



Technical Steering Committee

E-NEWSLETTER

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May 1, 2008

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Note from the Editor

*By Helen Stevens Love
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I am pleased to welcome you to the inaugural release of the HL7 Technical Steering Committee Newsletter. This newsletter's objective is to inform HL7 members about current decisions, discussions and activities underway at the TSC. We anticipate releasing the newsletter four to six times per year, based on interest and contributions. Regular columns will be provided by Charlie McCay (TSC Chair), John Quinn (CTO), and Charlie Mead (ArB). Additionally we will feature special highlights of projects that are underway. We will always be seeking to adjust the content and format of this newsletter to best meet the needs of our members – so, please contact me if you have any suggestions or questions.

In this first edition, we have some introductory remarks from Ed Hammond (HL7 Chair) and Charlie McCay as well as project updates from the Version 3 Editing Project, the eLearning Course Pilot Project, and the Arden Syntax Medical Logic

Modules Project.

I would like to thank the contributors to the articles for the first edition of the newsletter. I would also like to thank Wendy Huang (HL7 Canada Secretariat) for her support in the newsletter development.

We hope you enjoy the TSC newsletter and look forward to future releases.



Welcome from the HL7 Chair

By W. Ed Hammond, PhD

Chair, HL7

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Poor communication often contributes to the failure of projects. In past years, HL7 had grown into a largely horizontal organization in which lateral communications among the technical committees and special interest groups ranged from adequate to non-existent. Work was duplicated among groups, and worse, the approach led to different and competing solutions. The reorganization of HL7 into a Technical Steering Committee and Steering Divisions was a step in a direction to improve communications. Hiring a CTO was another important step in providing a single focal point for decisions and communications within HL7. Even so, effective communications among groups is critical to success.

The technological changes in standards requirements and in the expanding scope and overlap among working groups increase the premium of having effective standards. The future of HL7 depends on solving these problems. Again, the project approach is a step in this direction. The involvement of HL7 in the Joint Initiative Council and joint efforts of producing single standards for single requirements working with ISO and CEN has strained existing communication paths and approaches.

Therefore, I would like to congratulate Charlie McCay, (TSC Chair) and the TSC for coming up with the idea of the TSC Newsletter. The TSC Newsletter has the potential of becoming the key communications vehicle among the working groups within HL7. The newsletter will be effective if individuals produce complete, timely, and appropriate content for the newsletter, and if the members of HL7 consistently view the Newsletter. I offer my strong support to this concept and

pledge my commitment to that work process.



Welcome from the TSC Chair

By Charlie McCay

Chair, TSC

Email: charlie@ramseysystems.co.uk

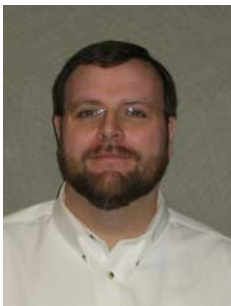
Welcome to the first TSC Newsletter. The newsletter will give you a chance to hear about standards that have just been delivered by HL7, as well as work that is in process and that is about to start.

The role of the TSC is to enable the HL7 working group to be more effective in the delivery of standards, and we are hearing from all sides that people want to know more about what standards HL7 is developing, how they are being developed, and when they will be available.

This newsletter is an important part of a wider communication plan to make it easier to know what is happening within HL7. There is also a project list with a summary of all the activities that are going on within the working groups and in the coming months we will be looking at better ways to present and maintain that information so that we all know what to expect from HL7 and when it will come.

This and much more is available on the TSC website (<http://www.hl7tsc.org>). Please look there for details on what the TSC is, and what we are doing.

Finally, once you have read the newsletter, tell us what you think or get involved in one of the many projects that are happening in the working groups.



Arden Syntax for Medical Logic Modules, Version 2.7

By R. Matthew Sailors

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This project is a work product of the Arden Syntax Work Group and the Clinical Decision Support Work Group. The Arden Syntax for Medical Logic Modules (Arden Syntax) is a standard for representing procedural knowledge in clinical knowledge bases. The Arden Syntax is used to encode and share the database linkages and logic used to generate alerts and reminders for clinical decision support. Composed using an English-like syntax, Arden Syntax medical logic modules (MLMs) contain sufficient logic and references to clinical data to make a recommendation regarding clinical care.

Arden Syntax 2.7 builds upon concepts introduced in Version 2.5 (2005) and Version 2.6 (2007) to improve the reading, writing and processing of structured data. This includes an enhanced variable assignment statement that allows direct instantiation of nested attributes of complex objects while reading from the database as well as initialization of those attributes. Support for workflow integration also has been enhanced by time-of-day concepts.

