

**Biomedical and Health Informatics Lecture Series**  
Course Website: [Link](#)

**Tuesday, April 10, 2012**  
**12:00 - 12:50 p.m., Room T-663**

**Eric Horvitz, MD, PhD**

Deputy Managing Director and Distinguished Scientist  
Microsoft Research

Affiliate Associate Professor  
Radiation Oncology, Computer Science & Engineering,  
and Biomedical and Health Informatics  
University of Washington, Seattle

**“Studies of the Pursuit of Healthcare Information on the Web”**

I will present studies that explore at scale how people pursue healthcare information on the Web. The studies highlight methods for learning about information-seeking behavior from anonymized search logs, including the construction of predictive models from log data. I will focus in particular on the use of the Web for self-diagnosis, where people use search engines as a diagnostic system. Results highlight systematic problems with the widespread use of the web for diagnosis. I will discuss how biases in content and indexing can interact with cognitive biases to fuel such phenomena as heightened anxiety or “cyberchondria.” I will also present analyses that explore links between web activity and healthcare utilization by identifying transitions between diagnosis-centric search and queries for local medical assistance. Finally, I will discuss recent work on privacy-sensitive studies of search from location-enabled mobile devices, and describe inferences about transitions from symptom search to healthcare utilization.

Joint work with Ryen White.

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Eric Horvitz is Deputy Managing Director and Distinguished Scientist at Microsoft Research. He has pursued insights and solutions in machine learning and intelligence, human-computer interaction, and search and retrieval. He has been elected a Fellow of the Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AAAI), the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He currently serves on the NSF Engineering CISE Advisory Board, the Council of the Computing Community Consortium (CCC), and as Immediate Past President of the AAAI. He received his PhD and MD degrees at Stanford University. More information can be found at <http://research.microsoft.com/~horvitz>.