A Study of the Intent to Fully Utilize Electronic Personal Health Records in the Context of Privacy and Trust

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May 2012

Abstract

Government initiatives called for electronic health records for each individual healthcare consumer by 2014. The purpose of the initiatives is to provide for the common exchange of clinical information between healthcare consumers, healthcare providers, third-party payers and public healthcare officials. This exchange of healthcare information will impact the healthcare industry and enable more effective and efficient application of healthcare so that there may be a decrease in medical errors, increase in access to quality of care tools, and enhancement of decision making abilities by healthcare consumers, healthcare providers and government health agencies. An electronic personal health record (ePHR) created, managed and accessed by healthcare consumers may be the answer to fulfilling the national initiative. However, since healthcare consumers potentially are in control of their own ePHR, the healthcare consumer’s concern for privacy may be a barrier for the effective implementation of a nationwide network of ePHR. A technology acceptance model, an information boundary theory model and a trust model were integrated to analyze usage intentions of healthcare consumers of ePHR. Results indicate that healthcare consumers feel there is a perceived usefulness of ePHR; however they may not see ePHR as easy to use. Results also indicate that the perceived usefulness of utilizing ePHR does not overcome the low perceived ease of use to the extent that healthcare consumers intend to utilize ePHR. In addition, healthcare consumers may not understand the different components of usage: access, management, sharing and facilitating third-party ePHR. Also, demographics, computer self-efficacy, personal innovativeness, healthcare need and healthcare literacy impact a healthcare consumer’s privacy concerns and trusting intentions in the context of ePHR and intent to utilize ePHR. Finally, this research indicates that healthcare consumers may need a better understanding of the Health Insurance and Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) regulations of ePHR as well as a better understanding of the impact HIPAA has on websites that may facilitate ePHR.