

## Technology Forecast

**R. ARUN KUMAR, VP, Head, Global Life Sciences, at Infosys Technologies, looks at the role technology can play to help pharmaceutical companies tackle the huge challenges facing the industry.**



➔ **PV:** *What are some of the challenges facing pharmaceutical companies that technology can address?*

**KUMAR:** With shrinking drug pipelines, companies are investing in better collaboration, standardization, and analytical tools to improve R&D productivity as well as their sales and marketing operations. Research departments are using software, online tools, and technology platforms for next-generation sequencing and imaging to fail faster and fail cheaper. Clinical departments are incorporating signal detection technologies, such as biosensors, to make trials more adaptive.

➔ **PV:** *What are the biggest issues facing the healthcare economy, and what impact will these have on the industry?*

**KUMAR:** The future of the healthcare economy will be driven by three big factors: aging baby boomers, increased incidence of chronic disease, and a move toward total health solutions. The increasing elderly population and the increased incidence of chronic diseases associated with aging will affect the affordability of healthcare. The move toward prevention and patient-centricity is being driven by patients demanding personalized services. Companies will have to take into account patient values, involve patients in clinical decisions, provide information, ensure transparency, and help direct self-care.

Patients are searching for total health solutions. A significant portion of healthcare spending in the future will be on vaccines, genome sequencing, and other means of preventing chronic conditions.

To address these challenges, major IT investment in 2011 will focus on manufacturing compliance, standardization, analytics, enterprise architecture, and mobility.

➔ **PV:** *Specifically, where will companies target their IT investments in 2011?*

**KUMAR:** Major IT investments in 2011 will focus on data and predictive analytics, interoperability, cloud computing, and social media. Technology can minimize errors and redundancies and improve healthcare delivery through data analytics, evidence-based medication, paperless transactions, etc. Capturing patient data and providing complex support on multiple platforms will require IT integration and widespread interoperability.

The digitization of patient health records will continue, and there will be higher investments in this area in 2011. Cloud computing and predictive analytics that enable more real-time decision-making from huge amounts of interconnected information will also drive investments in technology.

Sales and marketing will move toward digitization. As pharmaceutical sales and marketing functions continue to embrace the Web 2.0 models of social networks and media, such as blogging and communicating on Facebook and Twitter, there will be more investment in IT to capture and monitor these physician and patient interactions.

➔ **PV:** *What are some of the major roadblocks pharmaceutical companies will continue to face in emerging markets, and what role will technology play in addressing these challenges?*

**KUMAR:** While emerging markets offer huge opportunities, the major roadblocks, such as a lack of mature distribution networks, counterfeiting, generic competition, and lower price points, have some large companies struggling to capitalize on their operations in some of these less sophisticated markets. Uncertain political, regulatory, and legal systems, which are unable to prevent spurious medicines from reaching the market, are worrisome to companies operating in these developing regions.

Technology solutions can help identify and overcome these and other roadblocks. In a survey of 200 CEOs, more than 70% highlighted technology as the top change driver shaping the global

### U.S. Adults Continue to Seek Pharma Info Online

The e-pharma consumer population continues to grow, boosted in part by the increase in the number of older consumers using the Internet in recent years, according to Manhattan Research. In 2010, 112 million people, or 48% of U.S. adults, were e-pharma consumers, or individuals who went online to find pharma information, up from 55 million consumers in 2005.

Manhattan Research's new ePharma Consumer v10.0 study explores the diverse online media and technology mix of this audience segment as it relates to pharma information seeking.

The study found that most consumers who go online for pharma information take health-related action after their online research, and they are more likely to discuss the information with their doctor rather than to make treatment decisions on their own. General health websites are the top online pharma resources in terms of reach and influence, but the research also shows that pharma websites are critical secondary resources that play an important role during the prescription drug research continuum.

Source: Manhattan Research, ePharma Consumer v10.0. For more information, visit [manhattanresearch.com/epc](http://manhattanresearch.com/epc).

business environment. Technology forms the backbone of every successful business, and CIOs play a critical role in transforming their IT function from siloed, tactical operations into a global, strategic function. For executives to enable their companies to compete, they need to actively focus on technology areas that help them to address operational shifts. **PV**





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