

Janet Lee Johnson | The Art of Marketing

US CTO? Go to Work on Health 2.0...

I read with interest [The Short List for US CTO](#) article in yesterday's BusinessWeek by Tom Lowry. In it, he said:

“Obama sees greater broadband penetration as an enormous economic engine, much like the railroads were a century ago,” says Andrew D. Lipman, a veteran communications lawyer in Washington. “That is why the CTO will play such a critical role in any recovery plan.”

The US ranks 15th in percentage of broadband penetration, with only **23 in 100** Americans having access to broadband services, according to [a July report](#) issued by the Paris-based [Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development](#).

Linked forever in my brain with this report will be an article that appeared in today's Wall Street Journal by [Dr. Amar Gupta](#), the Thomas R. Brown professor of management and technology at the University of Arizona. The article, [Prescription for Change](#), starts off:

“The health-care industry is about to undergo a global revolution driven by a force it can no longer resist: information technology.”

“.... IT security will eventually meet the expectations of the health-care industry, just as has happened in other sectors, like banking. And when it does, powerful IT networks crisscrossing the globe will change the way much of health care is delivered: *Outsourcing and offshoring of medical and nonmedical services will increase, providing more efficient health care at the most cost-effective rates*; systems integrations will allow more medical records to be transferred swiftly and securely; efforts to monitor the safety of medicines will gain global access to data; and professionals and patients will find authoritative and up-to-date information on every specialty online.”

Re-read that last paragraph. Outsourced health care is coming. And we can use it. Ladies and gentlemen, we (Americans) are behind the eight ball in health care, in comparison to other countries around the world.

According to the [National Coalition on Health Care](#):

“Experts agree that our health care system is riddled with inefficiencies, excessive administrative expenses, inflated prices, poor management, and inappropriate care, waste and fraud. These problems significantly increase the cost of medical care and health insurance for employers and workers and affect the security of families.

National Health Care Spending

- In 2007, health care spending in the United States reached \$2.3 trillion, and was projected to reach \$3 trillion in 2011. Health care spending is projected to reach \$4.2 trillion by 2016.
- Health care spending is 4.3 times the amount spent on national defense.
- In 2005, the United States spent 16 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) on health

care. It is projected that the percentage will reach 20 percent by 2016.

- Although nearly 47 million Americans are uninsured, the United States spends more on health care than other industrialized nations, and those countries provide health insurance to all their citizens.
- Health care spending accounted for 10.9 percent of the GDP in Switzerland, 10.7 percent in Germany, 9.7 percent in Canada and 9.5 percent in France, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

If we had a US CTO, who did nothing more than work on the problem of bringing broadband services to the masses while improving network security to the standards set by the health care industry, we'd boost our economy, bring the US into proper alignment with other developed countries, and provide the health care technology to support the health of our aging population much more effectively. Perhaps even from within our own borders.

Please vote on November 4.

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October 20, 2008 | Posted by Janet Johnson |

4 Comments so far

1. [Craig C](#) on October 20th, 2008

Healthcare is already using IT very well - primarily for sending out duplicate billing statements and supporting on-line pharmacies, as evidenced by my email inbox. I receive hundreds of emails everyday about discount drugs that could help me go longer, stronger, faster.....Go broadband!

2. [Janet Johnson](#) on October 20th, 2008

Hilarious, Craig... as always, I very much appreciate your perspective.



3. [Gary Wiram](#) on October 21st, 2008

There's probably no easy answer for this. If so, I'd want to hear it from you. Maybe its good future (serial?) blog fodder. Anyway, both my Grandfathers were railroaders ... one retiring after 47 years on the Pennsylvania, So, I get the analogy of "broadband penetration as an enormous economic engine, much like the railroads were a century ago." But, when I visit my hometown, what were once multi-track train-crossings are now just grassy knolls. That transition wasn't handled well and we had a century to deal with it. Since today's technology changes nearly with every breath, what are the "experts" saying about the right strategy for this? Or is this just more evidence of the need for a US CTO?

4. [Janet Johnson](#) on October 27th, 2008

You nailed it, Gary. This is exactly why we should have a US CTO. Just as (fingers crossed) we have people in the government who've learned lessons from the recession, and are applying different tools to the financial crisis; I would hope that any transition from broadband to WIMAX to (name the new technology) would be planned carefully by one with the resources to execute well.

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