

How to win with personal health records? Build something beautiful and social

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Missy Krasner landed at Google Health in April of 2006 — a time she calls pre-social, pre-quantified-self and pre-internet-of-things. Google wanted to create a central repository for consumers to collect and store their health records, and make the APIs available for developers to build on top of.

We all know how that turned out: Google eventually [retired its personal health record platform in 2011](#), citing a lack of widespread adoption. But Google Health also had problems scaling in the eyes of Krasner, who served as the product marketing manager.

I recently talked with Krasner, who is now entrepreneur-in-residence at [Morgenthaler Ventures](#) and a startup mentor for 500 Startups and Healthbox, about why PHRs seem to finally be taking hold, and what the next generation of personal health records will look like.

Thinking back to your time at Google Health, what was the difference between what you guys were doing and what's [finally starting to get serious traction with patients now?](#)

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We were in a pre-social world and a pre internet-of-things world. This was pre-quantified-self movement. Basically, what we were building was a place that you could store all of your medical information in an untethered personal health record. That's an important distinction — a tethered PHR is when you have a solution that is attached to a health insurance plan or to a large hospital or to an employer. It's tethered to their EHR so all of the data gets populated.

That's very different than an untethered solution, which is consumer-directed. The reason it was tough to do an untethered PHR, is because you have to go out and build all of these point-to-point integrations with the data, and that's very hard to scale. I have to hit all of the insurance companies. Once I integrate with their claims systems, then I have to go talk to all of the EHR vendors.



So it seems that so far we've seen the most success with tethered PHRs. Do you see that changing any time soon?

Eventually, yes. This is where the industry has morphed: the world of cloud, social and mobile have basically penetrated late in the game. Now you have mobile apps that are very easy to navigate because the (user interface) is much easier, that are attached to brands that consumers know, whether it may be Weight Watchers or Walgreens. We're essentially now in an environment where the biggest challenge is not getting patients to engage with these apps, but rather who owns the social health graph?

I have at least 11 apps to monitor my health, but I have to log into each of them. They are all little pieces and features that used to be in a PHR. I would like to not have separate apps. I would like someone who I trust to own all of my data and visualize and normalize it and organize it in a way that makes sense. That's where we're headed. We're not there yet, but that's where we're headed.

What comes next?

The biggest theme right now is [Meaningful Use Stage 2](#). You have to now have a certain amount of patients that have viewed, downloaded and transmitted their data.

The other thing with what I call PHRs 2.0 is now you have a social networking element. At the very end of Google Health we were headed to social networking and device connectivity. We just needed more roadway.

Now, you won't just have a report. Some of the newer PHRs are getting business if they have amazing (user interfaces) — if they're beautiful, if they have companion user apps, and they're social. They don't just say we want to structure your data; now we want to connect you with other people who have your same illness, if you're comfortable with that. We're seeing social networking sprouting up around companies like [MyHealthTeams](#), [Alliance Health Networks](#), [Audax Health](#) and [OneHealth](#) who are doing the social model and selling to large self-insured employers under the wellness banner, or to providers that are in shared-risk networks. They want the patients to engage and get better. That's where we're seeing new companies.