



HL7 Pilot Program Provides Key Intellectual Property Free of Charge

HL7 recently announced a pilot program to provide some of its key intellectual property free of charge. “HL7 is keeping its promise to lower the barriers to adoption of electronic health records by making portions of our valuable intellectual property freely available to our stakeholders,” said Charles Jaffe, MD, PhD, CEO of HL7. “We believe that care givers, academic centers and vendors will greatly benefit from this significant enhancement for access to valuable HL7 material.”

In the pilot project, HL7 will enable no-cost licensing of its domain analysis models (DAMs) and functional profiles. This offer, a first for HL7, was announced at the 2012 HIMSS Annual Conference and Exhibition, one of the largest health information technology conferences in the United States.

The DAM is a set of requirements that explore and analyze the business of a particular clinical “domain.” Domain analysis is the first step in creating HL7 standards for a specific care or research environment. The domain analysis process produces documentation describing the stakeholders, activities, interactions, and information for a particular domain and serves as the source of requirements used in the design of HL7 standards.

Stand-alone DAMs will be made available at no cost during the one-year pilot, including:

- HL7 Version 3 DAM: Cardiology; Acute Coronary Syndrome
- HL7 Version 3 DAM: Clinical Trials Registration and Results
- HL7 Version 3 DAM: Analysis Model: Vital Records

Functional profiles for the HL7 Electronic Health Record System Functional Model (EHR-S FM) will also be available as part of the pilot program. The HL7 EHR-S FM was the industry’s first standard approved by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) to specify the functional requirements for an electronic health record system. HL7’s functional profiles outline the important features and functions of an EHR system, including criteria to support functions such as medication history, clinical decision support, and privacy and security. Profiles that are available to support specific uses across the continuum of care include:

- Child health
- Behavioral health
- Long-term care
- Clinical research
- Records management and evidentiary support

“HL7 standards are the most widely used in the industry,” said Don Mon, PhD, chair, HL7 Board of Directors. “These standards will be especially useful to physicians, nurses and other health care professionals, as well as health information management/technology (HIM/HIT) professionals. Making these standards available at no cost will further our mission to enhance the exchange, integration, sharing, and retrieval of electronic health information around the world.”

The HL7 DAMs and functional profiles can be accessed at the HL7 online store or through the HL7.org home page. Users must complete a click-through license registration process to participate.

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Adoption of HL7 CDA® to Connect Clinical Trial Data, EHRs: Technology to Support Patient Care, Speed Process from "Bench to Bedside"

HL7 recently announced a collaborative effort with the National Cancer Institute (NCI) to use the HL7 Clinical Document Architecture (CDA®) in a unique way that solves the problem of connecting clinical trial data to patients' electronic health records (EHRs).

"This is a significant advance in HIT connectivity because it brings clinical trial data directly to patients' personal physicians, which means we can improve patient care by speeding the process of moving medical advances from bench to bedside," said Bob Dolin, MD, FACP, vice chair of the HL7 Board of Directors and co-editor of the CDA. "Studies have shown that right now it can take seven years or more for new research advances to be put into clinical practice. We can make that process much quicker by improving physician access to clinical trial data, and by expressing clinical trial data using meaningful use EHR standards."

The new project demonstrates that clinical trial data can be packaged using the same HL7 standards that are incorporated into EHRs that meet the Stage 1 meaningful use criteria of the US Office of the National Coordinator (ONC) to bring clinical trial data

directly to the point of care and facilitate data analysis. Physicians will have a more complete picture of the care provided to their patients during clinical trials, and the project will also help facilitate data analysis that may speed the availability of new treatments to patients.

According to John Speakman, chief program officer for the NCI's Center for Biomedical Informatics and Information Technology, the program will lower the barriers for systems to interoperate in the service of biomedical research and, ultimately, precision medicine. To reach these goals, the use of HHS-endorsed industry standards such as HL7 CDA must be part of the picture, he said.

The HL7 CDA addresses universal requirements for the exchange and management of structured clinical documents. It supports the exchange of clinical documents between those involved in the care of patients and allows for the re-use of clinical data for public health reporting, quality monitoring, patient safety and clinical trials.

The program will be launched as a pilot program later this year.

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Meaningful Use Stage 2 Standards

Proposed Rule Selects Additional HL7 Standards



Keith Boone

By Keith Boone, Director, HL7 Board of Directors; and Standards Architect, GE Healthcare; and Austin Kreisler, Chair, HL7 Technical Steering Committee and Technical Fellow, SAIC

The Meaningful Use Stage 2 Standards and Certification Rule was published in the Federal Register March 7, 2012. The long awaited changes to the Meaningful Use regulations now include three additional HL7 standards and implementation guides, including the IHE Health Story CDA® Consolidation Implementation Guide Draft Standard for Trial Use (DSTU), the HL7 2.5.1 S&I Framework Lab Results Interface Informative Document, and the HL7 Context Aware Knowledge Retrieval (InfoButton) standard. The US Health IT (HIT) Standards Committee also recommended that only one standard be used for Electronic

Laboratory, Immunizations, and Syndromic Surveillance reporting to Public Health. Under Stage 1, the HL7 Version 2.3.1 and 2.5.1 standards were available for those purposes, but now only HL7 Version 2.5.1 is being proposed. They also selected HL7 2.5.1 implementation guides for each of those purposes, although no guide was selected for Syndromic Surveillance from ambulatory environments (that work is currently in progress in the International Society for Disease Surveillance (ISDS)).

IHE Health Story CDA Consolidation Implementation Guide

The IHE Health Story Consolidation Draft Standard for Trial Use was developed jointly by members of HL7, IHE, Health Story and the ONC Standards and Interoperability Framework team. The new guide includes nine document templates:

- Continuity of Care Document (Version 1.1)
- Consultation Note
- Diagnostic Imaging Report
- Discharge Summary
- History and Physical (H&P) Note
- Operative Note
- Procedure Note
- Progress Note
- Unstructured Document

Under the Meaningful Use regulation, a clinical summary must include patient demographics, provider information, date and location of the visit, reason for the visit, problem, medication and allergy lists, procedures performed, immunizations or medications administered during the visit, vital signs, test results and pending tests, care plan, referrals, and smoking status.

The availability of new document types under Meaningful Use means that providers can use the appropriate type of document to record information about the visit, and supply that record to the patient as a clinical summary. This was one of the key goals of the IHE Health Story Consolidation project.

Lab Results Interface

The HL7 2.5.1 Lab Results Interface Implementation Guide is the result of collaborative efforts between HL7 and the Health and Human Services Standards and Interoperability Framework Laboratory Results Interface Initiative. This guide addresses the challenges of reporting lab results to ambulatory providers, harmonizes previous HL7 efforts on laboratory reporting, and addresses regulatory requirements under the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act (CLIA). It provides clear conformance requirements for implementing laboratory results interfaces in the ambulatory setting. The new guide generated hundreds of ballot comments in its initial round of balloting, has been substantially revised based on reconciliation of those comments, and will go through an additional round of balloting in the near future with the goal of achieving draft standard status later this summer.

InfoButton

While most of what appeared in Meaningful Use Stage 2 was quite predictable, as ONC closely followed the HIT Standards Committee Recommendations, there was one surprise in the rule for some readers. The HL7 Context Aware Knowledge Retrieval Standard, otherwise known as InfoButton, was selected as part of the required set of standards to support Clinical Decision support for two separate cases. It is required to be supported by EHRs to enable clinician access to reference information on problems, medications, allergies, lab results and other structured content of the medical record, and also enables access to patient-specific education materials.

Update from Headquarters

By Mark McDougall, Executive Director, HL7



Mark McDougall

January Meeting

More than 400 attendees participated in our January Working Group Meeting held in San Antonio, Texas, January 15-20, 2012. Over 40 HL7 work groups met in San Antonio, of which 29 work groups conducted co-chair elections for 42 positions. Attendees also took advantage of 30 tutorials that week.

Board Changes

The New Year brought a change at the helm of the HL7 Board of Directors. We welcomed Don Mon, PhD

Bob will continue to serve on the board as the vice chair.

We also recognized three outgoing board members who served terms on the HL7 Board of Directors: Bill Braithwaite, MD, PhD; Hans Buitendijk; and Dennis Giokas. All three contributed heavily to important and valuable roles for the HL7 organization throughout their many years of service to HL7. Sincere thanks also goes to Bill and Hans for their years of service on the HL7 Finance Committee.

James Ferguson of Kaiser Permanente, Edward Tripp with Edward S. Tripp and Associates, and Diego Kaminker from HL7 Argentina. Following terms as the affiliate director on the board, Michael van Campen of Gordon Point Informatics was also elected to serve as the treasurer of the board. We look forward to working with all of these individuals along with the entire 2012 HL7 Board of Directors that are listed on page 38. On behalf of the entire HL7 organization, I thank each member of the board for their ongoing leadership and contributions to HL7.



Bob Dolin, MD



*Bill Braithwaite
MD, PhD*



Hans Buitendijk



Dennis Giokas

to the start of his two-year term as board chair. We also recognized the many contributions of outgoing board chair, Bob Dolin, MD. It has been a treat to work with Bob during his term as chair and we thank him for his brilliance and ongoing calmness which he consistently brought to any situation we faced.



