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This work explores self-care practices in type 1 diabetes and reflects on the design of a journaling platform supporting the personalization of self-monitoring practices. Chronic self-care in clinically uncontrolled settings is complex and gets entangled in a myriad of events in everyday life. In spite of the enormous clinical advancements in diabetes, what worked yesterday might not work today; what worked in the hospital might not work in a domestic environment; and what worked for the patient might not work for the doctor, and vice-versa. To deal with this complexity, patients need to rely on a series of resources and forms of knowledge that go beyond the clinical perspective. They develop a series of lay expertise that are key to ground medical knowledge in everyday life but that seem to be neglected by most design in the area (Storni, 2013a, 2013b; Orel, 1996). Available technology supporting diabetes self-management seems to rely on fixed and universal clinical that fall short in addressing everyday practicalities. Through the discussion of the proposed platform – called Tag-it-Yourself (Fig. 1) – it is shown that what each individual needs to learn is impossible to foresee at the time of design, and it should not be reduced to universal categories or normative approaches.

Drawing on Science and Technology Studies investigating the interplay between ignorance and knowledge (Gross 2007, 2010; Callon et al. 2009), I argue that designs uncritically relying on what is universally known today, risk transforming our ignorance (things we do not know yet) into non-knowledge (things we cannot longer know). Accordingly, I argue that design in chronic self-care should recognize and appreciate different forms of knowledge as well as our ignorance at the time of design, and that opening up the design to users, enabling appropriation (Storni, 2011), has the potential to better fit chronic self-care practices (Storni, 2013c).



Figure 1: The TiY Tags editor and a personalized self-monitoring page

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