HTA Policies and Guidance

Currency of Value Set Content

As at March 31 2016

Policy

- Value sets should be based on current version of the code system
- Where value sets are bound dynamically the expectation is that the responsible work group would – revisit standards and update the content of value sets to maintain their content as appropriate. Some code system licenses have currency requirements. For example: SNOMED CT requires the use the most recent version of the code system published prior to submission to ballot.

Background

Current: in this instance 'current' means within the licensing specification for current version implementation of the terminology resource. The version must be confirmed prior to submission for HL7 ballot. It is HL7 policy that balloted standards, when submitted for ballot must be current (i.e. reference the version of the terminology resource current at that time). Editorial modification must be undertaken to update the document prior to publication where a more recent version of the terminology resource becomes available after ballot.

HL7 vocabulary references in printed documents will indicate that they are a 'snap shot' at that time. This is not for conformant use. A pointer will be used to indicate to where and how to get the most current vocabulary for all vocabulary sited.

HTA identified that currently HL7 is not able to identify artefacts which reference SNOMED CT or which version of SNOMED CT is alluded to in that standard.   This cannot currently be resolved without significant effort (months of manual effort, or tooling development). HTA are developing detailed terminology content management system requirements which includes the ability to identify which code systems are used and which version in any artefact. HL7 will be unable to fully comply with the requirement for current versions without this detailed tooling.

There will always be standards used that will have old content. The HTA considered that the process of standards management is the appropriate method of management.   ANSI require a 5 yearly review of all standards. In the context of publication review HTA recommend that the work group doing the review identify if any terminology content is used where the licensing requires use of current version of the code system.   HTA will provide a list of all known code systems with this requirement on its Wiki.

1   Procedure Requirement

WorkGroups shall review content of published standards every 5 years. Value set definitions should be reviewed regularly.

When a publication is reviewed the vocabulary content component shall:

- Be updated to use the current version of any external code system (i.e. update value set specification). In value sets and examples which though not intended for implementation might be used in systems: Any codes retired in the code system version current at the time of review should be updated, or
- If there is a use case to continue to use a retired code – document the justification for retention of the old code and Contact the Vocabulary Workgroup.   Use Case example: CDA static binding used to a value set that includes procedures one of which has been retired and is still used. If the code is still used in some environments and required, a method to do so is needed.

The binding syntax project is addressing more specific guidance on how to present these requirements in HL7 documents.