

Community Talk with: Robyn Woods

and a panacea for care



Although a fairly new face in the ITEA Community and based in Calgary, Canada, Robyn Woods has managed to make a very firm imprint since her initial contact. Not only has she led the very successful Panacea Gaming Platform project (April 2017 to May 2020) but has turned the results to date into an equally successful award-winning, patented collaboration tool called Teleroo™ and Kids Digital Health™, a subscription-based collection of therapeutic games and content at KidsDigitalHealth.com. Here she tells us about the underlying motivation for her business adventure and the ITEA fit.

Virtual care

Robyn is a Registered Speech-Language Pathologist of 20 years who turned digital health entrepreneur in 2006. She pursued digital health to help minimise the disruption, travel costs, and risks, all the more evident in a pandemic but also road conditions during long, snowy winters in Canada, for families living with disabilities. Of course, travel time is a significant challenge for people living in rural communities with the geography and weather patterns in Canada. “It can mean a drive of three hours to see a patient for an hour or so and then there’s another three hours getting back,” Robyn

explains. It was then that the (very appropriate) Eureka! moment arrived. Robyn asked the question: “Why can’t we just put a camera in a person’s home?” So that’s what she did in 2011. “And then the hardware became software and then the software benefited from content,” she continues, “and that’s what has become the familiar product Teleroo™ and the basis for Kids Digital Health™. This led to a new way of practising – virtual care.”

Teleroo™

Teleroo™ is an award-winning, patented virtual care platform that connects care teams, families,



and their communities through engagement, and leads to an increase in continuity of care and behavioural health, along with desired fiscal outcomes for all parties, including health providers and governments. Teleroo™, which represents the future of patient-centred care in action, is founded on the service delivery model of evidence-informed practice, including video modelling and deep coaching. With help from the National Research Council of Canada, Robyn applied for a patent for the Teleroo™ brand, which has become the collective name for an exclusive suite of technology and therapy tools, the result of more than 10 years of research and development, and the collective expertise and experience of its team of therapists, practitioners, researchers, software developers, and its families.

Taking the stage

“It was through the National Research Council of Canada that I came into contact with the world of Eureka and the Community of ITEA in particular. The former ITEA Chairman, Rudolf Hagenmüller came to Winnipeg some years

ago and presented the ITEA Community. I became intrigued and that’s what brought me to Belgium for the Project Outline Preparation Days. It was so exciting and there was so much energy that I just had to get involved. I more or less ran onto the stage with my idea. I seized the opportunity through ITEA to take the lead in forming a consortium for the Panacea Gaming Platform project, the first ever Canadian lead. I must say that the Canadian Public Authorities were very keen to give us and the other Canadian participants plenty of support. When the three-year project got under way in April 2017, it proved to be a pretty exciting journey, and certainly one of the big highlights in my career. In 2018 we also represented Canada in Seoul, South Korea, during a Digital Health Mission there. Last year was also a very exciting year as we were flown to Abu Dhabi and Dubai to present, as one of just ten companies in the world, our solution to 196 countries and 100,000 participants. In May we were invited to address the Canadian Senate about virtual care and we demonstrated Teleroo™ and our international work.”

Great support

“I must say that the ITEA connection has been fantastic. The support is tremendous and the project review, quite rightly, challenged us about our claims. It led to collaboration and dialogue, and a successful conclusion. And then we launched the Kids Digital Health™ platform (kidsdigitalhealth.com) dedicated to providing parents and caregivers access to gamified apps and tools.” The virtual launch event and fireside chat featured speakers from Canada, USA, Belgium, South Korea, France and Turkey, showcasing the importance of global, collective action when it comes to the future of digital health. “It was great to have the support of our ITEA Chairwoman Zeynep Sarilar and Vice-chairman Philippe Letellier. And Zeynep emphasised the value of having ‘access to different cultures and knowledge bases to create a global solution.’ This is certainly something we have found in our ITEA experience - from Belgium to Turkey and from Canada to South Korea. We really feel the benefits of international collaboration and part of a global Community. Not only that but it gave us a lot of media attention and a new revenue stream with new partners.”

Value of relationships

“So, it’s quite clear that ITEA has helped us to kick on. But it has actually given us even more. Through ITEA we found partners, and the pleasure I have had in working with these partners, from different backgrounds and cultures, with their vast range of expertise and experience, has been priceless. The relationships we have built up with them go well beyond their project sell-by date. Relationships help create trust and with trust you are prepared to take risks together. Some in the form of commercial partnerships, such as we have with BeWell in Belgium and our Korean partner, Worri Soft. They have given us a world stage. And just seeing how all this technical knowledge can be transformed into clinical practices that can benefit everyone. I mean, for someone with no technical background leading a successful Cluster project for software-intensive services, that just about says it – I feel I have learned so much about how the power of collaboration can achieve great things. So, we’re very keen to do more.”

Benefits of diversity

“But just as importantly, the convergence of technology then has to be applied to the diversity of cultures in the application,” Robyn explains. “That’s another benefit of having a diverse cultural mix in the consortium. People need to see themselves in the technology for acceptance by the different cultures. Whether that’s Asian avatars or North American norms or Belgian values. It helps us pinpoint the true gap that we can fill and define our global value proposition. I’ve got a lot to be grateful for, and hopefully the journey with ITEA will continue. These are exciting times in more ways than one. The focus is on COVID-19 right now, but we must look to the power of collaboration and innovation to create a new, more resilient world. And we hope to play a role in that creation.”

More information

<https://itea3.org/project/panacea-gaming-platform.html>

<https://teleroo.com>

<https://kidsdigitalhealth.com>