IHTSDO Launches Global Health Terminology Workbench

Tools to Benefit Member Nations and Other SNOMED CT Users

Copenhagen, Denmark: January 22, 2008 – The International Health Terminology Standards Development Organisation (IHTSDO) launched today a new IHTSDO Workbench with tools to develop, maintain, and facilitate the use of SNOMED CT in health systems around the world. IHTSDO's 11 Member nations and other SNOMED CT users will use these tools in a shared web-based environment.

"Helping partners from around the world to collaborate on common challenges is one of the reasons that IHTSDO was founded," says Jennifer Zelmer, IHTSDO's chief executive officer. "The will to cooperate was there from the beginning, but the Workbench makes it easier to work together and to spread innovations that will improve health and health care."

IHTSDO Workbench Includes Terminology Editing, Mapping, and Other Applications
The IHTSDO Workbench includes a set of tools that will form the foundation of a multi-lingual modular workbench. The overall environment will initially host terminology browsing, authoring, subset and other reference set management, mapping, and namespace management applications. Users can either work independently or can collaborate on terminology editing, mapping, or other tasks. IHTSDO intends to add additional modules to the Workbench over time and to encourage partners to build and share complementary tools.

The successful bidders for the initial modules were Informatics Inc., CollabNet Inc., the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation through the Australian E-Health Research Centre, and Health Language, Inc. They were selected through a global Request for Proposals (RFP) that was conducted in conjunction with Open Health Tools in 2008. Evaluators from eight countries reviewed bids relative to the requirements specified in the RFP.

 "The IHTSDO Workbench represents a step change in the ability to deliver health terminology," says John Gutai, IHTSDO's chief technical architect. "Members can use the Workbench to collaborate effectively in the development of a shared healthcare terminology, grounded in common language-independent concepts."

The SNOMED CT workbench is part of IHTSDO's on-going efforts to enable broader access to, and use of, standardized clinical terminologies worldwide. Already, eleven countries have joined together to support the on-going development and maintenance of SNOMED CT and related standards, sharing the costs on a sliding scale based on national income and making the standards freely available in their jurisdictions. IHTSDO also offers free access to SNOMED CT in countries that are not yet members for qualifying research projects and on humanitarian or charitable grounds, as well as in countries with low income economies.

International Health Terminology Standards Development Organisation

About International Health Terminology Standards Development Organisation (IHTSDO)
The IHTSDO (International Health Terminology Standards Development Organisation) and its Members seek to improve the health of humankind by fostering the development and use of suitable standardized clinical terminologies, notably SNOMED CT, in order to support the safe, accurate, and effective exchange of health information. The IHTSDO is an international organisation, established as a Danish not-for-profit association. Copies of the Request for Information/Request for Proposals for the IHTSDO Workbench can be accessed at https://ihtsdo.projects.openhealthtools.org.

About SNOMED CT
SNOMED Clinical Terms™ (SNOMED CT™) is a standardized terminology that can be used as the foundation for electronic health records and other applications. For example, different clinicians often use different terms to describe the same concept. SNOMED CT contains more than 310,000 unique concepts and more than 1.3 million links or relationships between them that ensure that this information is captured consistently, accurately, and reliably across the health system. The terminology is used in more than forty countries around the world. SNOMED CT was originally created by the College of American Pathologists by combining SNOMED RT and a computer-based nomenclature and classification known as Clinical Terms Version 3, formerly known as Read Codes Version 3, which was created on behalf of the UK Department of Health and is Crown copyright.

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Backgrounder: Member Countries' Plans to Use the IHTSDO Workbench

Australia

"Electronic health records and clinical decision support systems rely on accurate, unambiguous terminology. The Workbench will allow us to share the costs and workload of producing a really high quality product for the benefit of all," according to David Hislop, general manager terminology services at Australia's National e-Health Transition Authority (NEHTA). NEHTA plans to use the Workbench to support the country's domestic terminology development and maintenance needs, as well as to contribute to international work related to SNOMED CT. "It's a great initiative by the IHTSDO," says Mr. Hislop.

