

Technical Committee October 2009 Report to the General Assembly

The Technical Committee is one of four IHTSDO Standing Committees. The Committee has scheduled monthly teleconferences and since the April 2009 face-to-face meetings in Copenhagen, has met five times.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

In October 2008 the General Assembly voted to proceed with a proposal to procure the IHTSDO Workbench. Finalising the procurement processes and implementing the workbench has been the major focus for the Chief Technical Architect (John Gutai) over the last 12 months, supported by the Technical Committee and its members. Since joining the IHTSDO executive team, John has provided a huge amount of energy and direction to the Committee, and it would be remiss not to single out his contribution.

The IHTSDO Workbench includes tools to develop, maintain, and facilitate the use of SNOMED CT in health systems around the world. The contract included provision for training and support, and numerous IHTSDO have now attended these sessions. Early releases of the workbench included a standalone editor and small project edition; which have been used to run a number of small collaborative pilot projects. The collaborative platform is now being used extensively by two IHTSDO members (Australia and the UK) for all of their terminology authoring and editing, and a number of other members are currently exploring opportunities to utilise the platform. A major project is also underway with our Support Organisation (The College of American Pathologists) to migrate their activities to the workbench. The Technical Committee has reviewed the project scoping document and will continue to oversee this project as it progresses.

Although the IHTSDO Workbench meets many of the core requirements of the IHTSDO and its members; further development is required in a number of areas. In particular, the CTO has led a process to assess translation tooling, in which many members of the Technical Committee have actively participated. The Committee has also overseen a number of related projects which are working to extend/ improve the platform for specific needs. In particular this has included oversight of the RefSet Editor Project – led by Gwen Smith from the UK– and the specific requirements relating to the Mapping Project – led by James Campbell from the US.

Other key tooling projects overseen by the Committee and the CTO have included:

- Implementation of a licensing tool for low income countries
- HL7 Pilot of the workbench (planned)
- Specification for an asset management tool to assist sharing of assets (such as Reference Sets) between members

The Committee recognise the need to prioritise investment and plan for future staged development of the workbench. They are developing a roadmap to identify and prioritise projects, which support the long term vision for collaborative editing.

The Committee has also provided advice and input to a range of other work items including:

- Options to open source the Workbench intellectual property
- Release Format 2 specification – which is now released as a Draft for Trial Use
- File naming convention – which has also progressed to Draft for Trial Use
- Namespace management policy

AREAS OF FOCUS AND RELATED GROUPS

The following Project Groups and work activities report to the Technical Committee:

1. ICD10 Mapping Project
2. RefSet Workbench development project
3. Translation tooling procurement
4. Workbench pilot projects
 - i. Small Edition Release
 - ii. SNOMED CT International release migration
5. Roadmap for tooling
6. Request Submission
7. Release Management
8. Asset register
9. Release Format 2 (RF2) specification and implementation
10. MRCM – definition and implementation in Workbench

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the Technical Committee, particularly those who are retiring this period, and those who have ably led the various project groups which report through to the Committee. I would also like to again acknowledge the excellent work of our Chief Technical Architect, John Gutai, who has so ably supported me as Chair

Karen Gibson
Chair, Technical Committee