

# Digital medicine – catch this next wave in

## Brendon Evans

I was always the ‘tech kid’. I remember loving our first PC (a Commodore 64) and the soaring accomplishment I felt after successfully setting the VCR time after my father had failed. I was almost finished high school when we first connected to the internet, and I sat – enraptured – listening to the modem ‘dialling up’, and my sister telling me to get off so she could call on the landline telephone. Like many of you, I was the one that the family looked towards for help when the things didn’t work. I was riding high! Surfing the front wave of technology. My, how things have changed!

In the subsequent decades, I have wiped out – face-first – and am currently churning in technology’s wake. My children sometimes call me a ‘boomer’ because I only use Facebook, and while they may not know what a VCR or landline even is, they are digital natives in an internet-saturated world, and I must admit that their skills far outpace mine. I turn to *them* for help with my phone settings, and when ‘the thing doesn’t work’.

I also, sadly, feel behind in technology in my medicine practice. I do not (yet) use an AI-scribe and can sometimes be heard grumbling around my rural hospital about the ‘good old days’ of paper charts. The truth is this: technology’s rising tide has made our patients healthier and our lives as doctors easier and will continue to do so, and paper charts weren’t really that crash-hot to begin with.

Fortunately, my time is not yet over, and I can still catch this next wave in. Whether we adopt technology early or later, the benefits are still on offer to us and our patients.

This issue takes a narrative approach to digital general practice. It serves as a solid primer to get up to speed on the ‘state of the art’. It begins with a reflection of where we have been and the landmarks we have passed along our journey.<sup>1</sup> It warns of the potential dangers to patients left behind and advises us on how we might minimise digital health inequity.<sup>2</sup> It continues with practical examples on implementing change and the use of AI in education and continuing professional development (CPD).<sup>3-5</sup> Finally, it closes with a view to the future and what the future waves might bring.<sup>6</sup> I commend the authors for their thoughtful and comprehensive contribution, and I commend their words to you.

Let us – together – catch this next wave in.

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