

# HL7 UK eZine Sept 2007



Welcome to the second issue of the HL7 UK eZine. This issue contains a starter guide to CDA and an account of our successful programme of "Roadshow" events this year, as well as technical notes on Harmonization from Hugh Glover, TC chair, and a few other goodies.

Please keep the content coming - this is your eZine! Send contributions and ideas for articles to: [ezine@lists.hl7.org.uk](mailto:ezine@lists.hl7.org.uk)

## Getting to know CDA

HL7 Clinical Document Architecture (CDA) is HL7's standard that bridges the gap between traditional paper documents such as clinical notes and discharge letters, and clinically coded structured data. CDA is particularly relevant to HL7 UK since CDA was adopted in 2006 as the basis for all clinical messages in the CFH MIM (from MIM series 6), and is also under serious consideration in the other home countries. There was an HL7 UK workshop on CDA hosted by NHS Scotland in February 2007, and the HL7 UK 2007 conference programme includes a beginners guide to the MIM, that will include a good hard look at CFH's use of CDA. The HL7 UK 2007 conference will also feature several other CDA-related items - see the conference programme on the HL7 UK website.

Patrick Mitchell-Jones, our Chair, has prepared a simple introduction to CDA in response to requests at the recent roadshow events, and this is available on the HL7 UK website in the public area.

Ann Wrightson presented an introduction to CDA at the February workshop, and her slides are also available on the HL7 UK website.

If you want to know more about the background and rationale to CDA, and the evolution from CDAv1 to CDAv2, then there is no better source than the

two articles published in JAMIA by the principal developers and champions of the standard. Both are freely available in full text, and can be found by an article search of JAMIA at [www.jamia.org](http://www.jamia.org) for "HL7 clinical document architecture".

## Care Pathways, Decision Support and the new HL7 vMR project

On Tuesday 20th November, the day before the HL7 UK conference, InferMed are hosting an HL7 UK meeting on Care Pathways and Decision support, with a special focus on the recently established vMR (virtual medical record) initiative within HL7.org.

The morning features show-and-tell presentations from InferMed and CSW Group Ltd on "How we do care pathways and decision support", and the afternoon is dedicated to a full review of progress to date on the HL7 vMR project, including outputs from the September (Atlanta) HL7 WGM.

For further information contact Ann Wrightson [ann.wrightson@csw.co.uk](mailto:ann.wrightson@csw.co.uk)

## HL7 UK Summer Roadshow 2007

Philip Scott  
Chair, NHS  
Implementers  
Group



During June and July the NHS Implementers group held a well-supported series of one-day seminars on information integration in healthcare.

The idea was agreed by the Board back in February. Lots of work followed! Potential sponsors were approached and

signed up, venues were selected and booked, speakers were invited and the overall programme took shape.

An extensive advertising campaign was undertaken: emails to members and an NHS contact list; notifications on the HL7 UK website, the UKCHIP website and the NHS Health Informatics Community website; emails to the BCS Health Informatics list and inclusion in the BCS events bulletin.

All this publicity generated masses of interest. Registrations were coming in even before we had officially opened for bookings. The roadshow started in Birmingham on June 6, where about 45 attended. The York event on July 4 had about 50 in the audience. Over 80 attended the final seminar in London on July 24 (despite the Thames flooding affecting some who'd wanted to attend).

Broadly the same content was presented at each seminar. The opening talk was an overview of HL7 and HL7 UK, given in Birmingham and London by Patrick Mitchell-Jones, chair of HL7 UK, and in York by Hugh Glover, chair of the Technical Committee. Nick Brown from IHE UK then gave an introduction to Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise and how it uses HL7.

In Birmingham and York, Richard Kavanagh from NHS Connecting for Health then introduced the CFH Message Implementation Manual.

The London audience enjoyed a lively and entertaining talk from Dr Lester Russell, CMO of Fujitsu, the Southern LSP, on the future of healthcare IT.

The afternoon programme comprised interesting presentations on interfacing and interoperability from Sun, InterSystems and Orion, followed by a talk on achieving the CCOW vision from Sentillion.



The NHS Implementers group would particularly like to thank Fujitsu, Sun, InterSystems, Orion and Sentillion for sponsoring the roadshow, our other speakers for participating in the programme, Mary Pritchard and Nicola Murphy for help with registration and event organization, and all who attended for giving us their evaluation of the events.

