

[How Bid Technology Got Me Banned From The Delivery Room](#)

Posted July 6th, 2007 by Chris Copeland

Sometime in the next 10 days I am supposed to become a father for the second time. I say "supposed to" because my wife was told 10 days ago that she should have this child at any time. Our first daughter was born two weeks early and now we have received a dubious prognostication of the newborn's arrival that has yet to be true. That, combined with my wife's doctor proclaiming that a healthy and on-time delivery could be between 37 and 42 weeks, has gotten me second-guessing our decision process.

When my wife chose this doctor, she did so based on recommendations and proof of many successful results produced. These line the walls of the many exam rooms we have been in and seemed to me to be a clear indication in quantifiable form that our doctor was quite good at her job. But, that was three long years ago, and the experience of my day-to-day life as a search marketer has allowed me to clearly see that perhaps she is not as good as all the pictures of smiling mothers and healthy babies originally led me to believe.

This led me to an exchange that will forever be known in my house as "The Last Time Chris Goes to the Doctor With His Wife."

It started simply enough. Upon completing a recent exam, the doctor proclaimed that while we were not progressing, we were not going backwards. And thus began the following:

Me: "So doc, in my business clients expect results, and I'm getting worried about your forecasting ability."

She stares blankly at me, so I continue.

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Me: "Obviously when we had our first child she was early and you delivered her. She's doing great but maybe I gave you too much credit. Tell me, what role do the machines play in the process."

She's now looking befuddled. "The machines?" she asks.

Me: "Yes, the machines, like the one that takes the pictures."

Doctor: "You mean the ultrasound machine."

Me: "Yeah, that one and that heart rate machine. Do you own those machines?"

Doctor: "Ummm, no, those are hospital property."

Me: "So, if you don't own the machines, I assume you didn't build them?"

Doctor: "Of course not."

Me: "Well, in my business the prevailing sentiment is, if you didn't build the machine and you don't own the machine, surely the machines you use are not as good as the machines of others."

By this point, the doctor's arms are crossed, and she is just staring at me. Meanwhile, my wife is making one of those faces at me.

I press on. "So, if you don't own them and didn't build them, who knows the most about the machines in the hospital?"

By now she's humoring me, I think. "Well, Chris, that would be the technician," she says.

"Excellent," I say, "and was he in the room last time?"

"Um, no. He's a software and hardware guy," she replies.

"But if he knows the machines best, surely he must be key to the process. How can we bring a life into the world using machines to guide us, but not the specialist in the foreground?" I ask.

"Listen, if you want to be close to the technician, maybe you two can sit outside. Your wife does the work, I guide her and the machines act as diagnostics," she finally declares.

With that she tells my wife she'd see us soon, and leaves.

What I learned from all of this is, as usual, I should stick to search — a world where people expect technology to do all of the work and deliver results, while the humans sit in the background. Clearly it is very different from the process where life is brought into the world and technology is used for diagnostic purposes.

But hey, we've always said search isn't brain surgery. Now we can include birthing babies on that list.

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