

KARTEN:DESIGN SNAPSHOT BODY COMPUTING 2013

At the 7th annual USC Body Computing Conference, Karten Design took a look into the near future, in which digital technology collects information from the body and gleans insights to improve healthcare. We previewed the latest digital tools scaling the reach of doctors, empowering patients, and radically changing medicine.



PUTTING HEALTH IN CONTEXT

“Lifestyle data is very contextual and can assist in clinical diagnosis and treatment.” - Ivo Stivoric, VP of R&D for Jawbone

To motivate behavior change, people need big-picture information on how their lifestyle—factors like nutrition, hydration, sleep, and stress—affects their health. Sensors can help connect the dots between environment, behavior, and vital signs, leading to actionable recommendations for improving health. Providing context creates a new symbiosis between consumer devices and medical sensors, a relationship that will grow as consumer devices become more accurate and medical products get “cooler.”

CREATING LONGTERM ENGAGEMENT

“80% of health apps are abandoned within two weeks.” - Marco Della Torre, VP of Product Science, Basis Science, Inc.

Panelists and presenters discussed strategies for creating “sticky” apps and devices that engage people in long-term behavior change. Stuart Karten presented a new Heart Coach app—the first to use data from ICDs to help heart failure patients live longer and stay out of the hospital. It provides a “smart” coach to help people take responsibility, stay positive, seek support, and reward progress. Speakers such as USC engineering student Charlie Haskins and Tastemade founder Joe Perez demonstrated solutions that integrate with platforms such as Instagram and YouTube, drawing on people’s impulses to be entertained and emphasizing the need to marry health with fun.

CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

“We need to change the narrative of health from a horror movie full of closed doors that people enter alone...” - Ed Saxon, Film Producer

Many people adopt digital health devices with a negative self-image—I’m “too sick” or “too fat.” Device makers need to be conscious of the psychology of their users, meet them where they’re at, and then change the narrative from disability to empowerment. Most of the solutions demonstrated at the Body Computing Conference make health care less intimidating by connecting users with a community that offers support and care.

TRENDS

Bring Your Own Data:

As patients collect and analyze data from personal sensors and apps, they’re going to demand more engagement with this data from their doctors. This type of engagement will become a differentiator for doctors, as empowered patients are likely to fire a doctor who refuses to cooperate on their own terms.

Government Presence:

Due to the government shutdown, the FDA’s Bakul Patel appeared via pre-recorded video. His physical absence reinforced a broader trend: the FDA recently stated the agency would not enforce requirements on a majority of health apps. It will limit its attention to apps designed for diagnostics and those that transform a mobile platform into a regulated medical device.

Cloud Computing:

Experts predict that cloud computing in healthcare will grow to a \$5.4 billion industry by 2017. A panel at the Body Computing Conference determined that reliability, open-ness, and user experience will determine the winning cloud-based platforms. People want to feel like they own and control their data, wherever it’s stored.