Creation of the Transitional Technical Task Force (T3F)

October 24, 2006

Introduction

One of the challenges that HL7 has been facing is the proliferation of scope and organization. That has lead over the years to a substantial increase in the number of committees (TC, SIG, Board Appointed) which in turn has lead to a reduction in clarity of who is working on what and who is responsible for what, leading to a lack of communication and coordination and, not surprisingly, an increase in unnecessary overlapping/redundant efforts. Both the Organizational Review Committee (ORC) and the Strategic Initiative (SI) have addressed these issues, working with substantial volunteer participation.

One of the early objectives of this effort will be a refinement in the organization of the existing TC/SIGs leading to greater communication and coordination of effort and ultimately, to more streamlined standards production. This document launches that process within the Technical Steering Committee. The initial piece of this process is creation of a "Transitional Technical Task Force" (T3F). The Board-appointed SI Transitional Task Force is managing this process. See Transformation - Transparency - Teamwork, Team Report of Strategic Initiative (517.5 kb) , especially slides 12-15.

When operational, the T3F will start with considering questions such as:

– Harmonization of work products: what are the processes and how are they managed?
– How will the T3F (and future Technical Directorate) work with the TSC and ARB and how will the structure and function of the TSC and ARB change to meet the objectives of the ORC and SITF?
– When to create a new specification and when to constrain an existing specification?
– When to use messaging and when to use a service oriented architecture?
– When to use a message and when to use a document?

Please note that there are several other aspects of the ORC/SITF recommendations that will be addressed in the future. **The formation of the T3F is just one step along the way.** Further work will address, among other topics:
- Continued need to distinguish TCs from SIGs: is this still functional?
- Need for formal project teams managed by TCs (2- or 3-tier organization, but not TC/SIG)?
- Need for RIM TC?
- Need for Clinical Statement &/or TermInfo TC?
- Need for other consolidation/refinement of committee structures?

The T3F is a precursor of the Technical Directorate (TD; see the SITF Recommendations) and will have a formative role in defining the scope and mission of the TD as well as directly addressing the issues listed here and others raised by the TSC, membership, Staff and the Board.

Timeline and Process for Creating the T3F

The T3F will be comprised of 3 representatives of the TSC, 2 representatives of the Affiliates Council and one or more members appointed by the Board. The Transitional Task Force has designed a process where the TSC representatives are chosen by election of the TCs/SIGs, then the Affiliate representatives are chosen, then the Board appointments are made. This sequence will support a well-rounded yet small and efficient working group.

The timing for these activities will be as follows:
- Discussion on TSC listserv on designation of 3 areas of interest – starting with this post and coming to concensus by Oct. 27
- Oct. 28-Nov. 5: SI Transitional Task Force finalizes area of interest designation
- Nov. 6-Nov. 12: nominations for TSC slots posted to list
- Nov. 13-16: election of TSC representatives (process will be electronic, details to be determined by Staff). Results announced Nov. 17
- Nov. 21-Dec. 1: Affiliates designate/elect representatives (process to be designed by Affiliates Council)
- Dec. 4: Board meets and appoints final members to T3F
- Dec. 5-Jan.5: T3F meets by teleconference to develop plans, strategy, agenda for January WGM

The first step, then, in this process is to designate the three areas of interest within the TSC so that these groups can hold elections. At the September WGM we shared an initial take on the 3-part designation (see Transformation - Transparency - Teamwork, Team Report of Strategic Initiative (517.5 kb) , slide #10. This concept creates three areas of interest to be known as Foundation & Technologies, Structure & Semantic Design and Domain Experts.

Please take the designation below as an initial proposal and post your comments/feedback/suggestions to this list by Oct. 27.

Foundation & Technologies

Committees and projects in this space focus on providing the fundamental tools and building blocks that other Committees can use to build the standards.

- Conformance
- Infrastructure & Messaging
- Java
- Modeling & Methodology
- Service Oriented Architecture (SOA)
- Tooling Committee
- XML

Structure & Semantic Design

Committees and project in this space focus on creation of basic patterns and common messages that could exist on their own, but are mostly used by others.

- Arden Syntax
- CCOW
- Electronic Health Record (EHR)
- Financial Management
- Genomics
- Orders & Observations
- Patient Administration
- Personnel Management
- Scheduling & Logistics
- Structured Documents
- Templates
- Vocabulary

Domain Experts

Committees and projects in this space focus on creation of messages, services, documents using many of the common structures in place, yet expanding it in key areas as well.

- Anatomic Pathology
- Anesthesiology
- Attachments (ASIG)
- Cardiology
- Community Based Health
- Emergency Care
- Government Projects
- Healthcare Devices
- Image Integration
- Implantable Devices
- Lab
- Patient Care
- Patient Safety
- Pediatrics Data Standards
- Public Health Emergency Response (PHER)
- Pharmacy
- Regulated Clinical Research Information Management (RCRIM)

Other

Additionally there are these Board-appointed committees:

- o Early Adopters
- o Education
- o Electronic Services
- o Implementation
- o Outreach Committee for Clinical Research (OCCR)
- o Process Improvement
- o Publishing

Unlike the Tooling Committee, these Committees do not elect their own leadership and are not considered members of the TSC, for this purpose. They will be represented on the T3F and eventual Technical Directorate through Staff.

What we are asking you to do

Here is what we are asking from the TSC today:
- Ensure that all appropriate groups are listed
- Endorse or suggest changes to the designations listed here
- Be prepared to post nominations to the T3F by Nov. 6.: these can come from any TSC member for the area of interest of your TC/SIG (e.g., if your TC is part of "Domain Experts", make your nomination for the representative from that area). Nominees should be prepared to commit approximately 1-2 hours/week, including teleconferences, and to attend Working Group Meetings.
- Be prepared to cast a *single vote per TC/SIG* Nov. 13-16

What you can expect from the Transitional Task Force and the Board

Here is what you can expect from us:
- We will monitor the discussion on this list (and participate if we are also TSC members) and will do our best to make an initial designation based on your input
- We will develop an initial set of goals, objectives and priorities for the T3F
- We will work with Staff to accommodate T3F suggestions for the January WGM (providing space, time, communications for this group to meet and to work with the TSC)
- We will continue to listen to the discussions on this list, in the TSC and from all sources to ensure that this process moves forward smoothly with minimal disruption to work in progress and with maximum support for your efforts

When the Board, the CEO and the Transition Task Force feel that the T3F processes are well enough understood and sufficiently stable, we will move to create a new body, the Technical Directorate, that will take over the functions of the T3 and which will represent our best thinking on the technical management of the core technical work of HL7.

Again, please note that this is just one step along the way and there will be much opportunity to discuss and deliberate on further moves that will address the issues you have identified and which will, ultimately, support the work processes within HL7.