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IBM buys Merge Healthcare for $1 billion

07 August 2015 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau

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Tech giant IBM has announced that it would buy medical image company Merge Healthcare for $1 billion to combine with its newly formed health analytics unit. IBM's health analytics unit is powered by famous Watson supercomputer.

Through the acquisition, IBM plans to combine data and images from Merge Healthcare's medical imaging management platform with Watson's cloud-based healthcare computing system. Watson has already been working with healthcare leaders such as Memorial Sloan-Kettering and Cleveland Clinic to become a system that LEARNS from analyzing previous situations.

The deal will help physicians and researchers collate and analyze data such as patient's medical and family history, data on others with similar symptoms and clinical research, trials and outcomes.

"As a proven leader in delivering healthcare solutions for over 20 years, Merge is a tremendous addition to the Watson Health platform," said Mr John Kelly, senior vice president, IBM Research and Solutions Portfolio.

Mr Kelly observed, "Healthcare will be one of IBM's biggest growth areas over the next 10 years, which is why we are making a major investment to drive industry transformation and to facilitate a higher quality of care."

Watson's powerful cognitive and analytic capabilities, coupled with those from Merge and our other major strategic acquisitions, position IBM to partner with healthcare providers, research institutions, biomedical companies, insurers and other organizations.