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