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iStethoscope: The iPhone app which is already replacing the real thing in hospitals

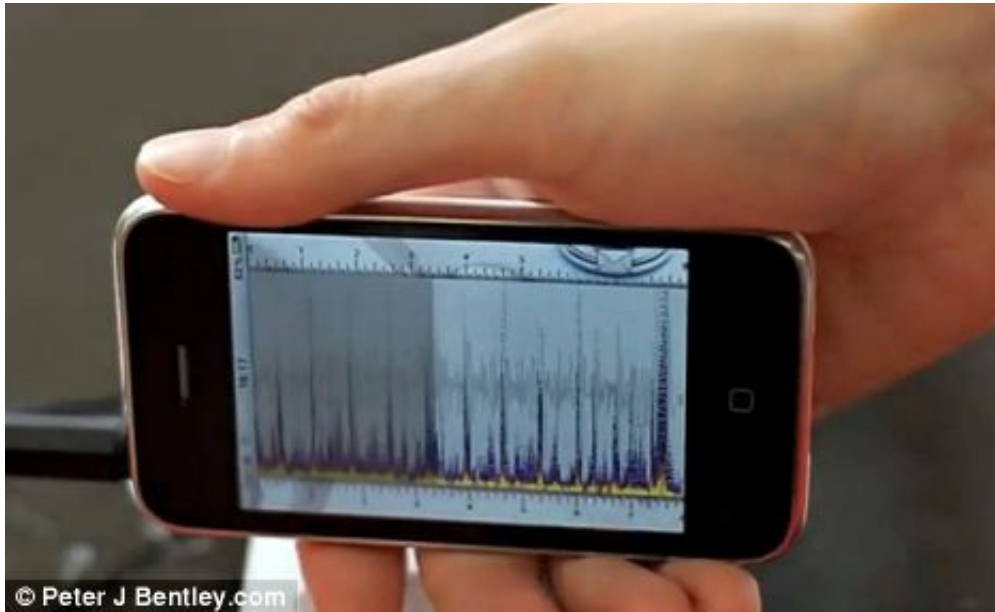
By [Daily Mail Reporter](#)

Last updated at 3:05 PM on 31st August 2010

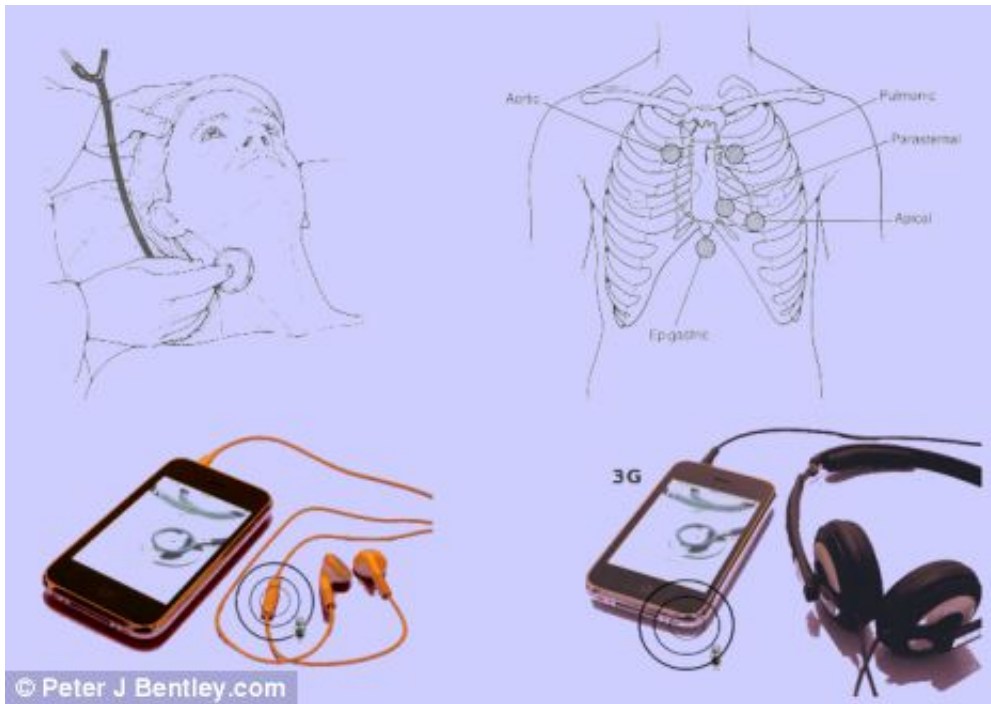
More than three million doctors have downloaded an iPhone app which is replacing the stethoscope in UK hospitals.

The iStethoscope app, created by Peter Bentley at University College London, was originally developed as nothing more than a toy.

But now more than 500 users a day are downloading the free version of the application which experts say has already saved lives.



The iStethoscope app displays a cardiogram after it is pressed against the chest



An image from the iStethoscope website which shows where on the chest the iPhone should be placed to get the best results

To use the app the iPhone is pressed against the chest where its built-in microphone is able to pick up on the heart's beat.



The new app could replace the stethoscope in some hospitals

The user then shakes the iPhone to hear the last eight seconds of recording and see a phonocardiograph display and a spectrogram. The diagrams can then be emailed to a specialist.

'Everybody is very excited about the potential of the adoption of mobile phone technology into the medical workplace, and rightly so,' Dr Bentley told the Guardian.

'Smartphones are incredibly powerful devices packed full of sensors, cameras, high-quality microphones with amazing displays,' he said.

'They are capable of saving lives, saving money and improving healthcare in a dramatic fashion – and we carry these massively powerful computers in our pockets.'

Bentley said that future cheap iPhone apps for use by doctors are being held back by out-of-date regulations that prevents smartphones from becoming medical devices.

Dr Bentley said that he could create a mobile ultrasound scanner or an app to measure oxygen levels in the blood but is being held back by the regulations.

A spokesman for the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), which looks at how to regulate new technologies, said: This is such a complex area that we are currently looking at every application on a case-by-case basis.

'We want to ensure that these new technologies are effectively regulated – thereby protecting health and avoiding unnecessary deterrents – while at the same time removing any unnecessary obstacles to manufacturers who wish to exploit new technologies for the benefit of patients.'

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'More than three million doctors have downloaded an iPhone app which is replacing the stethoscope in UK hospitals.'

Can you confirm which hospitals are using this application?

- Chris, Bournemouth, 01/9/2010 23:14

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I have used this successfully on many of my patients. It is an excellent app.

- Walt, Barons Court, 01/9/2010 21:03

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I have used this successfully on many of my patients. It is an excellent app.

- Walt, Barons Court, 01/9/2010 21:03

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"!...worrying about drug companys exploiting patients by down playing negative side affects.

- samantha, london, 31/8/2010 19:45"

Samantha - Drugs are not prescribed willy nilly - there is always the side effects vs benefits consideration (IF side effects present themselves at all). The Pharmaceutical industry are not the enemy - would you rather no drugs to treat disease?

- George Brown, Romford, Essex, 01/9/2010 01:24

Click to rate Rating 7

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I do hope that the Data Protection Act and Patient Confidentiality is being borne in mind here - the NHS seems to have a distinct lack of respect for other peoples clinical and personal data?

- George Brown, Romford, Essex, 01/9/2010 01:09

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What next? The iPregnancy Tester? Problem is, I can actually imagine some of these idiots actually peeing on their phones!

- Eleanor, Newry, UK, 01/9/2010 01:06

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