

Emerging Trends and Opportunities for Healthcare Organizations to Leverage Web 2.0

LAURA GREENE: This is Laura Greene for the Healthcare Intelligence Network. Today I am speaking with John Sharp, project manager for IT web services with Cleveland Clinic. John is presenting at HIN's Webinar on "Emerging Trends and Opportunities for Healthcare Organizations to Leverage Web 2.0". Welcome and thanks for joining me today John.

JOHN SHARP, PROJECT MANAGER FOR IT WEB SERVICES WITH CLEVELAND CLINIC: Thank you.

LAURA GREENE: To begin with, you refer to Web 2.0 as the architecture of participation. What is the business case for having physicians or other employees create or contribute to blogs, wiki's or other web 2.0 technologies?

JOHN SHARP: Well I think the key thing to remember is the practice of medicine has always been collaborative, whether it's between physicians and particularly in our institution since we're a large group practice model and have been that since the beginning, its kind of a natural to use Web 2.0 technologies where participation and collaboration is encouraged. So the real business case is to enable that kind of communication and collaboration over the web about medical topics, medical education, as well as patient education.

LAURA GREENE: Okay, thank you John. How does Cleveland Clinic encourage this participation and its expectation of new hires? Who are likely Web 2.0 champions/participants in an organization?

JOHN SHARP: Right now there's no real official encouragement of participation, as a contrast to what I said earlier about healthcare being collaborative at the same time healthcare can be very conservative particularly because of liability issues and the like. So at times those create barriers to participation in these kind of open technologies. So there isn't currently an expectation of new hires but there are some specific champions and participants in the organization. Some of those are physicians who are particularly Internet savvy who are very comfortable with technologies and kind of on the cutting edge of new technologies. So we have one physician for instance who writes a blog called, "Clinical cases and Images" where he puts up cases, which are of course stripped of any identifying information particularly for medical education and discussion. Some of those are unusual cases, some of them are kind of routine cases, but things that medical residents and fellows find helpful. Some of the other champions are in medical education area particularly for podcasting, and some of these physicians as well as nurses who are interested and researchers interested in social networking within their own group within those specific groups in a private way to discuss research and clinical issues.

LAURA GREENE: I see. Beyond creating a policy on employee's Web 2.0 participation how does the healthcare organization monitor employee generated content especially when it does not reside on the corporate site? Does someone within Cleveland Clinic have responsibility for this?

JOHN SHARP: Well this is a real issue. There isn't any, yet to date specific monitoring policy or monitoring person. It does

fit in with some other policies and enforcement that already exists within our human resources policies and IT policies in terms of the use of the Internet, the use of e-mail and the like. And there's some Web 2.0 sites that are actually blocked from employee usage during the day. Controlling employee usage of Web 2.0 outside the organization is much more difficult and there's no policy up to this point, but it's covered again by the general human resources policies about representing yourself as a part of the organization, and it would be dependant mostly on someone reporting a problem out there. Up to this point we really haven't had any of those kinds of problems, but it's always a possibility. It's out there.

LAURA GREENE: Okay. Thanks. And finally for healthcare organizations especially small ones with limited resources having no experience with Web 2.0, what would you recommend as an initial foray into this technology?

JOHN SHARP: A good place to start is thinking about either patient education or medical education. Podcasting technology has become very easy in terms of entry into that space and it would provide an opportunity for a physician or other health experts to record very simple short podcasts for patients. So patient education is an obvious place to start.

Blogs, if there is a specific champion in the organization who is willing to take that on, or a group of people or as a marketing effort that includes physician and other healthcare professionals, would be another possibility that would need a very specific strategy in terms of how are we going to use this, how is this going to benefit our patients or medical professionals and employees? So it's mostly defining instead of

picking a tool and finding a problem, you find a problem or an issue or an opportunity and then you choose the Web 2.0 tool that's going to best address that issue or opportunity.

LAURA GREENE: Okay, thanks. Those are all the questions that I have for you today. Thanks for being with us and were looking forward to hearing from you during the Webinar.

JOHN SHARP: Thank you.

LAURA GREENE: To register or get more information about this Webinar, please call 1-888-446-3530. This is Laura Greene for the Healthcare Intelligence Network.