We welcome positive suggestions about how the group can continue to support implementers both in the NHS and other healthcare providers in the UK.

*Article by Phil Scott; photograph: of York event by Mary Pritchard.*

## **Notes from the TC Chair – Harmonisation**

Last issue I looked at some of the levels in ballots, from the International down through the realm specific and down further to the contractual profile. Each of these is a restriction of the level above, tighter cardinalities, fewer choice boxes, fewer optional attributes.

A key concept in this process is “restriction”. It doesn’t matter how

much I need that additional attribute, or how hard it is to express something without that extra role and participation, if it isn’t in the RMIM that has been balloted I can’t just add it. More than that, if it isn’t in the RIM, it can’t be added to the RMIM I’m trying to work from.

For some people this inability to add new required features is a major weakness of HL7 v3. “It’s too constraining” they cry. “I can’t manage if it can’t grow with me” they rant. Well here’s a little known fact: there is a way of adding stuff to the RIM and to an RMIM, but you have to follow the magic path to achieve true satisfaction!

In the early ’90s the RIM was quite raw and there were many things that were “not quite right”, “poorly defined”, or just plain “missing”. A mechanism had to be found to fix these issues that would not hold back overall progress by being too cumbersome and hence “Harmonisation Meetings” were invented. These are two day sessions where requests for changes and additions to the RIM and associated vocabulary can be made. I never went to the early meetings, but I’ve heard tales of “RIM

Ramming” where the pressure to consider many hundreds of requests for changes resulted in whole blocks of changes being adopted in one go – I’m sure some peculiarities we now see stem from this time. However crude it may have been it did get changes made and allowed V3 to evolve at a reasonable pace.

Today harmonisation meetings still happen for two days three times a year, but now there are typically less than 100 requests to be considered.

So you have a requirement, to represent something in an HL7 v3 message and try as you might, there is no way you can see to fit it in. What do you do? Well first off talk to the relevant technical committee (TC) or special interest group (SIG) (each proposal must be sponsored by a TC or a SIG). They will look at what you are trying to do and either suggest an alternate way of achieving your objective, or they too will decide a RIM change is required. Then look at the harmonisation home page <http://www.hl7.org/special/harmonization/index.cfm>. On the right hand side is a link to the templates and examples for harmonisation proposals. Fill in a proposal and submit it by the due date. If this is a submission with a particular UK slant, please let me know about it too so I can support it at the meeting.

The meeting itself is open to anyone, but tends to be a gathering of the über geeks, those people whose grasp of HL7 passes the understanding of ordinary mortals. People who can decide which flavour of null they want on their cornflakes each morning.

This degree of expertise makes Harmonisation a design clinic in the first instance. If there is a way of modelling what you want with what is already available they will find it. The overall objective is to be conservative and make changes only if there is no other way.

Suppose now you submitted your proposal and it was accepted (the results are made available via the same web page) – can you now use it? Well ... not quite yet.

If your change is a new attribute and you want to stay true to a published ballot, you have to get your new change adopted by the RMIM you are trying to use, and that has to be balloted and accepted. Realistically any change like this is going to need at least six months to work through the system, perhaps more depending on timing of meetings.

Alternatively changes to vocabulary – a new value set for instance – will be available for use almost immediately.

Of course you can take a risk and pre-adopt the changes on the assumption that they will get through – just be prepared to reverse the changes if they are not adopted or are modified.