For more information on this project, please contact a co-chair of the CDS Work Group:

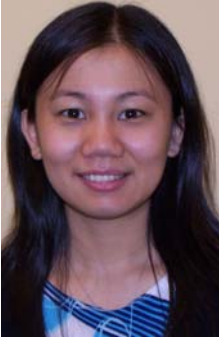
R. Matthew Sailors (msailors@tmhs.org)
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HL7 eLearning Course Inaugural Offering Successfully Launched

By Mark Shafarman
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Wendy Huang



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HL7 Inc. was pleased to present the inaugural offering of the HL7 eLearning Course pilot in English. This 10-week online course that began in March 2008 is fundamentally different from “standard” HL7 tutorials and education summit courses in several key areas: it creates a web-based online community workshop where students participate in a set of guided exercises so that they learn by doing, creating real HL7-based solutions to real problems that require the sharing and integration of healthcare information. The online community also supports email discussions with both the course instructors and the other students.

The course covers the basics of HL7 Version 2.x, Version 3, and Clinical Document Architecture, Release 2 (CDA R2). Upon completion of this eLearning program, students will know how to confront a project involving interoperability among disjointed healthcare information systems. They will have had experience reading and writing HL7 Version 2.x messages, HL7 Version 3 messages and CDA R2 documents. They will also have experience with using vocabulary standards in the HL7 context.

The course is based on a successful Spanish language eLearning course developed by Diego Kaminker and his colleagues in HL7 Argentina. This is its first English-language edition. It was targeted at students with little or no HL7 knowledge and experience. Six HL7 affiliates were selected with a need for HL7 education, including a mix of developed and developing countries (Australia, Canada, China, India, Sweden and USA). The course fee has been set at \$350 USD for developed countries and \$100 for developing countries. Each affiliate was responsible for selecting its students. The course was advertised with a press release, via email, and on the HL7 website as well as the HL7 affiliate websites.

The initial enrolment was planned for 100 students; however, the demand was much greater than anticipated. There were 454 applications received and a waiting list has been established for future offerings of this course! The inaugural students are now about half-way through the course, and it is going very smoothly. The project team is now working on a number of issues including

planning for future courses (two more are currently planned for 2008), training additional instructors, and setting up an administrative and IP framework so that affiliates can host the course as needed.

We would like to offer a special thank you to the following project team members for making this initiative a reality: Diego Kaminker, Fernando Campos, Gustavo Sosa, Alfredo Cancio, Gerardo Sarandria, Analia Baum, and Hospital Italiano de Buenos Aires of HL7 Argentina; Mark McDougall of HL7.org; the first English-language instructors: Mike Henderson, Rene Spronk, Virginia Lorenzi, and Mark Shafarman; and the course coordinators for each participating affiliate: Ting Shu (China); Mary Ann Boyle (USA); Chris Lynton-Moll (Australia); Virupaksh S. Nagathan (India); Wendy Huang (Canada) and Fredrik Strom (Sweden). Other key project team members include Jill Kaufman, Gora Datta, and Grant Gillis.

Version 3 Editing Project – Bringing the Vision of HL7 Version 3 into Focus

By Charlie Mead (mead_charlie@bah.com), Bob Dolin (Robert.h.dolin@kp.org), Jay Lyle (jaylyle@gmail.com), Sarah Ryan (ryansaraha1@earthlink.net), and the Version 3 Editing Project Advisory Group (teadvisorygroup@lists.hl7.org).

In July 2006, the HL7 Board of Directors decided that the Version 3 standard would benefit from an editorial evaluation. Over years of developmental activity, the support documentation of the standard had developed inconsistencies. As with any group effort, the product's great strengths were offset by divergent assumptions that impeded progress toward a clear, concisely written product that facilitates implementation. To address the perception that the standard is difficult to understand and put into practice, the Board engaged Ockham Information Services: Jay Lyle, Sarah Ryan, Abdul-Malik Shakir and Harold Solbrig. The project team is supported by technical advisors Charlie Mead and Bob Dolin and an advisory committee consisting of Ioana Singureanu, Keith Boone, Jim Case, Dick Harding, and Virginia Lorenzi. Ockham was tasked with reviewing the Version 3 standards documentation, identifying issues, and suggesting remedies for errors in the actual methodology, as well as for those instances where the methodology is correct but the documentation is inconsistent or imprecise. The project's charge is to work with the sponsoring work groups of the documents to distinguish those issues within the standard that are problems within the methodology itself from those that are problems with the documentation. The editors are for editing, not for writing new material, and they will work with the work groups to detect issues and make suggestions for resolution.

Three areas were identified as starting points for the project: the core of the RIM, Data Types, and Vocabulary. Ockham is reviewing each area in light of a user model and a documentation roadmap that the HL7 Board had endorsed. The documentation roadmap specifies that each document (or portion thereof) needs to have an identified audience or audiences. That audience may consist of many different types of people (e.g., programmers, business analysts, technical architects, administrators). By shaping the current documentation to address these identified consumers, the editors and work groups can enhance the clarity of the communication to those consumers. Business sponsors and administrators will understand which documents will help them articulate the value of Version 3 without trying to read technical specifications, while methodologists and data designers will know which specifications underpin their work. By applying the user model and creating a document “roadmap,” the project will help users understand the standard and increase its usability by suggesting targeted information.

The Editing Project is now in its second phase, targeted for completion by the May 2008 Working Group Meeting. Work products are posted on the [Mayo Informatics wiki](#). All HL7 members are invited to participate and contribute to the process.

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