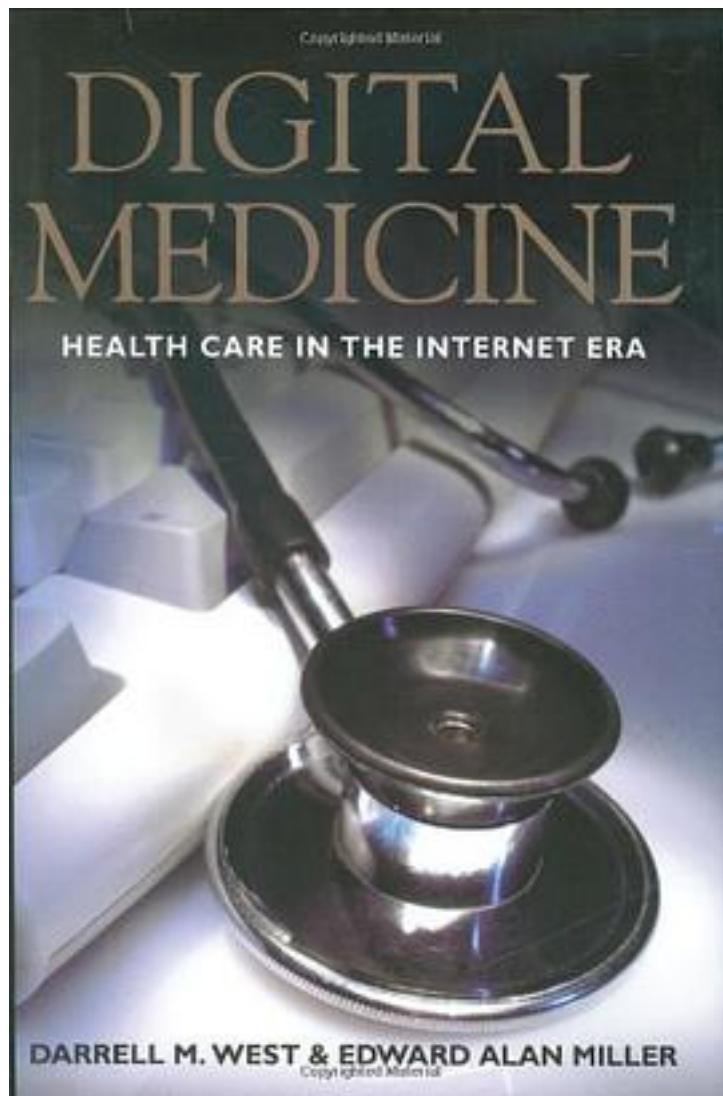


Digital Medicine



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Information technology has dramatically changed the way we live our lives in areas ranging from commerce and entertainment to voting. Now, policy advocates and government officials hope to bring the benefits of information technology to health care. Governments, hospitals, doctors, and pharmaceutical manufacturers have placed a tremendous amount of medical information, data, and services online in recent years. Many consumers can visit health department sites and compare performance data on health care providers. Some physicians encourage patients to use e-mail or web messaging as opposed to phone calls or in-office visits for simple medical issues. Increasingly, medical equipment and prescription drug manufacturers are making their products available online. Yet despite this growth in activity, the promise of 'e-health' remains largely unfulfilled. "Digital Medicine" investigates the factors limiting the ability of digital technology to remake health care in the United States and around the world. What political, social, and ethical challenges are presented by online health care? How are racial, ethnic, and other disparities limiting the e-health revolution? How accessible are health-related Internet websites to the disabled, those at basic or below basic levels of literacy, or with limited English proficiency? Are there differences between websites sponsored by public, private and nonprofit organizations that limit technology utilization? And how can we close the disparity gap and deal with conflicts of interest that contribute to distrust in the information presented? Darrell West and Edward Miller analyze multiple data sources, including original survey research and website analysis, to study the content of health care-related websites, sponsorship status, public usage, and the relationship between e-health utilization and attitudes about health care in America. They also analyze the different ways in which officials in other countries have implemented health information technology. By drawing on these experiences, "Digital Medicine" helps us understand health care information innovation in a variety of political, social, and economic settings.

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