

Three-Year Review: HIMSS Analytics and Dorenfest Institute

For more than two decades, the DORENFEST IHDS+ DATABASE™ had been considered as the primary source of information about the healthcare information technology industry. In 2004, when HIMSS launched its market research subsidiary HIMSS Analytics and acquired the Dorenfest database, new leadership in this area resulted.

"I had always felt that HIMSS would be an ideal location for the database, when I decided to sell it," said Sheldon I. Dorenfest, now president/CEO of The Dorenfest Group, a Chicago-based healthcare investment and consulting firm. "I am very happy that we did come together."

Now, some three years later, HIMSS Analytics has upgraded and expanded this healthcare IT data mine by developing a comprehensive, Web-based source that has grown by 45 percent and contains current detailed demographic and IT profile information on over 5,000 hospitals and integrated delivery systems in the United States.

"We took Sheldon's initial concept and basically redesigned it to create the product we have today," said Mike Davis, HIMSS Analytics executive vice president for products and services.

Healthcare organizations now can share their data by entering it themselves into the transformed and Web-enabled database, or if they prefer, a smart spreadsheet with dropdown boxes for easier and more accurate data entry.

"We have created a significant value proposition for the healthcare organizations that provide data to us," said Dave Garets, HIMSS Analytics president/CEO. "For their cooperation, we provide to them at no charge: access to 45 different benchmarking reports, access to the HIMSS Analytics vendor database and the ability to run data inquiries to find peers themselves."

After spending that first year modernizing the database, HIMSS Analytics began offering more customized market research programs to help clients reach their market objectives with primary market research, consulting and data analysis services. New products include the HIMSS/HIMSS Analytics *Annual Report of the U.S. Hospital IT Market*, the comprehensive *Essentials of the U.S. Hospital IT Market* report, the State Healthcare Knowledgebase and more. (Information is available at www.himssanalytics.org.)

HIMSS Analytics also uses its own data to conduct research, such as the recent University HealthSystems Consortium report on EMR adoption's impact on clinical quality scores. "It is a way that we can give back to the industry by providing this research at no charge," Mr. Davis explained.

Updates to the database continue on a regular basis and are vital to HIMSS Analytics' ability to serve the industry. As Mr. Garets explained, "Our clients, including the vendor community and healthcare organizations themselves, are responding very positively to our ensuring that the data is as accurate as possible."

The sale to HIMSS opened new professional opportunities for Mr. Dorenfest. After the sale of the database, he joined the HIMSS Board of Directors and worked for a short time as a consultant with HIMSS Analytics, noting that he "agrees with what HIMSS Analytics has done to make the database more user friendly."

In 2005, the HIMSS Foundation received a generous gift from Mr. Dorenfest, with the donation of his company and its historical data assets for the period



Sheldon I. Dorenfest

1986 through 2002. The Foundation formed the Dorenfest Institute for Health Information Technology Research and Education (Dorenfest Institute) to further the interest in and benefits associated with ongoing research in healthcare information technology.

The data is available at no charge to universities, students under university license, U.S. federal, state and local governments using the data for research purposes, and collaborative efforts with governments of other countries. More than 152 requests for information have been fulfilled since the Institute was formed. HIMSS Analytics also donates past years' data to the Dorenfest Institute each year, and the Institute currently has data from 1986 through 2004. The 2005 data set will be donated to the Institute in July of this year.

"I had always believed that if I could give information to students, it would be valuable and beneficial to them and to the industry," said Mr. Dorenfest. He felt that HIMSS could develop the most effective and efficient vehicle to distribute the data.

In 2006, The Dorenfest Group formed The Dorenfest China Healthcare Group offering a variety of improvement services to the China healthcare industry. Now, Mr. Dorenfest travels to China about 40 percent of the year. In the startup, his new company is providing operations improvement services and IT strategy support to several Chinese Health Bureau and hospital clients. He plans to expand this new business while also working on a book that provides his own perspective on health and wellness and making other healthcare investments.

"Data, market research, and analytical information are foundational resources for most associations. For any group to drive change and improvement in a profession or industry, this type of resource is critical," said H. Stephen Lieber, HIMSS president/CEO. "Laying the groundwork with the Dorenfest Database, HIMSS Analytics is another example of the resources we have developed for the purpose of helping HIT professionals, providers and vendors improve the delivery of healthcare." ■

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