Review of: "Building a digital republic to reduce health disparities and improve population health in the United States"

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On the whole, I find this article well-written and inspiring. Undoubtedly many countries, including the US, are using systems that are getting antiquated, and the shift to a well-working digital system is seldom painless and often hit and miss.

Every country and system should strive to make citizens' data (health, economy, insurance...) readily available. As the article discusses, there are significant considerations and challenges when building such systems, such as transparency, privacy and the ease of use.

However, I would have liked the authors to provide a more in-depth and critical view of the issues and challenges. For instance, one could mention the challenges of building these systems. Using Estonia and China as two contrasting examples is very good, but maybe these examples could have been expanded more.

I would also like to have a more critical focus on the issues of automation and data privacy. Currently, the challenges are mentioned but not really dealt with. As research shows, data and automation are often complicated and can lead to even more problems, often for those already in difficult situations.

Moreover, I have difficulties with the human-engine analogue, as it feels a bit old and overused. Human systems are more complicated, as are the issues the examples are trying to demonstrate. For instance, the connections and correlations between the stress caused by using (non-functioning) services might not be that simple and straightforward, but a sum of many moving parts (pardon for the engine analogue :)).

For a research article, I find that there is a severe lack of research and references. There are many presumptions without any reference to lie on. However, as the authors write, this article is more of a commentary, and as such, I think it is important. I would still like to see this article move or give birth to more scientific research articles that focus on the challenges and suggest researched possibilities for easier access to benefits and services.