Technology Is Being Held Back From Transforming Healthcare

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Right now, the technology exists to completely transform healthcare.

A doctor should be able to walk into the room where a patient is waiting for them and get everything they need to make an informed decision about that patient's care.

Location-based technology should sense the doctor approaching and already know which patient is waiting for them. A computer or a tablet in the room should have access to thousands of data points on that patient (past hospital visits, surgeries, and allergies, the results of recent tests such as x-rays or cultures, the notes of the nurse who just triaged them) and yet be able to synthesize that data in such a way that is useful to the doctor. Relevant assessments of risk, such as the TIMI score of a patient who is complaining of chest pain, should be automatically fed to the screen. Artificial intelligence should make a suggestion to the doctor on a possible diagnosis, while providing them ready access to the information they need to explore other possibilities.

The thing is, information technology in other areas of the economy is already achieving this level of intelligence, interoperability, and ease of use. After all, this is the year that Twitter did a better job than the CDC at predicting the spread of the flu. Each smartphone we carry around in our pocket now has more computing power than Apollo 11 did when it landed on the moon.

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