

Digital technologies have rapidly evolved and changed the way we communicate and access knowledge. This includes health services. In this scenario, the Web is the most visible element.

**Definitions of eHealth:**

**CONCEPT OF EHEALTH (WHO, 2002):**  
 - Health services and information that use information and communication technologies to improve health care and public health.  
 - Includes: electronic health records, telemedicine, mobile health, etc.

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**eHealth encompasses:**

**Essential to delivery of health care services:**  
 - Reduce prescription errors  
 - Reduce medication errors  
 - Reduce patient wait times  
 - Increase patient safety

**Enables:**  
 - Health services to be delivered remotely  
 - Patients to be more active in their health care  
 - Health care providers to be more efficient

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**Key stakeholders:**

**Patients (Consumers):**  
 - The Internet has facilitated the emergence of ePatients.  
 - Not all ePatients are active.  
 - Some are passive.  
 - Some are active and engaged.  
 - Some are active and engaged and contribute to the health space.

**Healthcare Providers:**  
 - Includes health care professionals and health care organizations.  
 - Includes patient care.  
 - Includes patient care and other services.  
 - Includes patient care and other services.

# eHealth: What is it and why is it important?

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**This is all very good... but there are challenges too:**

**Content issues:** Lack of professional oversight, content issues on the Internet, unreliable information (e.g., 2008).

**Privacy issues:** "Digital divide" - those who cannot access digital technologies, either due to economic factors or lack of infrastructure. Not all information is given, misleading or incorrect or substantially harmful information becomes available too.

**Clinical issues:** Further research needs to be conducted to test efficacy of health interventions. Some health care professionals are reluctant to use it.

**What eHealth is not:**

A substitute for traditional health services.  
 The sole solution to the problems of health care costs.  
 Something only young, computer savvy people use.  
 Just health information on the Internet.

**What eHealth is:**

A new framework that signals social and technological changes.  
 A way to empower patients.  
 A way to generate & share knowledge.  
 The future of health.  
 The present of health.



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**Definitions of eHealth**

**WHO (2002)**  
 Health services and information systems that use information and communication technologies to improve health care services and the health of individuals, communities, and populations.

**WHO (2003)**  
 The use of information and communication technologies to improve health care services and the health of individuals, communities, and populations.

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 The use of information and communication technologies to improve health care services and the health of individuals, communities, and populations.

**eHealth encompasses:**

<b>Electronic patient care</b> - Remote patient monitoring - Virtual care - Telemedicine	<b>Electronic health information systems</b> - Electronic health records - Clinical decision support systems - Health information exchange
<b>Electronic health promotion and disease prevention</b> - Health promotion - Disease prevention - Health education	<b>Electronic health research</b> - Health research - Health care research - Health services research
<b>Electronic health management and administration</b> - Health care management - Health care administration - Health care financing	<b>Electronic health policy and regulation</b> - Health policy - Health regulation - Health law

**Key stakeholders:**

<b>Patients</b> - Empowerment - Participation - Self-management - Health promotion - Disease prevention	<b>Professionals</b> - Improved health care - Better patient outcomes - Health promotion - Disease prevention
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**Patient-centred care**

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**This is all very good... but there are challenges too!**

**Content issues:** Lack of professional-generated content aimed at patients on the Internet (Lipkin, Wilensky, & Hays, 2005).

**Barriers to use:** "Digital divide" (those who cannot access digital technologies) either due to socioeconomic factors or lack of skills/interests. Not all information is good; misleading or incorrect or potentially harmful information becomes available too.

**Clinical issues:** Further research needs to be conducted to test efficacy of eHealth interventions. Some health care professionals are reluctant to use it.