James Ferguson



Edward Tripp



Diego Kaminker

As previously announced, we are pleased to welcome three new Directors on the HL7 Board of Directors:

Meeting Sponsors

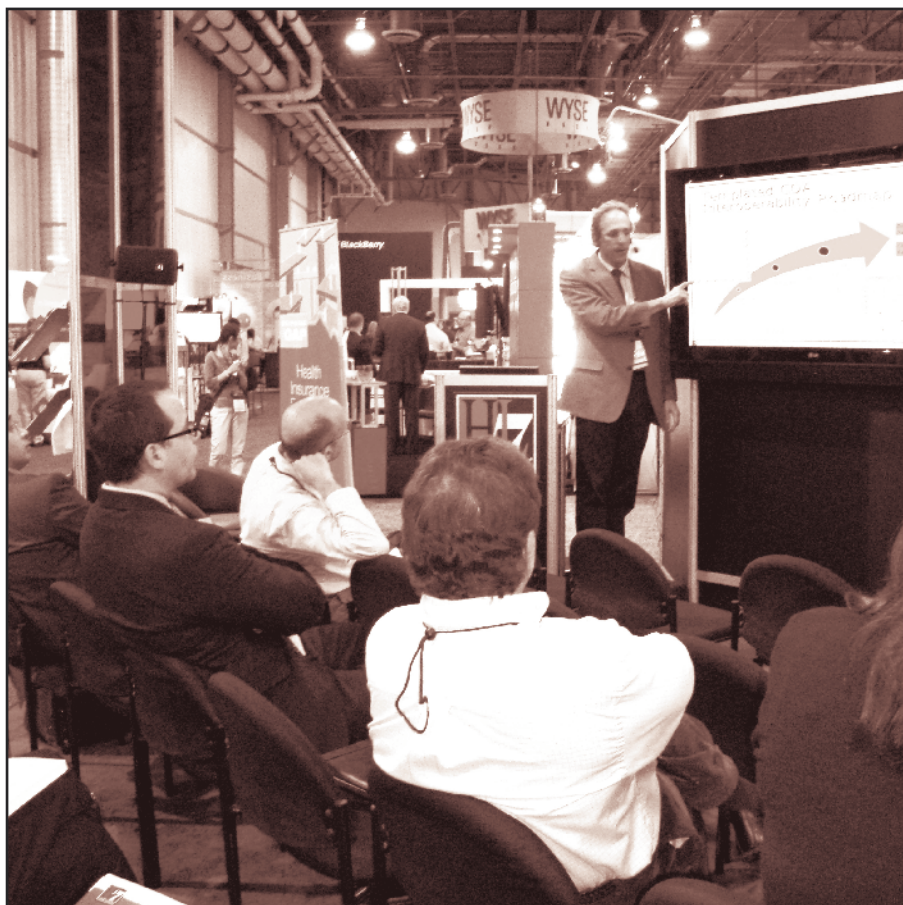
I am also pleased to recognize the following organizations that sponsored key components of our recent January Working Group Meeting in San Antonio:

- LINKMED
- iINTERFACEWARE
- Gordon Point Informatics
- Beeler Consulting LLC
- SPARX

The additional sponsorship support provided by these organizations heavily contributes to HL7's meeting budget and is much appreciated.

HIMSS

For over 20 years, HL7 has exhibited each year at the annual conference of the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS). This year's HIMSS conference convened in Las Vegas, Nevada dur-



HL7 Vice Chair, Bob Dolin, MD, gives a presentation at the HL7 Booth at HIMSS12

ing the week of February 20, 2012. HIMSS12 reportedly attracted over 37,000 people.

HL7's Director of Communications, Andrea Ribick, oversaw the production of 27 thirty minute presentations on HL7 standards and relevant topics. Many of the presentations attracted crowds that filled the theater area and were standing room only. I also wish to express our sincere thanks to the many individuals who volunteered to staff our booth and/or make presentations in our booth, including:

Calvin Beebe
 Woody Beeler, PhD
 Alan Brookstone, MD
 Jim Case, MD

Bob Dolin, MD
 John Gutai
 Freida Hall
 Chuck Jaffe, MD, PhD
 Mark Janczewski
 Thom Kuhn
 Ken McCaslin
 Don Mon, PhD
 Galen Mulrooney
 John Quinn
 Ken Rubin
 Scott Robertson, PharmD
 Dave Shaver
 Jim St. Clair
 Sandy Stuart
 Michael van Campen
 Grant Wood

Benefactors and Supporters

We are thrilled to have attracted the all time highest number of HL7 benefactors and supporters, who are listed on page 27. Their support of HL7 is very much needed and sincerely appreciated. We are pleased to recognize our benefactors in all of our HL7 newsletters, on the HL7 website, in our HL7 press releases, and at all of our HL7 working group meetings. A special thank you is extended to the list of firms that represent our 2012 HL7 benefactors and supporters.

Organizational Member Firms

As listed on pages 27-29, HL7 is proud to report that the number of HL7 organizational member companies is at an all time high of 758 companies. We sincerely appreciate their ongoing support of HL7 via their organizational membership dues.

In Closing

As I write this article, two of my favorite events are occurring this weekend: St. Patrick's Day and the annual basketball tournament in the US that involves teams from 64 universities participating in "the dance" or "March Madness." May you and your loved ones be blessed with a winning season and plenty of fun dancing.

Health Story Demo at HIMSS12 Showcased Benefits of Consolidated CDA®

By Liora Alschuler, HL7 Health Story Project Liaison; Health Story Project Executive Committee Member; Co-Editor of the HL7 CDA; and CEO, Lantana Consulting Group



Liora Alschuler

HL7 associate organization, the Health Story Project, demonstrated use of the HL7 Implementation Guide for CDA Release 2: IHE Health Story Consolidation, Release 1 – US Realm for the first time at the HIMSS12 Interoperability Showcase with a use case provided by the American College of Physicians. The demonstration highlighted how 12

vendors used Consolidated CDA to maximize information available throughout a transition of care using all available channels—from unstructured, scanned documents to dictated notes enriched with abstractor, computer-assisted and NLP coding—while maintaining the patient story.

On the last day of the showcase, the national coordinator for HIT, Farzad Mostashari, MD, challenged participants to demonstrate readiness for integration by securely exchanging information with an unrelated partner on the floor within one hour. The Health Story Project participated in the challenge and was successful in exchanging a clinical document within the deadline with two separate demonstration partners. A History & Physical was sent by way of the Verizon Medical Data Exchange to the STEM Transition of Care Pilot and to EHR vendor, OnBase, using Consolidated CDA. The exchange reveals the effectiveness of Consolidated CDA for exchange of health data at a moment's notice.

The mission of the Health Story Project is to unlock the valuable data in clinical notes and make possible an unrestricted flow of this narrative-source data into EMR and other systems for use within healthcare enterprises and health information exchanges. Over the previous four years Health Story supported development of eight HL7 implementation guides for common clinical documents as well as last year's effort with HL7, IHE and the ONC Standards & Interoperability Framework to consoli-

HEALTH STORY DEMO HIMSS12

date them into one implementation guide along with the HL7 Continuity of Care Document standard. Consolidated CDA offers a national foundation for exchange of information collected in clinical documents and is a huge step forward for health information interoperability in the US.

Health Story members featured in the HIMSS12 demonstration included: Apixio, Canon U.S.A, ChartLogic, Fujitsu, Inofile, Lantana Consulting Group, M*Modal, Nuance, Optum and Verizon. Health Story is discussing plans with its members for the HIMSS13 demonstration. Interested vendors should contact Joy Kuhl at joy@optimalaccords.com. Visit www.healthstory.com for more information about the project, and http://www.hl7.org/implement/standards/product_brief.cfm?product_id=258 for more information about Consolidated CDA.



Susan Lucci, AHIMA Liaison to Health Story and Linda Brady, Acting CEO, AHDI and CDIA

Implementations of the HL7 Context-Aware Knowledge Retrieval ("Infobutton") Standard



Guilherme Del Fiol
MD, PhD

By Guilherme Del Fiol, MD, PhD, Co-Chair, HL7 Clinical Decision Support Work Group and Department of Biomedical Informatics, University of Utah; and Howard Strasberg, MD, MS, Co-Chair, HL7 Clinical Decision Support Work Group and Wolters Kluwer Health

The high frequency of clinicians' patient care information needs that go unanswered is a well-known problem. Estimates vary from 0.2 to 3 information needs per patient seen and about half of these needs are not met.¹ Online health knowledge resources have answers to most of these questions, but important barriers limit their use at the point of care.² An increasingly popular approach to help clinicians and patients meet their information needs is to enable context-specific access to knowledge resources within EHR and PHR systems via Infobuttons.³ Based on the clinical context in an EHR/PHR (e.g., patient data, task, user attributes, care setting attributes), Infobuttons anticipate clinicians' and patients' information needs and provide automated links to relevant knowledge resources. For example, from a problem list of a 73 year old female, an Infobutton may provide access to specific inpatient treatment guidelines of community acquired pneumonia in this age group. In addition, the same Infobutton could provide access to patient education material on community acquired pneumonia to be given to the patient upon the patient's discharge. Studies have shown that clinicians who accessed Infobuttons were able to meet their information needs in 86% of the Infobutton sessions, reporting enhancement of patient care decisions in 62% of these sessions.⁴

To enable scalable and effective integration between EHR/PHR systems and knowledge resources, the HL7 Clinical Decision Support (CDS) Work Group developed the Context-Aware Knowledge Retrieval ("Infobutton") standard. The Infobutton standard consists of a set of specifications that include a normative specification and two implementation guides. The normative specification (http://www.hl7.org/implement/standards/product_brief.cfm?product_id=208) has been recently included in the draft EHR Meaningful Use Stage 2 Standards and Certification Criteria. This specification defines a shared context information model to be implemented by EHR/PHR systems and knowledge resources. The first implementation guide, URL-Based Implementations of the Context-Aware Information Retrieval Domain (http://www.hl7.org/implement/standards/product_brief.cfm?product_id=22), specifies Infobutton implementations using simple URLs. The second implementation guide is a draft standard for trial use (DSTU) called Context-Aware Knowledge Retrieval, Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA). The SOA implementation guide specifies SOAP and RESTful Infobutton implementations. In addition, this document specifies a standard knowledge response payload based on the IETF Atom Standard.

