

Successful exchange of records for patient with multiple IDs using IHE profile

Tony Schaller was having a great Connectathon experience in Bordeaux. A founding member of IHE Suisse, which this year joined the IHE- Europe community, Schaller was wearing the yellow t-shirt that designated him as a volunteer monitor during the week-long connectivity marathon for medical information systems.

“Most of the other monitors here will assist with more than 200 different tests this week, but I just have this one,” he said smiling as he held up a clipboard.

“This is my first time at Connectathon, and I end up on the most exciting test of the year, which is really great,” he said.

Schaller was part of a special group of IHE monitors setting up the first-ever test of a complex IHE profile that solves a real-world problem encountered by many medical systems as they attempt to exchange patient data.

A single patient accumulates several different identity numbers as he or she passes from doctor’s offices to radiology clinics to specialist clinics to independent laboratories and finally to a medical center for a procedure.

Finding all relevant data and gathering it into a single record for review is critical to following a patient’s care, is a daunting task for a caregiver who knows the patient, and until recently was impossible for a computer system.

The Cross-Community Patient Discovery (XCPD) profile developed by IHE provides a method for locating the communities which hold patient relevant health data and then for the translation of patient identifiers across communities holding the same patient’s data.

Until Connectathon 2010, the typical e-health test scenario only used a single patient identification number to validate the interoperability between health information systems, according to Claudio Saccavini of Arsenal.it who led the group of IHE monitors setting up the complex scenario.

Eleven companies participated in the trial, which required two days of set up for the initial test of six actors using point-to-point communications to validate the test network of red, blue and green domains holding different documents.

After a successful first run, the full test was opened to 15 different actors exchanging messages.

“Nothing blew up,” reported Saccavini, “and as of two minutes ago, it was a complete success.”

The patient identification management function builds on the well-established IHE profiles for Cross Community Access (XCA) that has greatly advanced the automation of critical workflows used in healthcare.

Two methods used at Connectathon to resolve patient identification issues also relied on two existing IHE integration profiles for Patient Identifier Cross-Referencing (PIX) and Patient Demographics Query (PDQ).

IHE IT Infrastructure Technical committee, an international community that continually develops IHE profiles expects to further develop profiles for patient identification management that will result in an even more sophisticated approach.