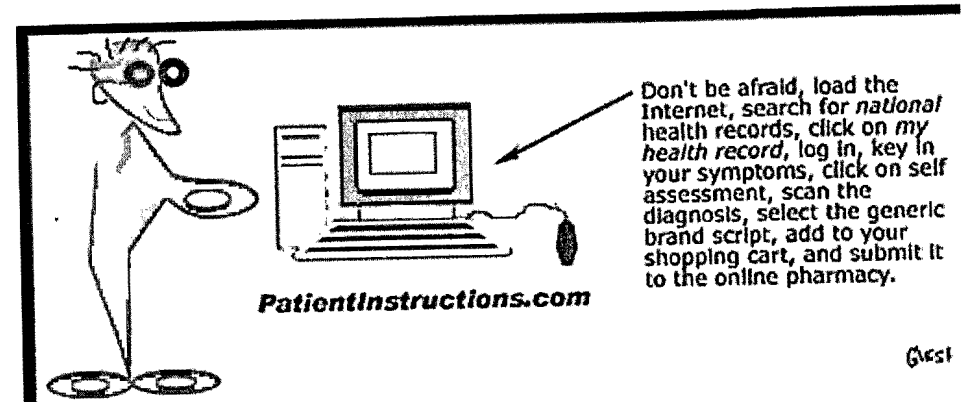
Thanks also to Karen for her great artwork and Cath for being my sounding board and proof reader. However, this book owes its existence to the many authors who have helped me to put it together in the midst of their own busy lives and day jobs.

### Dedication

*I would like to dedicate this book to my Dad (who did so much for me), to my Mum for her support and patience and to my sons for being there.*

# Part I

## The basics of health informatics



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