To assess the perceived adoption, benefits, challenges, and lessons learned of implementers of the HL7

Infobutton Standard, we interviewed representatives of 17 organizations that implemented the standard, including EHR vendors, health-care organizations, and knowledge publishers. An article presenting the results of this study has been published in a special issue of the *Journal of Biomedical Informatics* dedicated to standards in practice.⁵ The analysis identified 20 recurrent themes. Overall, interviewees underscored the benefits, simplicity, and flexibility of the Infobutton Standard. On the other hand, participants requested easier access to standard specifications and guidance to novice implementers who are not familiar with HL7. Participants also requested easier access to HL7 terminology assets that are used in the Infobutton Standard. Implementers expect that the Infobutton Standard will be widely or at least fairly well adopted. However, uptake will depend especially on the adoption by EHR systems, which should be significantly accelerated by the requirement to implement the Infobutton Standard defined in the EHR Meaningful Use Stage 2 Standards and Certification Criteria. Widespread adoption of the Infobutton standard has the potential to bring contextually relevant clinical decision support content into the healthcare provider workflow as well as to educate patients about their health care and treatment options, enabling patient engagement and patient-centered care.

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Clinical Genomics Determined to Stay Ahead of Game-Changing Technologies

By Mollie Ullman-Cullere, Co-Chair, HL7 Clinical Genomics Work Group and Senior BioMedical Informaticist, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Partners HealthCare System, Inc; Amnon Shabo, PhD, Co-Chair, HL7 Clinical Genomics Work Group and Head of the Healthcare and Life Sciences Standards Program, IBM; Grant Wood, HL7 Clinical Genomics Publishing Facilitator and Senior IT Strategist, Intermountain Healthcare; and Bob Milius, Senior Data Analyst, Bioinformatics Research, National Marrow Donor Program



Mollie Ullman-Cullere



Amnon Shabo, PhD



Grant Wood



Bob Milius

The world of clinical genomics has changed rapidly since the genetics-themed plenary session held in Boston in October of 2010. Speakers discussed family health history and genetic data flowing into the electronic health record. They talked about the ever expanding research with newly available and significantly larger genomic data sets. Yet with the healthcare industry talking about personalized medicine, data models and transmission standards have been slow in adoption and implementation.

The earth-shattering news now is that research from the National Human Genome Research Institute shows sequencing costs dropping like a rock falling from the sky. In fact, they are outstripping the exponential curves of Moore's Law. Whole genome sequencing has fallen at a record-setting rate of \$100 million 10 years ago to just \$1,000 today. The first radically steep drop appeared in 2008 with the introduction of next generation sequencing technologies.

We should be able to perform ever larger studies to correlate genes with medical histories due to the falling sequencing prices. Disruptive technologies have set the stage for an accelerated revolution in both research and clinical genetics.

Next Generation Sequencing Impacting Clinical Care

Research publications, news stories, and scientific conferences are already focusing on the use of whole genome or exome sequencing in the clinic. As an example, triple negative breast tumors, which make up nearly 20 percent of breast cancers, do not respond to treatment with targeted therapies such as Herceptin. To investigate new

options for these patients, clinical trials of whole-genome sequencing for this disease began in 2010. Based on mutations uncovered by sequencing, physicians ordered treatment protocols for either existing drugs, or new agents being evaluated in pharmaceutical sponsored clinical trials.

A major challenge in whole genome sequencing is the interpretation of the genetic data for use in diagnostic and treatment decisions. Many vendors are developing software that will help clinicians interpret and understand genetic data for clinical application. Collaborations between vendors, academic research, and healthcare providers are beginning to identify best practices for diagnostic development and gene discovery as a model for genome sequencing in a clinical setting.

Clinical Genomics Roadmap

Previous work done by the Clinical Genomics (CG) Work Group helps support these new technologies. The Pedigree (family health history) Model passed normative ballot in 2007, and the CCD® was extended to support transmission of family history summations. Yet efforts are still required to gain wider adoption of the standard. Hope increased dramatically when capturing family history using coded data was announced as part of Meaningful Use Stage 2 proposed standards.

Two Version 2 implementation guides which extend the 2.5.1 Laboratory Reporting Guide to support structured/codified reporting of cytogenetic and genetic variation test results passed informative ballot in January and will be published this spring. As the second release of the genetic variation guide, this included support for additional use cases based on early adopter feedback and improved structuring of interpretation and links to public knowledgebases. Work is continuing on gene expression profiling and a CDA® implementation guide for genetic test reports. An OMICS domain analysis model (DAM) will be created and aligned with a life science DAM and the BRIDG model.

Moving Forward with Projects and Pilots

Recently, the CG Work Group has launched several new projects: reaffirming family health history, expanding it with a release 2, clinical sequencing, and an implementation guide for CDA genetic test results, as well as participation in release 2 of the specimen CMET.

Last year the work group began a project reaching out to stakeholders involved in next generation sequencing technologies. The issues to be addressed are: (1) what are the compelling initial use cases for full sequencing, (2) what are the requirements for scaling out from research use to robust clinical applications, (3) who are the likely early adopters and how will we engage them in the standards process, and (4) what are the likely systems architectures that will evolve in order to accommodate genetic sequences.

The CG Work Group is also exploring the use of HL7 standards for messaging and structured documents to address the challenge for recording and reporting HLA typing results. The matching of stem cell donor (bone marrow, peripheral blood or umbilical cord blood) to a recipient is determined by comparing their tissue types, and is known as Human Leucocyte Antigen (HLA) types. The CDA implementation guide for genetic testing reports (CDA GTR) will be further constrained and specialized for use in HLA typing reports. A pilot is being developed to exchange HLA typing results within HL7 messages and documents between two clinical groups (Hadassah Medical Organization and Northwestern University) and

the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP). This pilot includes developing use cases and storyboards, which will be used to guide structured document design and model refinement, as well as exchanging data using HL7 containers and payloads.

HL7 Multi-Workgroup Collaboration Critical for Success

The CG Work Group actively collaborates with a number of other HL7 work groups, including Orders and Observations (O&O), Anatomic Pathology (AP), Clinical Decision Support (CDS), Image Integration (II), Regulated Clinical Research Information Management (RCRIM), Clinical Interoperability (CIC), and Marketing. Two new projects began this spring: CG is working with II, CDS, AP, and Lab on O&O's specimen CMET release 2 and clinical sequencing will look to Lab, O&O, AP, and SD for messaging components within the overall clinical sequencing workflow. CG and CDS have a long-term collaborative effort around family history and the pedigree model. CG is working with CIC on overall strategy for development of the OMICS DAM, examining strategy which supports cross organization collaboration of aligned DAMs which support a wide variety of stakeholders from research to clinical trial to clinical environments.

Happening faster than anyone predicted, we will have an understanding of our genomes such that getting everyone sequenced will make both medical and economic sense. We need to keep in mind, however, that falling prices are simply the first step. Clinical interpretations are still coming slowly – for now any way. And the Clinical Genomics Work Group will continue its efforts to stay ahead of the curve.



News from the **PMO** and Project Services Work Group

By Dave Hamill, Director, HL7 Project Management Office; Rick Haddorff and Freida Hall, Co-Chairs, Project Services Work Group

SAIF Pilot Coordination Project

Project Services is leading this project, which is sponsored by the Technical Steering Committee. The primary deliverable of the SAIF Pilot Coordination project will be to create concrete examples of artifacts that can be used in a future version of an HL7 SAIF implementation guide.

SAIF Pilot Coordination will assist in the documentation of processes encountered throughout the development of projects under the SAIF AP (Architecture Program) umbrella that require input from more than one work group.

The team has used RASCI charts to capture the roles and responsibilities of groups in these efforts. The first use of this tool was to capture the interactions between groups as a modeling tool was selected for use in the Orders and Observations Composite Order project. The team has also used Project Insight to help model the dependencies between the SAIF pilot projects' activities.

Additionally, the team has begun to use a concept mapping tool to present the dependencies diagrammatically. This is the work we will be focusing on in the next several months.

Overall, the Project will document coordination conducted by over 12 HL7 work groups as they proceed through over 9 projects under the SAIF AP umbrella. From this coordination, suggested contributions to SAIF Governance documents will be created as well as modifications to the HL7 Project Life Cycle for Product Development (PLCPD).

Project Services is happy to be working on this effort to help move HL7 toward the adoption of the SAIF architecture. We appreciate and welcome the contributions from all those involved in the SAIF AP projects.

Guidance for Steering Division Co-Chairs: Using PBS Metrics to Evaluate WG Capacity to Undertake New Efforts

Project Services has created a new document offering suggestions and guidance for steering division co-chairs on using the PBS (Projects Ballots and Standards) Metrics to evaluate work group capacity when they are undertaking new projects.

In addition to referencing the PBS Reports link located on the work group's HL7.org page and the PBS Metrics Excel report located in GForge, the document contains a list of potential issues and questions which steering division co-chairs can pose to the work groups.

The document is located at [www.hl7.org > Resources > Tools & Resources > Project Tracking Tools](http://www.hl7.org/Resources/Tools&Resources/ProjectTrackingTools/http://www.hl7.org/documentcenter/public/wg/projectServices/PBS-MetricGuidanceforSDCoChairsFinal.doc) (<http://www.hl7.org/documentcenter/public/wg/projectServices/PBS-MetricGuidanceforSDCoChairsFinal.doc>).

Come Join Us for the Project Management Roundtable

Every working group meeting, Project Services hosts an informal gathering at lunchtime on Wednesday called the Project Management Roundtable. Look for the tent card with "Project Managers" on it in the general session/lunch ballroom.

The forum is open. Please come forward with any project questions, concern or idea. We'd love to have you join us!