Lithuania

"This project is of great importance for Lithuania, a small and non-English speaking country. It provides us a perspective of resource-sharing, better collaboration and involvement," said Arvydas Laurinavicius, director of the National Centre of Pathology, Lithuania.

Singapore

The implementation of SNOMED CT in Singapore is a key foundation of information content in the National Electronic Health Record being implemented in 2010. "The availability of the IHTSDO workbench provides Singapore with the opportunity to leverage the outstanding work by our international colleagues allowing us to quickly create the Singapore SNOMED release centre," says Colleen Brooks, principal – standards for the Ministry of Health Holdings Pte Ltd. "We look forward to using the workbench to create the first Singapore release of SNOMED CT."

Sweden

"This strategic initiative from IHTSDO and the results are most welcome from a Swedish point of view. Sweden, like all countries working actively towards introducing uniform standards and processes to improve the quality of information in health care and social care, needs adequate tools to support both maintenance and further development of SNOMED CT as well as other products," says Lotti Barlow, project manager at the National Board of Health and Welfare. "It is very satisfying to have access to this internationally based workbench for future work. We plan to start testing and evaluation in 2009, with the additional perspective of the tooling needs in a country that inevitably must incorporate translation as part of the regular maintenance process for SNOMED CT."

United Kingdom

"This marks a considerable step forward in collaborative working on a key strategic product for the electronic health record, and is a world-leading and visionary initiative in standards development for healthcare," says Ken Lunn, director of data standards and products and head of the UK Terminology Centre Technology Office at NHS Connecting for Health. The United Kingdom looks forward to deploying and using the new Workbench throughout the
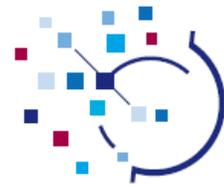
UK Terminology Centre in 2009 and to working more closely with our colleagues in the IHTSDO on the further development of SNOMED CT. "The continued refinement and improvement of SNOMED CT that the Workbench will enable and accelerate will benefit the UK healthcare community through a range of systems."

United States

"A technical platform that facilitates distributed input to the ongoing development of SNOMED CT by experts in different locations is a great match for the U.S. health environment, as well as for the IHTSDO," said Betsy Humphreys, deputy director, United States National Library of Medicine. "We hope to use the Workbench to set up a network of U.S. SNOMED CT contributors in both government agencies and private sector organizations - and to take advantage of the work done in other IHTSDO member countries."

Backgrounder: About the IHTSDO Workbench

The IHTSDO Workbench includes a set of tools that will form the foundation of a multi-lingual modular workbench. The overall environment will initially host terminology browsing, authoring, subset and other reference set management, mapping, and namespace management applications. Users can either work independently or can collaborate on these tasks. IHTSDO intends to add additional modules to the Workbench over time and to encourage partners to build and share complementary tools.

At a high level, the IHTSDO Workbench consists of three elements:

1. **A set of software tools** that allows users to do terminology development, maintenance, mapping, and related functions. Users can work with these tools locally using a Workbench "client" and then share their work with others. IHTSDO has procured these tools from Informatics Inc. and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation through the Australian E-Health Research Centre. These world-class tools were selected through a global Request for Proposals process involving evaluators from eight countries. Initially, the IHTSDO Workbench will provide tools to facilitate functions such as:
   - Terminology browsing and searching (using lexical tools) within SNOMED CT
   - Authoring of new and amended concepts within SNOMED CT
   - Rapid classification of SNOMED CT to produce and evaluate an inferred view of the terminology that is required for its effective implementation in health information systems
   - Developing and maintaining subsets of SNOMED CT concepts
   - Mapping from SNOMED CT concepts to other terminologies and classifications
   - Developing and sharing workflows to allow automation of repetitive tasks, for instance, within mapping or translation projects, with the intent of increasing project productivity and enhancing the quality of SNOMED CT.

