



School of Computing
& Information Systems

*An exploration of the pilot implementation of an online symptom
monitoring diary to support people living with cystic fibrosis self-manage
their condition.*

By

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Erin Roehrer

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the pilot implementation of an online symptom monitoring diary (myCF pilot implementation) developed to support people living with cystic fibrosis (CF) through symptom monitoring. The research was conducted within a broader study, the myCF project, that was implementing an online symptom monitoring diary in Tasmania. The myCF pilot implementation was designed in conjunction with health care practitioners with the intention of increasing the patient's symptom awareness and in turn their CF self-management. This thesis presents findings on how the myCF pilot implementation was incorporated into the daily lives of people living with CF and how the myCF pilot implementation influenced people's ability to self-manage. More broadly, guided by the use of Normalisation Process Theory, this thesis contributes to improving understanding of the socio-technical factors and processes that arise during the integration of online symptom monitoring with supporting chronic disease self-management.

ICT tools have been proposed as a mechanism to contribute to improving people's self-efficacy for managing their condition, which in turn lead to improved health outcomes (Cummings et al., 2010, Ekberg et al., 2010). There is a need for more qualitative research to understand the requirements for ICT self-management tools (Ahern, 2007) and to improve the efficacy of these tools (Gomez and Pather, 2012, Cummings, 2008). This research explores the potential link between self-management tool efficacy and developing self-management 'knowledge'. ICT tools that are specifically designed to support individuals in symptom monitoring are still in their infancy and there is minimal evidence of the implementation of such tools (Gaikwad and Warren, 2009, Nijland et al., 2008, Solomon, 2008). Currently most self-management tools include a monitoring component with reporting back to health care professionals for decision making on the management of the patient's condition (Hardiker et al., 2013, McDermott and While, 2013). The monitoring of symptom data by health care professionals contradicts the foundations of self-management, aligning the self-management tool to a compliance model. CF has been identified as a chronic condition where patients could potentially benefit from ICT supported self-management. CF is one of the most common life-threatening genetic diseases, Tasmania has a high incidence of CF and much of the CF population is geographically dispersed and socially isolated. This thesis contributes to the current substantive and conceptual knowledge to the field of information systems by presenting findings on the interactions between the online symptom monitoring diary and CF in Tasmania.

The research methodology employed a qualitative approach that was underpinned by a subjective ontology and an interpretative epistemology. The research strategy consisted of a case study and a three-stage data collection over 6 months. Three groups of participants were involved in this research, for all three stages. These groups are:

1. Children (0-10 years) and a parent;
2. Teenagers (11 to 17 years) with CF, a parent may have been included; and
3. Adults (18 years plus) with CF.

The research design consisted of three research stages: Stage one explored participants' expectations and the initial introduction to the myCF pilot implementation by conducting semi-structured interviews, observations, and field notes. Stage two explored the participants' experiences of the myCF pilot implementation and utilised semi-structured interviews, observations, field notes and web-logs. Stage three used unstructured interviews to develop individual case studies and additionally used data collected from the first two research stages.

Data was analysed with an inductive thematic approach that developed abstracted themes, which generated insight and discussion from three different lenses for this research; the research stages, the individual cases, and at a holistic level. The themes were interpreted to gain insights for each research stage, resulting in the development of initial findings. Concept maps were used to identify clusters of the initial findings and to enhance the interpretation of the initial findings from all three stages of the research. The interpretation process resulted in research findings that represented both individual and group experiences. Further interpretation of the research findings, assisted by the use of Normalisation Process Theory, answered the research questions and research objectives, producing the final four key findings. In order to understand in detail the attitudes, insights, perceptions, and individual CF attributes over times as they interact with the myCF pilot implementation, a qualitative approach was adopted.

