Syntax, Semantics & Standards: Model for a National Health Information Network

Liora **Alschuler**

Abstract

On September 13, 2005, HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt selected 16 commissioners to serve on the American Health Information Community (the Community), a federally-chartered commission charged with advising the Secretary on how to make health information digital and interoperable (www.hhs.gov/news/press/2005pres/20050913.html). Between now and the November conference, four contracts will be announced setting up a governing structure for construction and deployment of this network: standards harmonization, compliance certification, prototype contractors, and privacy/security solutions contractors.

This activity represents an ambitious attempt to reformulate the government role in technology development and deployment, seeking to avoid the pitfalls of over-regulation and to support the healthcare industry as it constructs the network which some estimate will cost in the area of $156 billion in capital costs over 5 years and approximately $48 billion in annual operating costs.

Health Level Seven (HL7) has spent the last 10 years developing a Reference Information Model (RIM) and a model-based methodology for development of interoperability solutions. The RIM is an ANSI/ISO standard and defines the semantics for a growing number of interoperability solutions based on both XMLschemas and Java APIs.

This presentation will describe the National Health Information Network activity and role of syntax and semantics in building an interoperable framework for healthcare information on a national level.

Table of Contents

1. Late-breaking Talk

The author did not prepare a paper for the proceedings.

Biography

Liora **Alschuler**

    Consultant

    alschuler.spinosa

    East Thetford

    Vermont

    United States of America

Liora Alschuler is a developer of XML-based standards for electronic healthcare information and a consultant in their application for providers and system vendors. She is Co-chair, HL7 Structured Documents Technical Committee responsible for HL7's Clinical Document Architecture (CDA), the first national standard for healthcare based on XML. As a project manager in 1997, she brought together and worked with the group that produced the Kona Architecture, adopted by HL7 as the basis for the CDA. Liora also Co-chairs the HL7 Board-appointed Marketing Committee. She designed and managed the HL7 HIMSS Interoperability Demo 1999-2003 and the healthcare track for the ebXML Proof of Concept in 2001. Liora wrote ABCD... SGML: A User's Guide to Structured Information, in 1995, and since that time has written and presented worldwide on SGML, XML and healthcare information exchange. Together with her consulting partner, John Spinosa, MD, Ph.D., she has developed product strategies for healthcare vendors and providers based on an XML document architecture.