

# Health-IT World.com

## Vertical Search for Health Gets Sexy

By Matthew Holt

**October 09, 2006** | In the last year a minor flurry in healthcare web venture capital activity is reminding some of the good old eHealth days. The hottest area right now, courtesy of Google, is search. [Google's Co-Op page for health](#) was launched in May 2006, but several start-ups focusing on health-related search are making waves -- all believing that they can thrive in the giant's shadow.

The purest search plays include [Kosmix](#) and [Healia](#). Both claim revolutionary search technology. Healia's Chairman Tom Eng claims that Healia assesses the quality of the documents it's searching, ranks the results by both relevance to the search term, and by quality of the author --so the American Heart Association will come up ahead of a dubious online pharmacy. Eng, who has a public health background, wants "Healia to be the trusted health librarian." Healia already boasts the VA as a licensee.

Perhaps the most interesting of Healia's features is that it allows searchers to set filters on the information. These include allowing selecting information relevant to gender, ethnic group, and reading complexity. Kosmix also has a similar system.

Positioned somewhere between being a search engine and a content provider is [Healthline](#), which allows access to search results either via the standard word search or via its HealthMaps. Really astute eHealth observers will remember not one but two earlier versions of the company, YourDoctor.com and InterMap Systems. Healthline was re-launched in late 2005 with a \$14m venture capital recapitalization -- including funding from its original backer, VantagePoint Venture Partners.

Healthline also hosts a significant amount of original content from YourDoctor, Adam, and Gale, which comes up first in its searches. In addition it's also introduced physician-written blogs to create more approachable health content. External search results come "below the line." However, Healthline's VP of Business Development, Tony Gentile, says that its search is based on semantic taxonomy, overlaid by consumer synonyms recognizing the relationships between disease and its risk factors. In addition, its Healthlinks service automatically creates links within that content, so that if a reader wants to know more about a specific health-related term they just click on the word and are taken to the most relevant content source available.

Finally, Vimo (which thankfully just changed its name from Healthia) is a search tool aiming at allowing consumers to access doctors and insurers, and eventually medical products and services. CEO Chini Krishnan says Vimo is "a comparison shopping site like Lending Tree". The goal is enable the last mile -- the transaction -- which Krishnan calls the "actionable result of search." Vimo will make money from referrals to insurers and, eventually, physicians and products. To get there, they're building a community, including member physician reviews and referrals. For now, Vimo has \$10m in funding from Bessemer and Trinity Ventures.

It's far too early to say whether these new sites, and others like Revolution Health's [Wondir](#) answer service, will prosper in the search and content worlds dominated by Google and WebMD. But for now in the eHealth world, it feels a little like 1999.

Source: <http://www.health-itworld.com/newsitems/2006/oct/10-9-06-vertical-search>