Webinar Recording: HL7 Project Management Tool Overview for HL7 Project Facilitators

In case you didn't know, the HL7 PMO recorded a webinar that provides an overview of the various HL7 Project Management tools. To view the 38 minute webinar recording, go to [www.hl7.org > Resources > Webinar Recordings](http://www.hl7.org/Resources/WebinarRecordings).

This session, targeted for co-chairs and those leading HL7 projects (i.e. project facilitators), demonstrates HL7 project tools including Project Insight (HL7's primary project repository), the HL7 Searchable Project Database, GForge, as well as review HL7 project processes and methodologies.

If you would like the PMO to present this webinar at one of your Steering Division or Work Group conference calls, please contact Dave Hamill at pmo@hl7.org to schedule a day and time.

HL7 Project Tracking Tools

All of HL7's project tools, including the Searchable Project Database, GForge and Project Insight, are available on www.hl7.org via [Participate > Tools & Resources > Project Tracking Tools](#).



Dave Hamill



Freida Hall



Rick Haddorff



Carlos Tellería
Orriols

Interoperability throughout a Corporate Integration Platform Using HL7 Standards

By Carlos Tellería Orriols, Integration Manager, SALUD

The Public Healthcare Provider of the Aragón Autonomous Community of Spain (SALUD) is responsible for the healthcare delivery to 1.34 million inhabitants in the Aragón region in northern Spain. With an annual budget of 1.8 billion in 2012, SALUD covers a geographical area of 47,719 km.

SALUD, through its hospitals, primary health centers and other specialty facilities, offers a comprehensive portfolio of services to citizens, including:

- Primary care
- Acute care
- Chronically dependent care (skilled nursing)
- Mental health
- Emergency
- Public health
- Pharmaceutical benefits, orthoprosthesis, dietary products and health transport

The public health system is divided into eight geographical sectors, each of which has a reference hospital. The health district is the basic territorial framework for primary health care, having direct access to the population and with the ability to provide ongoing support, and includes:

- 124 Primary care centers
- 990 Primary care physicians
- 167 Pediatric physicians
- 933 Primary care nurses

In December 2006, the interoperability project began as the basis for the IT strategy for the public health system. Orion Health Rhapsody was chosen for this purpose, mainly for its simple, efficient, robust manner, independent of vendor-specific technology.

In June 2007, the first interfaces went into production, and Rhapsody has operated continuously since then. Today, Rhapsody provides the basis for integration between the different information systems of the Department of Health of Aragón. There are currently nine instances of Rhapsody in production, one for each territorial sector of Aragón, as well as the central node.

The HL7 Version 2.5 standard was adopted at the beginning of the project for every message passing through the integration engine. An implementation guide for Aragón is currently being compiled and is expected to be published this year.

The deployment of Rhapsody in Aragón is being led by the Center for Integrated Management of Corporate Projects (CGIPC) of SALUD. The development and maintenance team is composed entirely of C2C Consulting TSIS consultants.

Case I: Patient Unique Identification at Corporate Level

At Aragón Health Service, a unique identifier has been defined for every patient (CIA, Autonomic Identification Code), in such a way that they are uniquely identified across all facilities and devices inside the health system. This code is automatically created and managed by an Enterprise Master Patient Index (EMPI) system. The normal operation of the system comprises two circuits, related to the patient's entry points to the health system: primary care and emergency services at hospitals.

Clinical systems are permanently synchronized with the demographic database and EMPI for primary care since

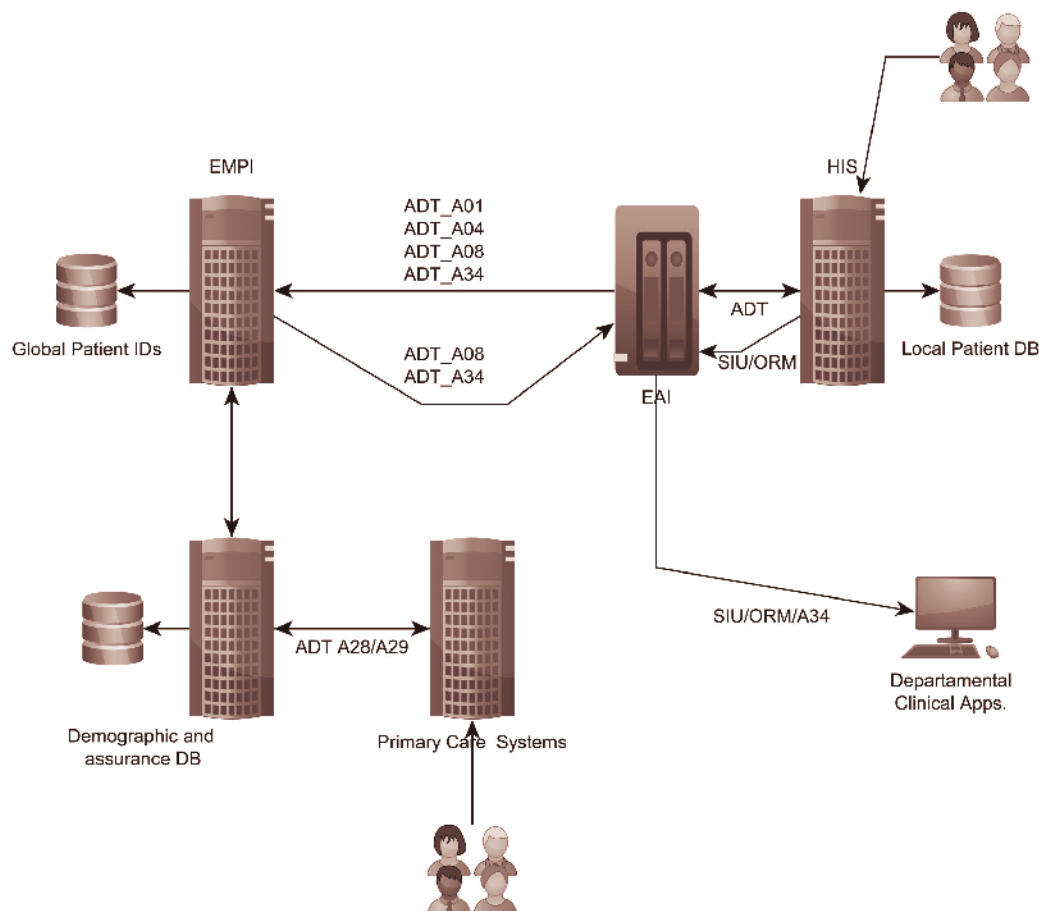
continued on page 12

Interoperability, continued from page 12

patients have been previously granted their health-care assurance. When a new patient is created in the assurance database, a notification is sent to an EMPI Web Service, which creates a unique ID (CIA) for that patient and then returns the information to the demographic database. This database broadcasts an ADT A28 message to all primary care systems.

The circuit is more complex with the hospital emergency system. A patient may not exist in the EMPI system, but it is mandatory to provide assistance to him or her in a secure way. In normal conditions, when a patient arrives at emergency, HIS sends an ADT message to EMPI, which identifies that patient and returns his or her unique ID (CIA), creating it if necessary. Thereafter, HIS keeps that identifier and includes it in every message sent to third party systems, such as RIS or laboratory.

If a communication problem occurs when a patient hasn't yet been assigned his or her unique CIA, the EAI bus, responsible for communications among systems, detects a SIU or ORM message lacking a CIA and tries to look for it in the EMPI. If this operation is not possible, EAI assigns a temporary unique ID to the patient with the format "PROV" + Local History Number, and adds a PID.3 element to the message with this ID. Once communications are restored, and with the permanent CIA already created in EMPI, EAI



Case 1: EMPI at Aragon Health Service

broadcasts a merge message A34 to all involved systems in which the temporary CIA is replaced by a permanent one. This operation allows for the restoration of identifiers and guarantees that the patient's healthcare and correct identification are provided at all times.

Case II: Simultaneous management of laboratory orders and appointments with HL7 messages

SALUD has an electronic health record tool for primary healthcare that allows the generation and sending of laboratory orders, but it does not support appointment management for analytic tests. Admission staff at the specialty facilities usually performs this action.

SALUD has also developed a custom solution (LabRM,

Laboratory Request Manager) for managing both lab orders and patients' appointments for analytic tests. This solution is multi-lab and multi-requester, and connectivity is defined with a set of HL7 messages for managing orders as well as appointments.

Aiming to facilitate patient appointments, and also with the goal of reducing pressure on admission personnel, a route has been developed between primary care systems and LabRM. Beginning with the order request, the route is as follows:

