

## Editor's note

*IOS Press is publisher of Information Services and Use (ISU) along with the book series, Studies in Health Technology and Informatics (SHTI). Currently in preparation for publication in 2017 is the volume, Health Literacy: New Directions in Research, Theory, and Practice, co-edited by Robert A. Logan and Elliot R. Siegel.*

Many authors and readers of *ISU* are interested in exploiting new developments in mobile information technology and social media applications. These technologies often promise timely, authoritative, and personally relatable health information to enhance an individual's health literacy. The technologies also attempt to reduce health disparities among underserved populations who sometimes have better access to newer information technologies, such as smart phones and tablets, compared to more traditional sources and channels of health information. Easier accessibility to health care delivery systems additionally is enhanced by the same technologies that can overcome distance from a patient and/or reduce expensive user costs, which addresses two sources of health outcomes disparities.

Health science librarians, information scientists and technologists often possess only a limited awareness of potentially relevant scholarly theory underlying health literacy, health disparities, and health communication. As a result, some health interventions omit relevant conceptual frameworks and miss what otherwise might be achievable. **Robert Logan** is author of the paper (a chapter in the book) that explains and partially integrates the conceptual frameworks within health disparities and health literacy research. It contributes to more awareness and appreciation for theory generally, and encourages more hypothesis testing and robust study design by eHealth proponents and practitioners. "There is nothing more practical than a good theory" is famously attributed to David K. Berlo, one of the leading communication scholars of the 20th century, and a mentor revered by Logan and myself.

The second paper by **Wanda Whitney**, **Alla Keselman** and **Betsy Humphreys** focuses on the unique role of libraries and librarians in promoting patient education, general literacy and information literacy efforts. Indeed over the past two decades librarians have made remarkable contributions to health information outreach programs in diverse communities, focusing on serving special populations that may suffer from health disparities. The paper surveys librarians' outreach efforts with cutting edge technologies, such as virtual worlds and gaming; overcoming challenges in meeting patients' information needs in clinical settings; and meeting patrons' health information needs in the context of disaster preparedness and health insurance market place sign-up.

In subsequent issues of *ISU* we will select and co-publish additional papers from the book. Although written in the context of examining health literacy research, theory and practice, they have a dual role of illuminating our knowledge and understanding of the uses of emerging information technologies and innovative services that are applicable to other domains.