2. **A professionally-hosted collaborative environment and build servers** that provide a platform for users from around the world to work together on terminology projects. This environment is based on CollabNet's industry-leading application lifecycle management platform consisting of CollabNet Subversion, CollabNet SourceForge Enterprise, and CollabNet CUBiT. The CollabNet platform powers the world's most innovative open source and corporate software communities to enable collaborative best practices across distributed teams. Within this development environment, Subversion provides a central collaborative area in which multiple authors, reviewers and mappers can all work in parallel on SNOMED CT. Subversion allows them to work in parallel and in a controlled fashion, by use of version control, branching, merging and conflict resolution facilities. In addition, SourceForge Enterprise provides facilities for project issue tracking, project management tools and configuration management. With CollabNet, terminology contributors world-wide are ensured an extensible solution that will grow with their needs.

3. **User support** for the IHTSDO Workbench will be provided as a collaborative effort. CollabNet Inc. will provide first line support, including issue tracking. Health Language, Inc. will provide second-line support, including problem management, root cause

analysis, as well as Workbench training and education and user administration. Informatics Inc. and CollabNet will share responsibilities for third-line support, including investigating issues and providing bug fixes and minor enhancements to the tools and environment.

About Informatics Inc.

Informatics Inc. develops software and infrastructure that enables organizations to collaborate using proven development best practices. These best practices including robust version control and configuration management, flexible workflow management, integrated development environments, and support for collaboration—within a flexible and loosely-coupled distributed system. The inclusion of our tools into the SNOMED CT Workbench is the latest achievement in Informatics Inc.'s efforts to improve collaborative access to—and standardization of—health terminology, clinical decision support, and clinical best practices worldwide.

## About the CSIRO Australian E-Health Research Centre

The CSIRO's Australian E-Health Research Centre (AEHRC) is a joint venture between the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and The State of Queensland. AEHRC's mission is to develop and deploy leading edge information technology innovations in the health care domain to improve service delivery in the Queensland and Australian health care systems, generate commercialisation revenue and increase the pool of world-class e-health expertise in Australia. AEHRC delivers on its mission through research capabilities in health data, smart methods and bio-medical imaging. Our high-performance classification engine (Snorocket) is included in the SNOMED CT Workbench and also forms a key aspect of Snapper, our tool designed for reverse-mapping of existing terminologies to SNOMED CT. AEHRC is online at http://aehrc.com/.

About CollabNet

CollabNet is the leader in application lifecycle management (ALM) solutions for distributed teams. CollabNet SourceForge Enterprise, an integrated suite of adaptable, easy-to-use tools that share a centralized, secure repository, supports every development methodology, project workflow, and programming language. This flexibility enables companies of all sizes to reduce the cost, increase the transparency, and manage the risk of software development. As the corporate sponsor of the open source Subversion project, the best version control and software configuration management (SCM) solution for distributed teams, collaborative development is in our DNA. Millions of users at more than 600 organizations, including Applied Biosystems, Capgemini, Deutsche Bank, Oracle, Reuters, and the U.S. Department of Defense, have transformed the way they develop software with CollabNet. For more information, visit www.collab.net.

About Health Language Inc.

Denver-based Health Language, Inc.® (HLI) is the worldwide leader in developing and delivering state-of-the-art software solutions that automatically incorporate medical vocabulary and coding standards into healthcare information technology (HCIT) applications. HLI's Language Engine Language Engine (LE®) allows centralized access to medical terminology standards and generates mappings to create a common pool of standardized codes and concepts that enhance patient safety, facilitate clinical outcomes analysis and accelerate reimbursement. It also provides standards for modelling, storing, updating and
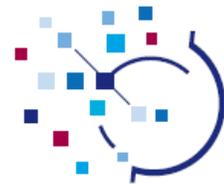
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