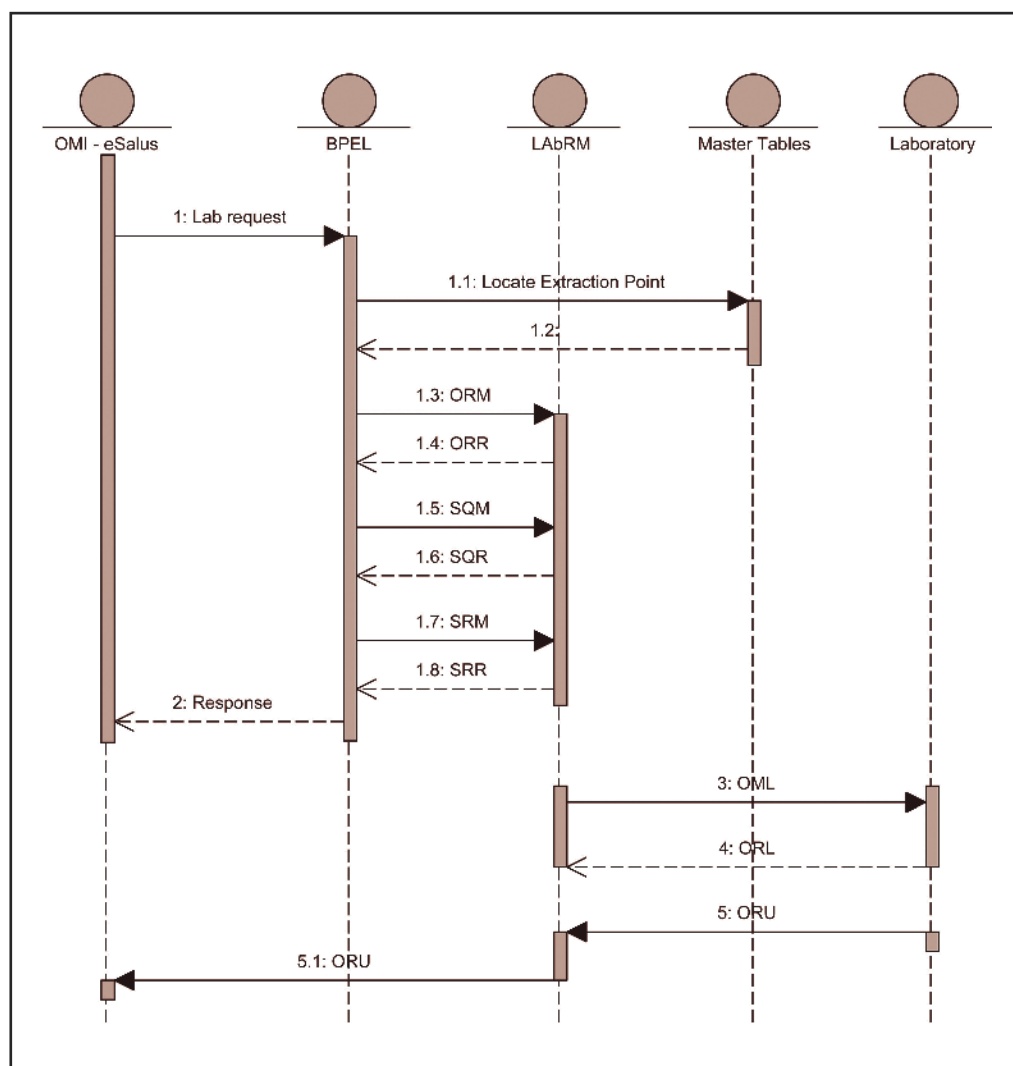
- Registers laboratory orders
- Selects the correct extraction point and schedule depending on order type requested
- Assigns appointments finding first available gap on that schedule
- Links appointment to order
- Returns the appointment details to the clinical application

Thus, patients leave their consultation with both the appointment and the lab order simultaneously.

LabRM is also responsible for sending requests to laboratory, and managing results as well as forwarding them to clinical systems. These transactions are delivered using standard OML/ORL and ORU/ACK schemes.

All the logic inside the processes for selecting schedules, finding schedule gaps, trying to fix an appointment (recursively if needed), and composing a message that joins order and appointment details, has been developed over OpenESB BPEL engine.

All integration routes and traffic management have been implemented with the Orion Health Rhapsody Engine. IT staff at SALUD, in collaboration with C2C consultants, developed the system.



Case II: SALUD's LabRM system

News from the PBS Metrics Team

By HL7 International Staff Members Dave Hamill, Director, Project Management Office; Lynn Laakso, TSC Project Manager; Don Lloyd, PhD, Director of Technical Publications; and Karen Van Hentenryck, Associate Executive Director



Dave Hamill

PBS Metrics (Projects, Ballots and Standards) Report

The PBS Metrics Team would like to thank all the work group co-chairs, project facilitators and everyone else that had a hand in cleaning up their 'infractions' (i.e. red items). The team continues to enhance reporting, visibility and resources to make it as easy as possible for work groups to address problem areas. On HL7.org, via Resources > Work Groups, you can now find forms, templates and process documentation to help you address PBS infractions.

PBS Metrics Work for 2012

The PBS Metrics Team will focus on making the PBS information easier to access and more visible. A link to the PBS Metrics Excel report will be added to every work group's webpage on www.HL7.org as well as the HL7 Searchable Project Database. 'Interim' reports will be published between working group meetings (WGMs) to provide more timely information. Co-chairs will be provided their Project Insight login credentials prior to WGMs so project clean up will be easier. PBS Team members will assist in creating educational material on HL7 balloting, and the Searchable Project Database will be modified to indicate if the project has a PBS Metrics infraction.

PBS Metrics Reports and Dashboard

The PBS Metrics reporting and dashboards are easily accessible via the Reports link on your work group's HL7.org page. This link directs you to GForge, where the report resides within the TSC's File area (http://gforge.hl7.org/gf/project/tsc/frs/?action=FrsReleaseBrowse&frs_package_id=169).

As a reminder, the PBS reporting and dashboards reflect the following criteria for each work group:

1. Idle Ballots - Items that haven't balloted in a year, and are still "open" (haven't successfully completed their ballot)
2. No Recon Package - Items that have not had a reconciliation package posted
3. Non-Advancing Ballots - Items that have gone

- through 3 or more ballots
4. Expired DSTUs - Expired DSTUs that have not proceeded to normative or some other ballot level
5. Unpublished CMETs - CMETs that are finished (passed by numbers and Recon is complete) but unpublished (waiting for the CMET clean-up work to be completed by Andy Stechishin and Dave Hamill)
6. Unpublished Ballots - Items that are finished (passed by numbers and reconciliation is complete) but unpublished (not in Normative Edition or on HL7 Standards page)
7. Projects in Project Insight that are behind more than 120 Days
8. Projects in Project Insight with an 'Unknown' status
9. Work groups that do not have any 3-Year Plan Items in Project Insight

The PBS Metrics Report was created to support the HL7 strategic initiative to "streamline the HL7 standards development process." It is intended to be a tool to assist work groups with managing ballots in addition to cleaning up projects and old data. By reviewing the reports, work groups can identify potential issues before they get out of hand as well as move items through balloting to a final document or standard state.

If you have any questions or comments, please direct them to any PBS Metrics team member: Dave Hamill (dhamill@HL7.org), Lynn Laakso (lynn@HL7.org), Don Lloyd (dlloyd@HL7.org) and Karen Van Hentenryck (karenvan@HL7.org).



Lynn Laakso



Don Lloyd, PhD



Karen Van Hentenryck

LCAM: Local Clinical Alarm Manager for COPD's Chronic Patients from the Balearic Islands

By A. Conde Geli, M. Pons Crespí, M. N. Melià Aguiló, J. C. Amer Oliver, F. Tous Llull, Integration Competency Center (<http://cci.ibit.org>), Department of Health, Fundació iBit

Abstract

The present article defines the Local Clinical Alarm Manager (LCAM), an interoperability project of several information systems related to the monitoring and early diagnosis of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), which applies algorithms which reflect the reference clinical practice guides. The project's scope is defined within the Balearic Islands' health and sanitary environment.

LCAM is generic and configurable, and allows professionals to monitor one or several chronic diseases. The architecture is based on a Services Oriented Architecture (SOA) model, and the synchronization with the local clinical application is carried out using the HL7 Clinical Context Object Workgroup (CCOW) standard protocol.

Introduction

Chronic diseases are the epidemics of the twenty-first century, especially in countries with a population with a high aging rate. COPD is a cause of high morbidity, mortality and disability in Spain. It is estimated that between 9% and 10% of the adult population over 40 years of age suffer from COPD, and that over 70% of them remain undiagnosed. Chronic diseases entail costly and complex processes, and represent a big percentage of the sanitary costs.

The information system (IS) that supports the Chronic Diseases Alarm Manager will be referred to as LCAM in this article.

The IS consists of a client part, installed in each professional's personal computer, as well as a server part, which acts as an integration core with the different sanitary information systems. The client part is fed by the sanitary application which the professional is using at the time—generally any application which uses HL7 CCOW as an integrated communication protocol. CCOW informs the client part of the LCAM about the context patient—the patient about whom the clinical professional is querying the sanitary application—and about which specific chronic diseases the professional is interested in monitoring. Once this information has been collected, LCAM's integration engine informs the client if it is necessary to display alarms which may interest the clinical professional related to the patient who is been queried at the time.

Project Aim

- Assistance improvement: support for the clinical professional upon the monitoring and treatment of the chronic disease COPD
- Minimization of COPD infra-diagnosis, easing an early diagnosis of people within EPOC risk

Designing a Prototype Solution for COPD

The prototype design had to include a previous synchronization step between the patient that is being queried by the clinical professional and LCAM. This synchronization process is carried out by implementing CCOW with LCAM within its client part and the clinical application used by the clinical professional. The clinical application instigates context changes, cascading any change to the rest of applications which share the protocol (in this case LCAM) every time a new patient query is carried out. Once the clinical professional has carried out the patient query the application, a cascade will be carried out within the new context, and LCAM will gather information about whether the patient is or is not at risk, or if COPD has been diagnosed.

An absolute priority at the technical level, and in order to enable a progressive addition of other chronic diseases, was to obtain a solution already adapted for re-usability, flexibility and scalability in the future.

Interoperating Information

In order to enable the information's interoperability, a means of transport was needed, together with a synchronization standard between the desktop applications. The HL7 CCOW and Version 3 standards were chosen.

Future

In order to increase the functionalities of LCAM, the actions that need to be carried out for this interoperability project are as follows:

- Monitoring and early diagnosis of vascular risk/diabetes mellitus
- Monitoring of the specific care-giving programs

Conclusions

The client LCAM has been set up in fifteen health centers and three hospitals within the Balearic Islands. In clinical literature, the most accepted proposal consists of combining the presence of the main risk factor (smoking habit), the age criteria (as age increases, the

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Andalusia Health Services: A New SOA and HL7 Strategy



*José Román
Fernández Engo*

By José Román Fernández Engo, Charge of Strategy for Interoperability, IT Department, SAS-Andalusia Health Services

The Servicio Andaluz de Salud (SAS – Andalusia Health Services) is the public organization providing health services in the Autonomous Community of Andalusia, Spain. SAS serves a population of 8 million people distributed in a 33,694.4 sq mile territory through a network of approximately 85,000 health professionals working in 29 hospitals and 1,500 PHC centers.