**What eHealth is not:**

- A substitute for traditional health services.
- The sole solution to the problem of health care costs.
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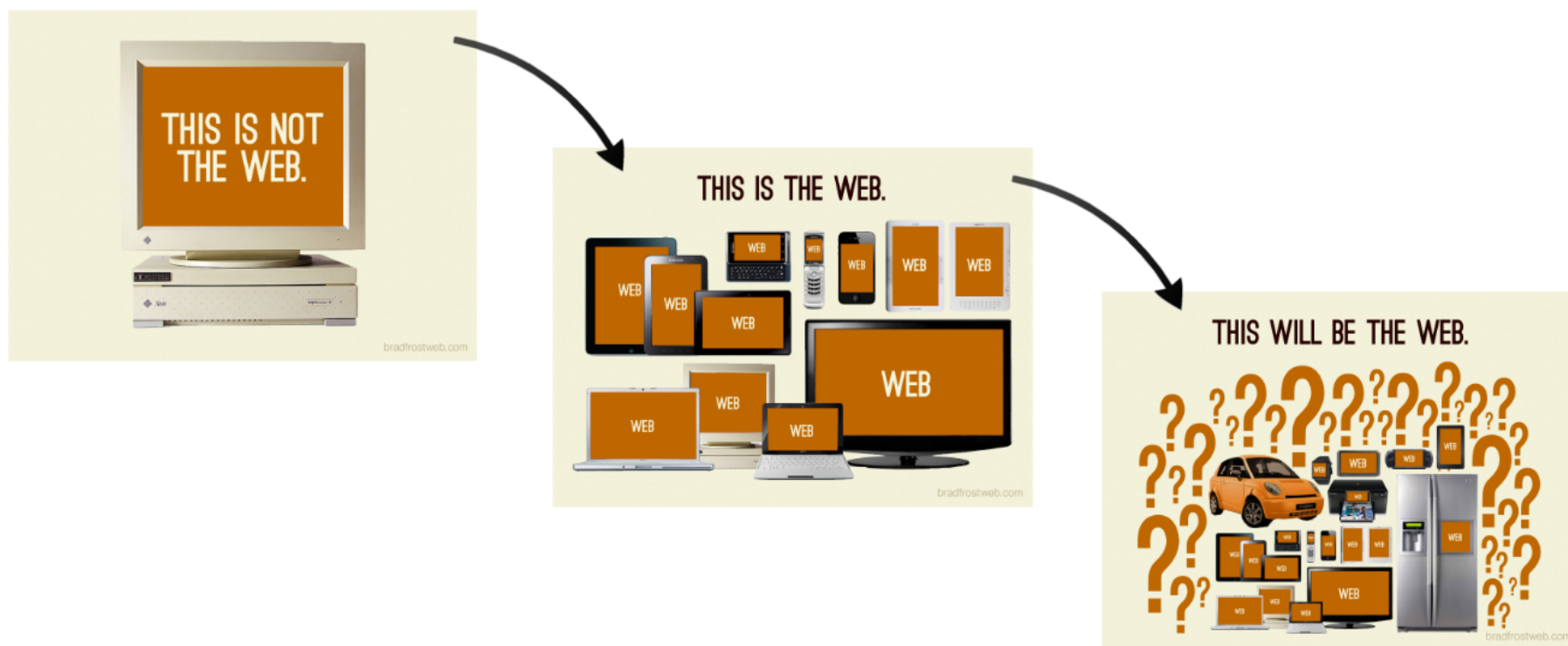
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# Definitions of eHealth:

Eysenbach (2001):

Seminal article which defined eHealth as "not only a technical development, but also a state-of-mind, a way of thinking, an attitude, and a commitment for networked, global thinking, to improve health care locally, regionally, and worldwide by using information and communication technology."



Systematic review of definitions (Oh et al., 2005):

- 51 unique definitions
- 2 universal themes:
  - health and technology
- Most used terms: improvement, enhancing, efficiency, enabling

WHO (2013):

"The use of information and communication technologies (ICT) for health. Examples include treating patients, conducting research, educating the health workforce, tracking diseases and monitoring public health."

# eHealth encompasses:

Organisation & delivery of health care (Powell, 2009):

- Online prescriptions
- Booking appointments online
- Computerised decision support systems
- Shared electronic records

Telemedicine:

- Usually refers to the use of telephone/teleconference to provide health care.
- "Involves the direct provision of clinical care" (Paré et al., 2007).

Health information on the Internet:

- About health problems
- About management of conditions
- Scholar articles

Consumer Health Informatics:

How to keep electronic patient data secure and confidential.

Social media: some examples...

- Online support groups
- Blogs about health (both from institutions or individuals)
- Testimonials about conditions in YouTube
- Online conferences

mHealth (mobile health):

The use of mobile devices to monitor health conditions (e.g. patient texts blood pressure to GP)

# Key stakeholders:

## e-Patient (Ferguson 2007)

- The Internet has facilitated the emergence of e-patients...
- ... but it is not only the mere use of the Internet, but its meaningful use
- Empowered
- Proactive, engaged
- Involved in their care
- Valuable contributor to the health system



Patient-centred care



## e-Professional:

- Provides holistic care within own field, using ICT
- Encourages patient involvement
- Accepts patient as an equal
- Engages in online networking (e.g. WHO's Health Professionals Networks) and learning (e.g. online conferences)

This is all very good... but there are challenges too:

Content issues: lack of professional-generated content aimed at patients on the Internet (Lupiáñez Villanueva et al., 2009)

Ethical issues:

- "digital divide" (those who cannot access digital technologies, either due socioeconomic factors or lack of skills/resources)
- not all information is good: misleading or incorrect or potentially harmful information becomes available too

Clinical issues:

- further research needs be conducted to test efficacy of eHealth interventions
- some health care professionals are reluctant to use it

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