

Documentation capture, Healthcare AI

# Can speech recognition be a magic bullet for the digitisation of Australia healthcare?

Dr. Simon Wallace | Chief Clinical Information Officer (CCIO), Nuance Healthcare UK and Ireland

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Australia's national digital health agency has just published a comprehensive national digital health strategy. Does Australia healthcare have anything to learn from the UK NHS' investment and deployment of digital technology?

## Australia digital health from the front line

Australia has published a comprehensive [national digital health strategy](#) with seven strategic priority outcomes spearheading the drive to meet both the clinical and financial challenges of delivering and sustaining a complex 21<sup>st</sup> century healthcare system.

Tim Kelsey, once of NHS fame, now Chief Executive of the Australia Digital Health Agency, presenting at a recent Cerner Australia Regional User Group which I attended, took us on a journey where patients and their healthcare providers will have access to 'My Health Record', a digital health record for a patient that contains a summary of their health information. His enthusiasm, vision and sheer determination to make this a reality in Australia despite unfortunate road blocks in the UK, will be a real win for the citizens of Australia.

Afterward we all discussed the strategy and shared real-life, day-to-day experiences of delivering a digital infrastructure, whilst striving to make a real difference to their healthcare organisations. The meeting was peppered with inspiring examples of EPR digital innovations that have made a measurable difference to the quality of patient care.

## Clinical speech recognition delivers measurable outcomes

Like other countries across the world, healthcare in Australia has reams of clinical documentation – [recent estimates for 2015-16](#) suggest that there were 10.6 million discharge summaries, 28 million outpatient reports/letters and 2.2 million procedure notes. But is it in a digital format that is useful? As I have observed in [previous blogs](#), these EPR tools only work if their engine room is fueled with quality data. Speech recognition is a key ingredient and ‘magic bullet’ to [overcome the data entry burden](#) that the EPR can place upon clinicians.

As I mingled with a very ‘can do’ group of clinicians at the Cerner Australian RUG and [shared some of our experiences with speech recognition in the NHS](#), they ‘got it’ and wanted to ‘just get on with it’.

They were intrigued with recent NHS case studies from across primary and secondary care, in a wide range of specialties, used not just by doctors, but nurses and other allied health professionals. Their enthusiasm was heightened with headline benefits such as:

- [Savings of up to 40% in documentation time in the Emergency Department](#)
- [Accelerated document turnaround times reducing delays in outpatient letters from weeks to days](#)
- [Removal of backlogs in histopathology](#)

As the event drew to a close, it was clear to me that the need for real time, quality clinical information, whether in Australia or in the UK, requires an industrial strength tool such as speech recognition that I have found is the natural bed-fellow to keep pace with the never-ending progress of modern medicine.

**Tags:** [Future of healthcare](#), [Clinical documentation](#), [Digital healthcare](#)

### More Information

#### Get ahead on the digital journey

Read more about speech recognition outcomes in the NHS and learn how to benefit from the lessons learnt.

[Learn more](#)



#### About Dr. Simon Wallace

Dr. Simon Wallace is the Chief Clinical Information Officer (CCIO) of Nuance's Healthcare division in the UK and Ireland. Simon has worked as a GP, hospital and public health doctor in Brighton and London. His interest in health informatics began in the 90s when he spent a year at the King's Fund investigating the impact of the internet on shared decision making between patients and their healthcare professional. For the past 15 years, he has worked for a range of organisations including Bupa, Dr Foster, Cerner Corporation and GSK across a range of technologies which include electronic patient records, telemedicine, mobile health and lifestyle devices. Simon has a keen interest in the voluntary sector, recently completing a 7 year term as a Trustee for Fitzrovia Youth in Action, a children and young people's charity based in London.



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