Background

During the last decade, SAS has centered its IT efforts on providing a centralized information system for general practitioners and pediatricians. This system covers the whole PHC (primary healthcare) level, including the patient electronic PHC record, an electronic prescription tool integrated with private pharmacy offices; and a laboratory orders tool accessible from public PHC premises throughout the entire territory. The project is named *Diraya*, which is the Arabic word for knowledge.

However, public hospitals have remained mostly isolated IT environments characterized by locally developed or third party solutions, with specific integrations at a local level and a discrete number of point to point integrations with SAS corporate information systems.

SOA Governance and HL7 Messaging

The SAS strategic IT plan foresaw providing corporate solutions to tertiary care while respecting the particularities of IT ecosystems within the different clinical departments in each hospital as well as allowing for seamless information exchange within the organization itself among all levels of care: with other public health organizations, external providers, other regional health information systems, the Spanish Health Ministry and European health authorities with the utmost security and reliability. The plan focuses on reducing IT and business costs, promoting IT reusability and ordered growth, and providing a solid organization-wide basis for better clinical and management decision making.

To turn the plan into a reality, five years ago, the Subdirección de Tecnologías de la Información (SAS IT Department), with the help of Red.es, undertook two complementary lines: building a comprehensive catalogue of corporate services throughout the organization to fulfill the needs within hospitals and among different levels of care for clinical and management purposes, and using an international and reliable standard for information exchange among health information systems.

The main objectives of the HL7 SOA strategy are:

- Adoption of a strategy and an information policy and integration defined and stable over time
- Establishing a governance model that allows both the consolidation and dissemination of these policies and the rules, master data, etc.
- Definition, modeling and consolidation of organizational processes; and the definition and implementation of sustainable life cycle models for all necessary services whether or not technological
- The widespread application of rules and standards (HL7 2.x, CDA, CIE9, etc.) for process modeling and establishing responsibility for the information of the organization
- The implementation of the services that establish and unify the interpretation of the information in the organization
- The adoption of a syntax based communication standard common to all systems, the force of law derived from the modeling business
- Hardware architecture for information management and communications based technology standards, which ensure the exchange of information on the physical level

The SOA Governance group of the SAS IT Department is responsible for the Interoperability Technical Office (OTI) and is supported by and partnered with Accenture, who has broad experience in health business process and IT systems. The role of the OTI is to define communication interfaces between clinical applications and to define and standardize SOA services. It also coordinates developments made by the various players of the Andalusian Public Health System (SSPA) for the construction of *DIRAYA*. The OTI's functions include the following:

- Implement the governance model defined by SOA governance group
- Coordinate modeling process
- Set rules and standards, use and dissemination policies and procedures
- Establish and manage the service catalog
- Define master data of the organization and its responsibilities
- Trace the path of convergence of systems to the new model, project to project, as part of a global macro-project, ensuring coexistence with the existing systems
- Integrate the actors participating in the SSPA information management through a corporate or departmental policy dissemination of standards,

Andalusia Health Services, continued from previous page

training activities and a certification program of developments aimed at interoperability

Main Results

Today, eight public hospitals are fully operational in the DAE project. A tight deployment schedule is under way to extend it to the other 22 hospitals. Organization-wide logistics and IT management systems are also being progressively integrated into the SOA and HL7 messaging strategy. Since the implementation of the strategy in September 2009, important results have been achieved. The scope of these results more than justifies the investment, both economically and in terms of effort, from the Directorate of IT in internalization, dissemination and training. The results are summarized below:

MANAGEMENT

- SOA and HL7 strategy from OTI in DAE has produced a savings of 86% in development and implementation costs expected with a maximum reuse rate obtained with the SAS SOA Services Catalogue

DEVELOPMENT

- Provides documentation or reference to a lot of control in their evolution
- Unifies support, simplifying the training of both technological and project management, etc.
- Simplification and reuse of developments for these units "atomic" from the standpoint of business functionality and not its technological configuration

- Decouples applications, allowing the independent evolution of business areas based on functional needs
- Scalability and Sustainability

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

- Internalizes the knowledge of the business by improving internal control projects and reversing the knowledge in the organization, thus avoiding dependence on external agents
- Avoids data inconsistencies by having role models of the information that reflect that data
- Ensures interoperability of the organization both internally and externally

To illustrate these results, the following table shows some counters:

Description	Count	Impact
Business areas covered	11	Human Resources, Laboratory, Master Patient, Treasury, Logistics, Reports, Appointments, Images, Demographics, Census, Cross Services.
Business Services	97	From both top-down and bottom-up approaches, assuring convergence with existing projects.
Hospitals and organizations using Service Catalogue	27	18 new hospitals expected before the end of the year.
Information Systems using corporate services	57	Publishing the corporate interfaces and following SAS White Paper for Interoperability, unify semantic and decouple the systems map in the whole organization. Important savings expected in the future.
Providers behind IS	22	Huge effort of coordination and project planning, risk management and supporting.
HL7 version	V2.5	Implementing the standard, taking advantage of HL7 v2.x messaging's event orientation, for a EDA approach (Event Driven Architecture).
Corporate Projects adopting the strategy	20	Thrusting the whole strategy towards a fast growth and tight deployment schedule.
Messages processed	16,632,588	Mainly distributed in DAE, Logistics, Laboratory.

LCAM, continued from page 15

disease's prevalence increases), and the use of a highly consistent test such as spirometry. This is what LCAM considers, therefore improving the patient's assistance quality, together with the clinical professional's assistance, for three clear reasons:

1. Monitoring and early diagnosis, by computerizing the clinical practical guides, together with medicine based scientific evidence in order to improve the assistance quality for one of the twenty-first century epidemics for developed countries: chronic diseases
2. Solving the current problem of the lack of communication between the different assistance levels, generating an alarm at any level, thus alerting the clinical professionals about an early diagnosis or informing the clinical professional that the patient is already under treatment

3. Communicating between the different assistance levels by using communication protocols and standards, trying to mitigate the report, diagnosis and/or treatments duplicity

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Dr. Klaus-Peter
Adlassnig

Electronic Surveillance of Healthcare-Associated Infections Using HL7's Arden Syntax

By Dr. Klaus-Peter Adlassnig, CEO and Scientific Head, Medexer Healthcare in Vienna, Austria; and Section for Medical Expert and Knowledge-Based Systems, Center for Medical Statistics, Informatics, and Intelligent Systems, Medical University of Vienna

Arden Syntax is a medical knowledge representation and processing scheme for the development of clinical decision support (CDS) systems that originated in 1989 at a gathering of several medical informaticists from the USA, the Netherlands, and Sweden at the Arden Homestead Retreat in Orange County, NY, conference estates owned by the Columbia University. The intention was to write computer-based clinical reminders, diagnostic and therapeutic recommendations, and crucial alerts in a clear and readable way and—as one of the main objectives—to make them shareable to others.

Since then, the early versions of Arden Syntax have been updated, extended, and were adopted by standards organizations. The American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) first approved the Arden Syntax as standard E-1460-92 in 1992. Ownership was transferred to Health Level Seven (HL7) and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) in

1999 with the approval of version 2.0 of the standard. The latest release is Arden Syntax version 2.8 which was approved in January 2012; however, HL7's Arden Syntax Work Group is still preparing further improvements of, and extensions to, this representation and programming code.

Arden Syntax is a syntax defining how to arrange input data to be processed, condition and action parts of clinical rules to be written, and how and where to output the computed results. Medical logic modules (MLMs) are the basic representation and processing units in Arden Syntax, and the syntax was designed such that each MLM may contain all the knowledge for at least one single decision. However, MLMs can call each other, be interconnected, even intertwined, and can thus form whole medical knowledge packages (MKPs)¹, consisting of sets of MLMs.

To make the syntax operable, one needs to write—say program in a

programming language—an interpreter or compiler for Arden Syntax, and an execution engine to have the MLMs being processed. In addition, an authoring tool containing an editor for writing MLMs—which possibly includes an execution engine for testing them before they become enacted—usually comes with such a suite of Arden Syntax software.

Following current software architectures and providing the Arden Syntax execution engine within a service-oriented architecture makes it possible to offer interoperable CDS systems for a variety of tasks. These tasks all have in common that data sources such as clinical, laboratory, or intensive care information systems or the web “itself” supply the data to be processed—preferably through standardized data communication—and that the MLM-processed results be returned to the connected information systems or be reported by separate web-based applications.

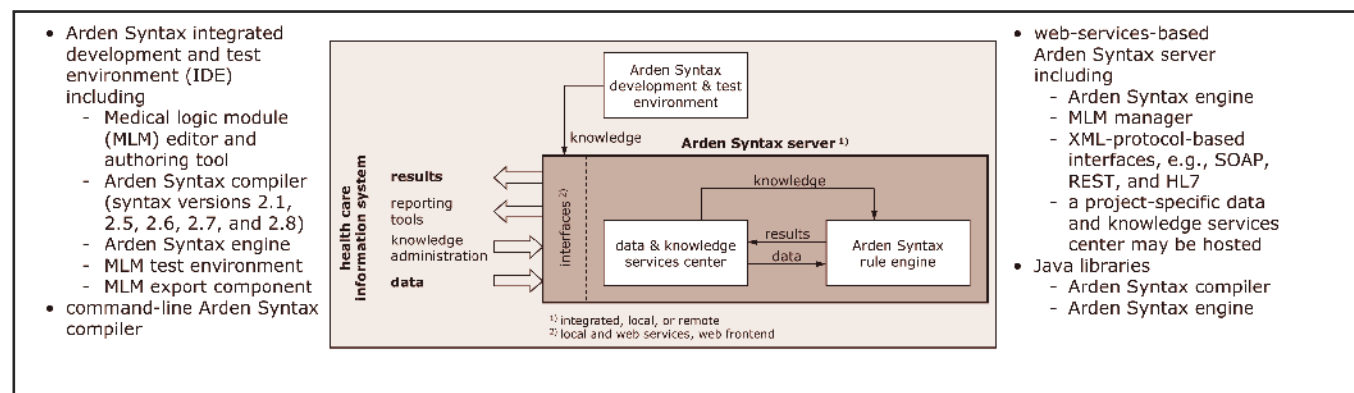


Figure 1: Suite of Arden Syntax software—service-oriented architecture and software components

Figure 1 shows the structure of an Arden-Syntax-based, service-oriented CDS system and lists some of its software components, as it is offered and applied by Medexer Healthcare. This software for Arden Syntax was written, distributed, and has been incorporated into a number of hospitals and some healthcare companies information systems.

