



Why Electronic Healthcare Still Sucks

By Steve Moran

I want to apologize in advance to all my friends -- and Senior Housing Forum Partners -- who are really into technology and believe it will make the world of senior living better. And yes, I fully appreciate the irony of attacking technology in a publishing platform that is 100% technology dependent.

I feel like a bit of a Luddite writing this, but honestly, I am not. However, here is the big, huge, massive, mind-blowing problem. Too much of the technology that is out in the world (this is not just a senior living problem) is cool but does not actually make people's lives better.

One more big disclaimer . . . this article is all the fault of [Craig Patnode](#), the founder of [Eldermark](#), (a Senior Housing Forum Partner). Craig is someone who is fiercely committed to tackling this problem.

This article is the first in a series that Craig and I are doing to explore ways we can turn all that amazing technology into amazing work-reducing profit-increasing tools.

Big Problem #1

Most technology vendors get so excited about their new cool technology that they do not spend enough time thinking about the real cost to senior living providers. While the dollar cost is not trivial, equally important is the increase in work and the worry burden for senior living team members.

Here is what happens . . . a vendor approaches a senior living decisionmaker about their very cool technology. The decisionmaker immediately starts thinking, “I love technology, but right now my plate is already too full. This is just one more thing I am going to have to spend time figuring out. Right now what I have may not be perfect, but it is working okay. If I start down this path, I am going to have to spend more money and it will take time to get my team up to speed on the technology. Then, they will have to start using it and they already feel overburdened with what they have to do right now.”

It is not that they won't ultimately purchase new technology or change technology platforms, but the ROI has to be super high.

Big Problem #2

As senior living technologies get more and more sophisticated, one of the big potential wins is the ability to collect lots of data about residents. On the surface, this sounds fantastic and honestly has the potential to be revolutionary. But like most things, it is a double-edged sword. More data means more fertile ground for lawsuits -- or with good operators, protection from lawsuits. The bigger problem is figuring out how to actually use this data to improve the operations of the community. Right now, too often the data just sits with people thinking they need to do something with it yet not knowing exactly what.

A New Approach

Just a hint of what is to come in this series, Eldermark is working on moving their resident care software away from laptop and desktop computers to an app-centric system. There are a bunch of really good reasons for this. First, it reduces costs. Second, every single caregiver in the world already has a smartphone and knows how to use apps. This makes adoption easier, faster, and more natural.

By moving in this direction, their new pricing will shock you with how affordable it will be.

You are now thinking “No laptop? No desktop?” -- not quite. There will still be some need for those traditional platforms for reporting, as well as for other healthcare providers who are tied into the system.

So maybe I am not such a Luddite after all. Next up a technology ecosystem that really works for everyone.



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