ABSTRACT

The emergence of lead generation companies has created a tremendous change in the world of data collection. This opportunity has enhanced the possibility of tracing and offering classified packages of user behavior in the virtual world. As such, this paper aims at discovering the possible connections between the lead generation and electronic health. The recent trends were followed to present the main research interests in this area. This study presents a theoretical framework to find out about the use of lead generation facilities in e-health area. At the end, managerial implications have been proposed for better presenting the practical aspects of the capacities of lead generation for the advancement of business practice.

Keywords: Data Collection, e-Health, Lead Generation, Lead Generation Facilities, Theoretical Framework

Advancement of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in recent years has led to tremendous changes in various industries. The effect of ICT on different sciences has given rise to novel issues such as e-government, and e-education. One of the issues where a large volume of information is produced and used is healthcare. Healthcare is increasingly becoming an important part of the content used by online users (e.g., Romano, 2003; Shaman & Pralgever, 2004; Taylor, Gombeski & Dillon, 2005). Hence, websites with healthcare content are seen among other websites which provide Internet users with services in this area.

According to 2004 PEW Internet Project Survey, the online content related to healthcare sought by people is as follows: special disease or medical problem (63%), certain medical treatment or procedure (47%), a particular physician or hospital (21%), and experimental treatment to medications (18%) (Taylor, Gombeski & Dillon, 2005, p.33). Also, according to Taylor et al. (2005) in 2004 when people were using a healthcare website, 33% looked for hospital information, 19% looked for medical information, 18% looked for other health information, 14% for a physician, and 9% sought directions.

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Studies reveal that users visit a health website for different reasons. In such websites, the motivations of people are important since, due to the different nature of health websites, these motivations might sometimes lead individuals to risky behaviors. This issue is of higher importance in Islamic countries because it is not readily possible to use most health websites due to the nature of discussions presented and products advertised in them. The present study intends to determine the type of user behavior according to their motivation of searching in such websites. Also, this study aims at distinguishing ethical users from non-ethical users using an effective mechanism for determining user behavior, and lead unethical users to desirable behaviors through appropriate strategies.

Generally, physicians perceive the potential benefits of implementing IT. A recent survey of a US primary care physician revealed that almost 75% of the participants believed that these applications could reduce errors, 70% perceived IT as potentially increasing their productivity, over 60% indicated that IT tools have the potential to reduce costs and help patients assume more responsibility (Anderson & Balas, 2006).

The significance of e-health has led many researchers to conduct studies on different aspects of the issue. Faghihi and Memarzadeh (2012) identified three areas of infrastructures, policies, and strategies as the indicators of e-health policy-making in Iran. Provision of legal infrastructures, integrity of the practitioners of this area and providers of e-health services, and public and inexpensive access to qualitative services based on individuals’ needs have respectively the highest priority in three indicators of infrastructures, policies, and strategies of developing e-health.

Hermann (2002) in a survey of 80 patients, tried to investigate if the new media are appropriate for communicating basic information. He also studied the advantages of using computer animations for indicating various treatment methods compared to ordinary advertisements. This study indicated that the perception and subjective knowledge of surgical operation and its probable side effects, the degree of trust in professional treatment, reducing stress and preparing for the operation have significantly better performance after watching the animation compared to reading the text.

Another study by Anderson (2007) investigated the present situation of IT in healthcare to understand the benefits and threats of using this technology by primary care physicians in European countries, as well as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. This study found that physicians, in general, perceive benefits of IT, but also cite major barriers to its implementation in their practices. These barriers include healthcare providers’ limited access to center, complex systems, and lack of data standards that permit exchange of clinical data, privacy concerns and legal barriers. Besides, another study revealed that physicians consider the time and effort for learning to use IT as an important barrier (Anderson, 2007).

Huang and Chang (2011) conducted a content analysis of 764 cases of US hospitals and found out that larger hospitals tend to implement interactive e-health tools more than smaller ones.

Nowadays, lead generations are considered as one of the most important strategies of marketers. This strategy helps marketers to find information about users by tracing them in the virtual space. The main advantage of lead generations is its online nature. Lead generations, using innovative marketing strategies and specific technology offer solutions which lead to generation of qualitative leads for advertisers. This information finally helps advertising agencies, Internet marketers, and Internet publishers reach their goals (Hanafizadeh & Behboudi, 2012; Hanafizadeh, Behboudi, Ahadi & Ghaideri, 2012). To understand what lead generation is, the following definition has been proposed;

Lead generation is a technological and managerial process by which ad specialists trace users' behaviors (leads) on the Internet and categorize (generate) those leads in a manner that provides advertisers with some bleeding edge courses of action.

E-health websites responsible for healthcare services are considered among the mostly-visited websites; for, all people of the society...
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