One large-scale application is called Moni-ICU and runs as clinical routine application at the Vienna General Hospital, a tertiary care hospital with 2,134 beds and the main teaching hospital of the Medical University of Vienna, Austria. Moni-ICU has been built for electronic, fully-automated surveillance of healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) at the hospital's intensive care units (ICUs) with adult patients. The primary user is the infection control team of the Clinical Department of Hospital Hygiene of the Vienna General Hospital, which receives daily automated updates on its cockpit surveillance screen to see which patient at which ICU ward developed an ICU-associated infection, continued to have one, or recovered from one (See Figure 2). Based on classification criteria for HAIs, as they have been issued by the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the European CDC, and German KISS, the published definitions of the various forms of septicemias, pneumonias, urinary tract and central-venous-catheter-associated infections were linguistically decomposed, formally rearranged and structured, and brought into Arden Syntax MLM code.

Processing layers from raw data calculation and interpretation to intermediate and high-level clinical concept evaluation were introduced and a package of hierarchically

interwoven MLMs was established (Figure 3). Patients' medical data is measured, observed and automatically transferred from the intensive care medical information systems and the microbiology laboratory. It is then put through a step-by-step pipeline of aggregation, interpretation, and evaluation that is eventually used to draw conclusions about whether one or more of the included infection criteria are fulfilled, fulfilled to a certain degree, or not fulfilled. Most of the encoded clinical entities are modeled as fuzzy sets, and fuzzy logic is used to perform the subsequent inference steps. Figure 3 shows a graphical depiction of the processing layers in Moni-ICU.

At present, this Arden Syntax ap-

plication is used by 12 ICUs with a total of 96 beds and the microbiology department provide about 15-18,000 data items every day. For each of the 96 patients, an Arden Syntax knowledge package containing 74 MLMs (with emulated clinical fuzzy set definitions and fuzzy logic processing operators) is automatically invoked, and both intermediate medical concepts and final infection results are computed, stored, and prepared for viewing on screen or for reporting.

A study evaluating the effectiveness has shown an excellent conformance of Moni-ICU with an established clinical reference standard as well as Moni-ICU's superiority in

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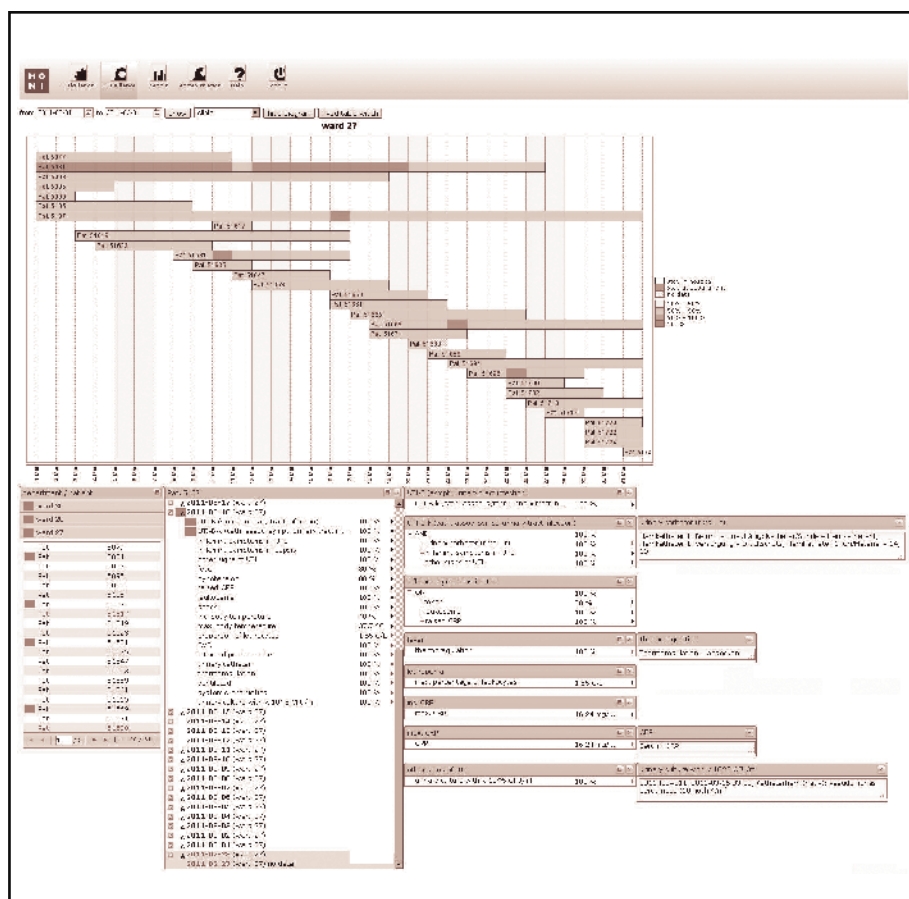


Figure 2: Screenshot of Moni-ICU showing daily results (lower half, middle part) including detailed explanations (lower half, right part) and patients' infection period over time (upper half)

Electronic Surveillance *continued from page 19*

minimizing time demands on the infection control team with respect to electronically supported versus sole human surveillance [2].

The next steps include extending Moni-ICU to neonatal care (Moni-NICU), forming standardized interfaces to medical information systems applying the HL7 messaging standards, defining and adopting a genuine Fuzzy Arden Syntax (presumably Arden Syntax version 2.9), and adding several automated reporting schemes for HAIs as requested by legal requirements in Austria, Germany, and the US.

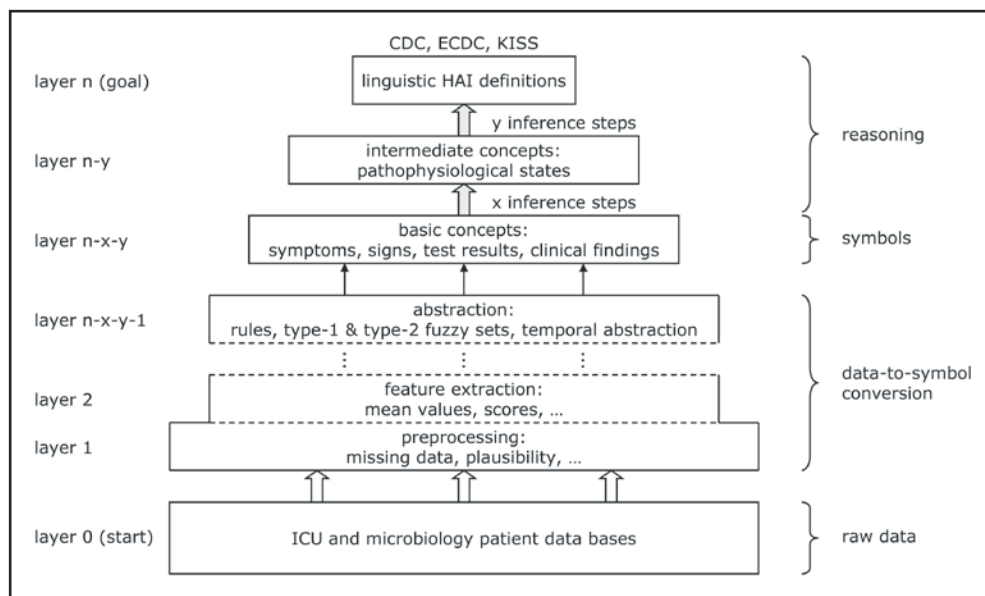


Figure 3: Processing layers from raw data to high-level clinical concept evaluation using Arden Syntax

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Upcoming **INTERNATIONAL EVENTS**

eHealth Conference 2012 / World of Health IT Conference and Exhibition

Copenhagen, Denmark
May 7 - 9, 2012

For more information, please visit
<http://www.worldofhealthit.org/>

HL7 May Working Group Meeting

Vancouver, BC, Canada
May 13 - 18, 2012

For more information, please visit
<http://www.hl7.org/events/Working Group Meetings>

eHealth 2012: Innovating Health e-Care

Vancouver, BC, Canada
May 27 - 30, 2012

For more information, please visit
<http://www.e-healthconference.com>

MIE 2012: Quality of Life through Quality of Information

Pisa, Italy

August 26 - 29, 2012

For more information, please visit
<http://www.mie2012.it>

HIMSS AsiaPac 2012

Marina Bay Sands, Singapore
September 17 - 19, 2012

For more information, please visit
<http://www.himssasiapac.org>

13th International HL7 Interoperability Conference

Vienna, Austria

September 28 - 29, 2012

Watch the HL7 website for more information.





