



# They have computers, you know!

Mike Morris 3rd July 2019

This is my first blog entry for this site and thank you for reading this, hopefully this will solicit some responses and we can start an active and productive dialog.

I thought that I would start by describing a conversation that I had with a young man a few days ago. He is in his early twenties, a graduate, plays sport and does whatever he can to look after himself. He is training to be an accountant, so our conversations can be a bit mundane, and we got around to discussing medical treatment. I happened to mention that my GP was waiting for a letter from a hospital a hundred miles away to confirm the results of tests that I had taken there after an issue that resulted in a ride in an ambulance. My young friend gave me a condescending look and said that my GP could have just looked it up on my records – “they have computers you know”.

I attempted to explain that there are many computers but that they can't all see the same information and that the systems are not fully interconnected. His condescension turned to sympathy as he realised that I was still living in the 1980s and didn't understand the way things worked in 2019. I persevered and managed to convince him that what I had said was actually the case and that the issue was less technical in nature and more related to the laws on information sharing and the consent of the record owner. There was a short debate on why the patient was the record owner and not the GP, but we got there in the end, however it did lead to a bit more incredulity when I explained that some patients did not want their records shared.

My point in all this is that some of the millions of people registered with the NHS believe that there is already a nationally integrated electronic health record. They live in the Facebook era and can't comprehend of a system that does not interlink – particularly one of this importance.

Lets hope that we soon do have a reality that he can comprehend, not by ripping and replacing what we have, but by the clever application of technology to glue the disparate systems together.

One good thing did come from the conversation though: for the first time ever, I managed to get an accountant into such a state of shock that he actually bought me a drink!