

Digitalize or Die-Responsible Innovations in Healthcare and Welfare Sectors

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Abstract : Present paper suggests a theoretical model that describes the process of the development of responsible innovations on the firm level in health and welfare sectors. There is a need to develop new firm strategies in these sectors. This paper suggests to look on the concept of responsible innovation that was originally developed on the social level and to apply this new concept to the new area of firm strategy. The rapid global diffusion of information and communication technologies has greatly improved access to knowledge. At the same time, communication is cheap, information is a commodity, and global trade increases technological diffusion. As a result, firms and users, including those outside of industrialized nations, get early exposure to the latest technologies and information. General-purpose technologies such as mobile phones and 3D printers enable individuals to solve local needs and customize products. The combined effect of these changes is having a profound impact on the innovation landscape. Meanwhile, the healthcare sector is facing unprecedented challenges, which are magnified by budgetary constraints, an aging population and the desire to provide care for all. On the other hand, patients themselves are changing. They are savvier about their diseases, they expect their relation with the healthcare professionals to be open and interactive, but above all they want to be part of the decision process. All of this is a reflection of what is already happening in other industries where customers have access to large amount of information and became educated buyers. This article addresses the question of *how* ICT research and innovation may contribute to developing solutions to grand societal challenges in a responsible way. A broad definition of the concept of responsibility in the context of innovation is adopted in this paper. Responsibility is thus seen as a collective, uncertain and future-oriented activity. This opens the questions of how responsibilities are perceived and distributed and how innovation and science can be governed and stewarded towards socially desirable and acceptable ends. This article addresses a central question confronting politicians, business leaders, and regional planners.

Keywords : responsible innovation, ICT, healthcare, welfare sector

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