John Ritter



Lenel James

Health Level Seven International Project Supports the US Office of Personnel Management's Blue Button® Requirements

By John Ritter, Co-Chair, HL7 Electronic Health Records Work Group and HL7 Ambassador; and Lenel James, CPHIT, CPEHR, Member, HL7 EHR Work Group and HL7 Ambassador

HL7 recently announced a response to the US Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) recent requirement that US Federal Employees Health Benefit Program (FEHBP) health insurance carriers support the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Blue Button® text file format as a means of conveying personal health information to federal employees. In January 2012, HL7 launched a project that defines the conversion of an HL7 Continuity of Care Document (CCD®) to the Blue Button format via an XSLT style sheet tool. Because most Meaningful Use-certified health information exchange systems already possess CCD-export capabilities, the tool will be able to leverage those capabilities as a simple and effective way for many carriers to meet OPM's new requirement.

The Blue Button, developed by the VA in collaboration with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), empowers Veterans to access and download their health information as an ASCII text file or PDF® document. The Blue Button initiative was made nationally available in October 2010. In December 2011, OPM issued a formal request to all carriers in the FEHBP to add Blue Button functionality to their web-based personal health record systems. (See: <http://www1.opm.gov/news/blue-button-added-to-health-insurance-carriers-for-federal-employees,1744.aspx>)

The Blue Button service participates in the health infor-

mation exchange continuum by enabling Veterans and consumers to share their data with clinicians and other caregivers via a simple text file. The service is part of the expanding landscape of national and local initiatives such as the Office of the National Coordinator's Standards and Interoperability Framework and the Beacon Community Programs.

John Ritter, co-chair of the HL7 Electronic Health Record Work Group (EHR WG), noted that HL7 quickly assembled a broad set of industry stakeholders, including vendors, providers, payers, and federal agencies, as part of its ongoing commitment to be responsive to the industry's needs in a timely manner.

The Blue Button, developed by the VA in collaboration with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), empowers Veterans to access and download their health information as an ASCII text file or PDF® document.

The EHR WG and Structured Documents Work Group, co-sponsors of the project, expect to publish the file conversion tool and User's Guide after the May Working Group Meeting in Vancouver. Doug Dormer, President of SPINNphr and member of the project team stated, "I am pleased to be involved in this project. This tool will reduce my technical team's effort to offer a data download channel to consumers in the Blue Button format and help our clients meet OPM's requirement."

For more information visit: www.HL7.org/EHR

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Andrea Ribick

One Step Closer to Secure EHRs and mHealth: OMG and HL7 Announce Adoption of the hData Specification

By Andrea Ribick, HL7 Director of Communications

HL7 and OMG® recently announced the adoption and availability of the hData Record Format and hData RESTful Transport specifications, a scalable electronic method for exchanging patient health information (such as electronic health records, “EHR” and mobile health, “mHealth”) among patients, doctors, hospitals, and clinics.

“This is the latest in a number of standards jointly created as a result of our partnership with OMG. This collaborative relationship is successful because it combines HL7’s expertise in creating healthcare interoperability standards with OMG’s expertise in distributed process models, wrappers and transport specifications that are common to all industries,” said John Quinn, CTO, HL7 International. “It is also one of the first published efforts to adopt the significant contributions and balloting efforts of our volunteers from MITRE, giving HL7 implementers API access to the hData RESTful Transport specification.”

“The real impetus behind health data information standards like hData is saving lives and saving money by connecting clinical systems across doctors’ offices, hospitals and research centers. This is accomplished by overcoming the differences in systems that make sharing information difficult in the medical world,” said Dr. Richard Mark Soley, PhD, Chairman and CEO, OMG.

With the adoption at OMG and at HL7, hData is now the first set of peer-reviewed specifications within both organizations for implementing a RESTful exchange of clinical information in the context of national and international standards. With hData, implementers can achieve semantic interoperability between clinical systems both within and across organizational boundaries. By supporting a wide variety of clinical content models and media types, hData offers maximal flexibility while ensuring high scalability and efficiency through an optimized transport architecture.

“MITRE initiated and led hData’s development in 2008 in an effort to promote the adoption and use of scalable electronic health record systems,” says Gerald Beuchelt, Lead Software Systems Engineer, MITRE. “Doctors cite compliance as an area that will improve a patient’s health and also help keep costs in the US system down. Mobile health is a useful tool, but first we need scalable exchange and semantic interoperability of health IT systems, and then we can support future growth in tools like mobile health that can all share common data – hence hData.”

RESTful specification services are low-cost and easy to deploy versus other service types that are more cumbersome to build and implement. hData allows a Web developer to demonstrate a prototype in days instead of months with the current standards in use. Not surprisingly, RESTful Web services are used by companies such as Amazon.com and Google because they can scale to millions of users.

With the hData specifications, medical records present content in a tiered structure that allows for fast and secure access to only the specific information needed at a given time. This means that rather than having to download an entire record to a mobile device, doctors can download just the pieces of data they need in order to make decisions. hData makes the data securely accessible so the innovation of mobile use can happen.

The specification is available to the public for download from the OMG website at <http://www.omg.org/cgi-bin/doc?dtc/2012-01-03>.

HL7 has published the hData Record Format as a DSTU (Draft Standard for Trial Use). It is available on the HL7 website at <http://www.hl7.org/dstucomments/>.



Dr. Adam Chee

Health IT Standards – What Went Wrong Where?

By Dr. Adam Chee, Vice-Chair, HL7 Singapore

I had an interesting conversation about health IT standards recently, in a private setting, where a group of people debated a few popular standards adopted in the realm of medical imaging.

The discussion started with XDS (Cross Enterprise Document Sharing) from IHE and the topic was why it was not suitable for handling non-DICOM images. The first red flag that went off in my head was ‘Perversion of the XDS standard!’ XDS is not meant for handling of non-DICOM images; it is meant to register and share electronic health record documents between health-care enterprises, ranging from physician offices to clinics to acute care inpatient facilities. In other words, it is meant to be used in an EMR/EHR environment for sharing of documents. The individual placing the complaint can go on about the how XDS has failed for him and he will be “correct” because it has indeed “failed,” since XDS has been made to serve a wrong purpose. There are no surprises here.

However, the rationale of his argument is akin to saying that airplanes have failed because they make terrible cars when one tries to drive them like one – thinking that both are transportation devices, hence they should serve the same purpose. I call this a case of plain cognitive failure.

As a firm believer of adopting relevant standards in the right context, I tried to highlight that if one is looking at imaging, then maybe XDS-I (Cross Enterprise Document Sharing for Imaging) would be a better choice. The reply I received was an

interesting one: “It’s the same.” Before I could explain the differences, I was shot down (well, it was a three person team versus me) and given an example from an article taken off the Internet, citing how a physician was trying to access a patient’s medical records with an XDS enabled system and had trouble locating what he needed because he had to open every single document to find out what it was.

I was half-amused and half-worried at this stage.

- Half-amused because the example was describing a half-attempted adoption of XDS (citing one article out of millions off the Internet) in order to support the point that XDS failed to support a workflow that it was never meant to
- Half-worried because there will be people in the group walking out of the discussion, spewing the same misguided information

To describe the concept of XDS in a very simplistic manner – XDS manages a federated document repositories and a document registry to create a longitudinal record of information pertaining to a patient (in a given ‘clinical affinity domain’).

These are distinct entities with separate responsibilities.

- A document repository is responsible for storing documents in a transparent, secure, reliable and persistent manner and responding to document retrieval requests
- A document registry is responsible for storing information about those documents so that the documents of interest for the

care of a patient may be easily found, selected and retrieved irrespective of the repository where they are actually stored

The example given obviously has the document registry part missing; therefore the implementation was not in compliance with the XDS specification. But somehow, XDS got blamed for it! This is like saying “work is going to kill you” because there are reported incidents of Kar shi (death from overwork) in Japan!

The topic then shifted suddenly to HL7 Version 2.x (V2) and the complaint was that HL7 V2.x is all the same, but they are not backward compatible, hence the need for interface engines. I tried to explain the concepts of HL7 V2.x and why it is in such a chaotic state (due to the lack of semantic interoperability, hence the reason why a logical information model such as RIM was developed), but the accuser became really defensive and further attempts to set the context right were met by rebuttals claiming that: standards looks nice on paper but fail in real world implementation and standards are developed by people sitting in ivory towers whereas he works in the industry so he “knows better.” I pointed out politely that standards bodies like HL7 and IHE are made up of volunteers from the industry (myself included – I am practitioner first, academian second, consultant third) and the notion that standards have ‘failed in the real world’ is due to implementers not understanding the standards being implemented, thus implementing them half-right or just plain-wrong.

continued on next page

Heath IT Standards, continued from page 15

To put his argument into another context, it is akin to saying that:

- The traffic light system of Red = Stop, Yellow = Caution and Green = Go has failed because motorists are ignoring them or that in some places the color has been changed
- Because he is accustomed to driving in a such a chaotic environment (such as above), he is convinced that his opinions are the only ones that matter

Well, the world is a very big place and even traffic rules differ from place to place (e.g. speed limits, left-hand drive versus right-hand drive), let alone healthcare systems. It is important to understand that in the

arguments above, standards have not failed; the implementation and enforcement has. If one cannot see the difference than one cannot fix the problem—it really is that simple. Now don't get me wrong, health-care IT standards are by no means perfect (and nothing is) and the people working on the development of standards and their consistent improvements are practitioners from the industry who have not only encountered real-life problems, but have also decided to make a difference by volunteering their time to help rectify these problems.

However, in order for standards to be effectively adopted, it is very important that users receive the right

information. While constant communication and knowledge transfer between standards developers and users are vital toward the effective adoption of standards, it is also important that users of standards take the effort and initiative to look for credible information from the right sources. As HL7 affiliates, we can serve as the enabler, facilitating the flow of knowledge between the two groups.

Last but not least, let us applaud the self-sacrificing individuals who dedicate their time and effort in the development of health IT standards, facilitating interoperability that improves care delivery.

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Patient Care

Patient Safety

Pharmacy

Public Health & Emergency Response

Regulated Clinical Research

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Service Oriented Architecture

Templates

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