The key findings for the research are as follows:

- **KF1: Without a transition from self-management 'understanding' to self-management 'knowledge' it is not possible for an online symptom monitoring diary to provide self-management support.**
- **KF2: Symptom monitoring is a background activity for those with CF, and a focused activity for those who care for people with CF.**
- **KF3: Evaluation methods that focus on use of electronic tools for self-management support are not able to holistically capture all aspects of perception of helpfulness.**
- **KF4: Lack of consistency in user-interface design directly impacted on perceptions of satisfaction during interaction and overall evaluations of the entire online symptom monitoring diary.**

This research has made contributions to information systems knowledge at substantive, methodological and theoretical levels. At a substantive level it has provided a case study of how the myCF pilot implementation was incorporated into the lives of participants, and how self-management support was not evident from the pilot implementation. At a methodological level the design of this research has demonstrated the value of linking the analysis of the research stages through inductive thematic analysis. The thematic analysis moved the segmented data to abstracted themes that facilitated individual case development of the participants' experiences during the research. The interpretation of the

analysis through the use of a concept map developed the basic initial findings into comprehensive research findings that reflected both the individual and group perspectives present in this research. At a theoretical level, using the knowledge management hierarchy, the research has highlighted that the myCF pilot implementation does not support self-management without a transition from self-management 'understanding' to self-management 'knowledge'. The research has demonstrated that current evaluation techniques do not capture the intangible criteria that indicate whether the myCF pilot implementation was a success or a failure. Finally, this research has demonstrated that before technology is implemented to support people living with CF with symptom monitoring and self-management, we first need to be aware of what the participants understand self-management to consist of.

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ACRONYMS

BMI	Body Mass Index
CCM	Chronic Care Model
CDSM	Chronic Disease Self-Management
CF	Cystic Fibrosis
COPD	Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
CSCW	Computer-Supported Co-operative Work
EBM	Evidence-Based Medicine
FEV1	Forced Expiratory Volume in 1 second
FVC	Forced Vital Capacity
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GP	General Practitioner
HCI	Human Computer Interaction
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IS	Information Systems
ISDM	Information Systems Development Methodologies
IT	Information Technology
PC	Personal Computer
PD	Participatory Design
NPT	Normalisation Process Theory
RCT	Randomised Controlled Trial
SDLC	Systems development life cycle
SLT	Social Learning Theory
SMS	Short Message Service
TCF	Tasmanian Community Fund
TPB	Theory of Planned Behaviour
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action

TTMC	Trans-theoretical Model of Change
UCD	User Centred Design
UI	User-Interface

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	I
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	IV
ACRONYMS.....	V
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	VII
TABLE OF TABLES	XII
TABLE OF FIGURES	XIII
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 RESEARCH DOMAIN	2
1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM DEFINED	5
1.3.1 <i>Research Aims</i>	7
1.3.2 <i>Research Questions</i>	7
1.3.3 <i>Research Approach</i>	7
1.4 SUMMARY OF CONTRIBUTION	8
1.5 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS	10
1.5.1 <i>Chapter 2 Background</i>	11
1.5.2 <i>Chapter 3 Literature Review</i>	11
1.5.3 <i>Chapter 4 Research Methodology</i>	11
1.5.4 <i>Chapter 5 Stage one: Foundation building</i>	11
1.5.5 <i>Chapter 6 Stage two: Implementation Experience</i>	12
1.5.6 <i>Chapter 7 Stage three: Life context</i>	12
1.5.7 <i>Chapter 8 Discussion of findings</i>	12
1.5.8 <i>Chapter 9 Conclusion</i>	12
1.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY	12
CHAPTER 2 BACKGROUND	14
2.1 INTRODUCTION	14
2.2 BACKGROUND TO THE MYCF PROJECT	15
2.2.1 <i>Pathways home</i>	15
2.2.2 <i>CFA Project</i>	16
2.3 MYCF PROJECT.....	17
2.4 MYCF PILOT.....	20
2.4.1 <i>The implemented system</i>	21
2.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY	23
CHAPTER 3 LITERATURE REVIEW.....	25
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	25
3.2 BACKGROUND.....	26
3.2.1 <i>Changing health care demographics</i>	26
3.2.2 <i>Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in health care</i>	27