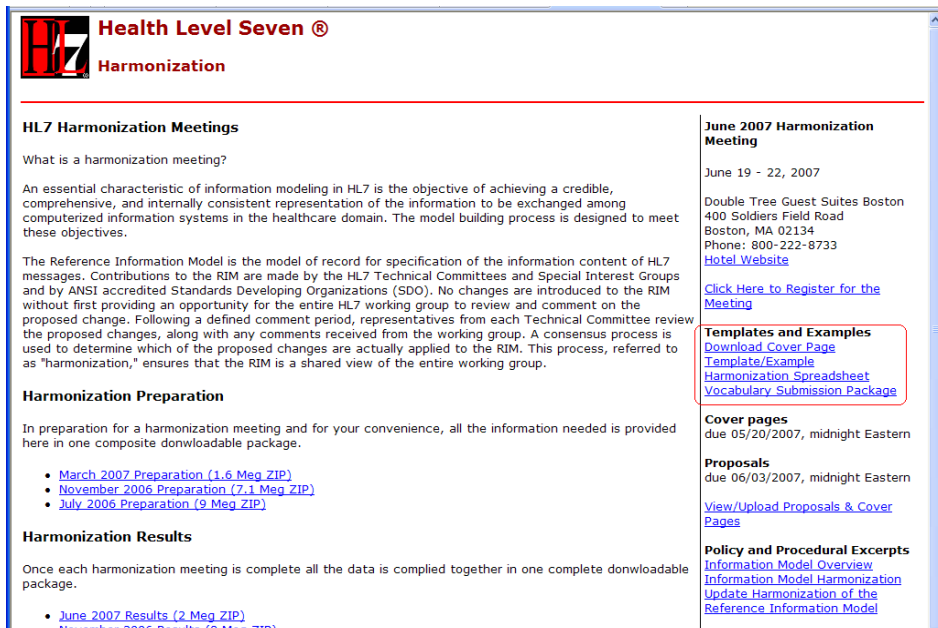
Changes to RIM attributes are now rare events, one or two a year. The real business of harmonisation is resolving vocabulary issues – something we have not paid enough attention too. But I'll leave that for the next issue. The key thing to remember now is that the RIM **can** be changed, things **can** be added, but its not a quick decision during a design session – standards shouldn't be that easy to change.

*Hugh Glover*  
HL7 UK TC Chair

## **Workshop on IHE XDS Cross Enterprise Document and Image Sharing in UK Healthcare**

IHE are holding a workshop on Monday 15th October 2007 from 10 am to 4 pm at the BCS, The Davidson Building, 5 Southampton Street, LONDON, WC2E 7HA

IHE XDS is an internationally agreed method of using an ebXML registry to share stored electronic documents which



The screenshot shows the 'Health Level Seven Harmonization' website. The main content area is titled 'HL7 Harmonization Meetings' and includes sections for 'What is a harmonization meeting?', 'Harmonization Preparation', and 'Harmonization Results'. The 'Preparation' section lists links for March 2007, November 2006, and July 2006 preparation packages. The 'Results' section lists links for June 2007 and November 2006 results. A sidebar on the right contains a 'June 2007 Harmonization Meeting' section with dates and location, and a 'Templates and Examples' section with links to download cover pages, templates, spreadsheets, and submission packages. There are also links for cover pages, proposals, and policy/procedural excerpts.

has been defined by the Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise (IHE) and is rapidly being adopted around the world. IHE XDS supports a wide range of documents including CDA documents pdf, rtf and DICOM Images and supports the use of documents that may include a coded section allowing an easy progression to automatic information search while supporting existing clinical practice.

This workshop organised by the British Computer Society and the British Institute of Radiology is an excellent opportunity for healthcare software suppliers, information officers and those involved in electronic information sharing across the healthcare enterprise to learn and participate.

For further information visit: [www.ihe-UK.org](http://www.ihe-UK.org) the IHE UK website, [www.ihe-Europe.org](http://www.ihe-Europe.org) for IHE Europe and [www.ihe.net](http://www.ihe.net) for the full international picture.

*Nicholas Brown*  
IHE-UK Steering Committee chair

## **Editorial Note**

From this issue, we have moved from using a rather expensive magazine-layout tool to an open standard

edit/layout package (OpenOffice). We hope you agree that it still does the job nicely for a Web newsletter – as well as being more in line with our ethos as a standards organization.

*Ann Wrightson*

## **HL7 UK Events**

### **September**

5th HL7 UK Board Teleconference  
16th-21st HL7.org 21st Plenary & Working Group Meeting, Atlanta, GA, USA

### **October**

2nd-3rd HL7 UK Technical Committee Working Meeting, London (tbc)  
10th HL7 UK Board Meeting

### **November**

6th-9th Harmonization, Chicago, USA  
14th HL7 UK Board Teleconference  
20th CPDS vMR meeting  
21st-22nd HL7 UK 2007 Conference: "Making Interoperability Work"

### **December**

10th-11th HL7 UK Technical Committee Working Meeting, London (tbc)  
12th HL7 UK Board Teleconference