

The Elusive Search for One-Size-Fits-All e-Health Solutions

E-Health is a young and rapidly-growing field lying in the intersection of multiple research disciplines. The transdisciplinary nature of the field means that it is challenging for researchers to remain fully aware of methodologies and strategies from other fields that would be useful in advancing e-Health research.

One strategy that is underutilized in e-Health is customization. Customization has been a focus of research in Human Computer Interaction for decades and is widely used in commercial applications. Yet most e-Health solutions do not appear to consider adaptive designs for user subgroups. While some applications, such as electronic health records, may require a high level of standardization, others, such as Web-based patient education tools, could easily incorporate customization to allow for maximum user acceptance. By seeking one-size-fits-all solutions rather than using factors that influence user needs and preferences to customize technologies for subgroups of users, e-Health researchers may be missing opportunities to develop solutions that provide a better fit for more users.

This presentation will outline the theory and practice of customization and will delve into how its methodologies and strategies can be applied effectively in e-Health. We will also discuss some of the challenges of customization from technical and ethical perspectives, as well as personalization, which goes beyond customization to provide designs based on individual preferences.