3.2.3	<i>What is eHealth?</i>	30
3.3	ICT FOR SYMPTOM MONITORING	32
3.3.1	<i>ICT development</i>	33
3.3.2	<i>ICT evaluation</i>	35
3.3.3	<i>Defining the user</i>	40
3.3.4	<i>The digital divide</i>	40
3.3.5	<i>ICT symptom feedback</i>	41
3.4	SELF-MANAGEMENT	42
3.4.1	<i>Health Information seeking behaviour</i>	43
3.4.2	<i>Partnership in health care</i>	44
3.5	CYSTIC FIBROSIS, ATTITUDES AND LIFE.....	46
3.5.1	<i>Cystic fibrosis - a Tasmanian context</i>	47
3.5.2	<i>Delivery of cystic fibrosis care</i>	47
3.5.3	<i>Impact of cystic fibrosis on individual and family</i>	48
3.6	CHAPTER SUMMARY	49
CHAPTER 4	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	52
4.1	INTRODUCTION	52
4.2	RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY	53
4.2.1	<i>Ontology</i>	53
4.2.2	<i>Epistemology</i>	54
4.2.3	<i>Qualitative methodology</i>	55
4.3	RESEARCH STRATEGY	58
4.3.1	<i>Case study</i>	59
4.3.2	<i>Three stage data collection</i>	61
4.4	RESEARCH DESIGN	61
4.5	TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES	63
4.5.1	<i>Interviews</i>	64
4.5.2	<i>Semi-structured interviews</i>	65
4.5.3	<i>Observation</i>	67
4.5.4	<i>Field Notes</i>	67
4.5.5	<i>Web-logs</i>	68
4.5.6	<i>Unstructured interviews</i>	68
4.5.7	<i>Ethics</i>	69
4.6	DATA ANALYSIS.....	69
4.6.1	<i>Theory of analysis</i>	70
4.6.2	<i>Analytical approach</i>	71
4.7	INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION	78
4.7.1	<i>Concept Maps</i>	78
4.8	RESEARCHER BIAS.....	80
4.9	CHAPTER SUMMARY	82
CHAPTER 5	STAGE ONE - FOUNDATION BUILDING	83
5.1	INTRODUCTION	83
5.2	RESEARCH STAGE ONE – FOUNDATION BUILDING	84
5.3	STAGE ONE THEMES	84

5.3.1	<i>Condition</i>	84
5.3.2	<i>Management</i>	89
5.3.3	<i>Support</i>	91
5.3.4	<i>Considerations</i>	95
5.3.5	<i>Expectations</i>	100
5.3.6	<i>Development</i>	103
5.3.7	<i>Blockage</i>	106
5.4	STAGE ONE – FOUNDATION BUILDING INITIAL FINDINGS	109
5.5	CHAPTER SUMMARY	111
CHAPTER 6 STAGE TWO - IMPLEMENTATION EXPERIENCE		112
6.1	INTRODUCTION	112
6.2	STAGE TWO – IMPLEMENTATION EXPERIENCE THEMES	113
6.2.1	<i>Expectations</i>	113
6.2.2	<i>Relevance</i>	115
6.2.3	<i>Usability</i>	118
6.2.4	<i>Facilitation</i>	123
6.2.5	<i>Connecting</i>	125
6.2.6	<i>Care</i>	129
6.2.7	<i>Apathy</i>	133
6.2.8	<i>Life</i>	135
6.3	STAGE TWO – IMPLEMENTATION EXPERIENCE INITIAL FINDINGS	140
6.4	CHAPTER SUMMARY	143
CHAPTER 7 STAGE THREE – LIFE CONTEXT		144
7.1	INTRODUCTION	144
7.2	STAGE THREE – LIFE CONTEXT THEMES	146
7.3	CASE STUDY A	147
7.3.1	<i>Dennis</i>	147
7.3.2	<i>Comparison of case to stage two analysis</i>	150
7.4	CASE STUDY B	152
7.4.1	<i>Iain</i>	152
7.4.2	<i>Comparison of case to stage two analysis</i>	154
7.5	CASE STUDY C	156
7.5.1	<i>Keir</i>	156
7.5.2	<i>Comparison of case to stage two analysis</i>	159
7.6	CASE STUDY D	161
7.6.1	<i>Jarrett</i>	161
7.6.2	<i>Comparison of case to stage two analysis</i>	166
7.7	CASE STUDY E	168
7.7.1	<i>Nate</i>	168
7.7.2	<i>Comparison of case to stage two analysis</i>	170
7.8	CASE STUDY F	172
7.8.1	<i>Saxon</i>	172
7.8.2	<i>Comparison of case to stage two analysis</i>	175
7.9	CASE STUDY G	177

7.9.1	<i>Wallace</i>	177
7.9.2	<i>Comparison of case to stage two analysis</i>	179
7.10	CASE STUDY H	181
7.10.1	<i>Martin</i>	181
7.10.2	<i>Comparison of case to stage two analysis</i>	184
7.11	CASE STUDY I	185
7.11.1	<i>Nyda</i>	185
7.11.2	<i>Comparison of case to stage two analysis</i>	187
7.12	CASE STUDY COMPARISONS	189
7.13	STAGE THREE – LIFE CONTEXT INITIAL FINDINGS	194
7.14	RESEARCH FINDINGS	196
7.15	CHAPTER SUMMARY	200
CHAPTER 8	DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	201
8.1	INTRODUCTION	201
8.2	FINDINGS	202
8.2.1	<i>Finding One</i>	202
8.2.2	<i>Finding Two</i>	203
8.2.3	<i>Finding Three</i>	205
8.2.4	<i>Finding Four</i>	206
8.2.5	<i>Finding Five</i>	207
8.2.6	<i>Finding Six</i>	209
8.2.7	<i>Finding Seven</i>	212
8.2.8	<i>Finding Eight</i>	214
8.3	ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES	216
8.4	RESEARCH KEY FINDINGS	224
8.4.1	<i>Key Finding One</i>	224
8.4.2	<i>Key Finding Two</i>	226
8.4.3	<i>Key Finding Three</i>	227
8.4.4	<i>Key Finding Four</i>	229
8.5	CHAPTER SUMMARY	231
CHAPTER 9	CONCLUSION	232
9.1	INTRODUCTION	232
9.2	SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS	233
9.2.1	<i>RQ1: Supporting self-management</i>	233
9.2.2	<i>RQ2: Incorporating symptom monitoring</i>	234
9.3	RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS	235
9.3.1	<i>Substantive level</i>	235
9.3.2	<i>Methodological level</i>	236
9.3.3	<i>Theoretical level</i>	237
9.4	IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE	238
9.5	RESEARCH LIMITATIONS	238
9.5.1	<i>Scope of research</i>	239
9.5.2	<i>Researcher bias</i>	239
9.5.3	<i>Lack of generalisability</i>	240

9.6	FUTURE RESEARCH	240
9.7	SUMMARY	241
REFERENCES.....		243
APPENDIX A PRE-IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONS.....		263
APPENDIX B DIARY USER GUIDE.....		264
APPENDIX C POST-IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONS.....		280
APPENDIX D FIELD NOTE EXAMPLE		282
APPENDIX E INTERPRETATION CONCEPT MAP.....		283
APPENDIX F FINDING ONE CONCEPT MAP		284
APPENDIX G FINDING TWO CONCEPT MAP		285
APPENDIX H FINDING THREE CONCEPT MAP		286
APPENDIX I FINDING FOUR CONCEPT MAP		287
APPENDIX J APPENDIX FIVE CONCEPT MAP		288
APPENDIX K FINDING SIX CONCEPT MAP		289
APPENDIX L FINDING SEVEN CONCEPT MAP.....		290
APPENDIX M FINDING EIGHT CONCEPT MAP.....		291