



Shelagh Maloney

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Looking Back... Looking Forward

A colleague recently forwarded a photo of me that she had found. The photo was taken over a decade ago while I was Director, New Ventures at the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI); we had recently established the Partnership for Health Informatics Standards and had published an annual report. In those early days of the Partnership we had only a handful of standards experts in the country, a slightly larger group that weren't experts but that recognized the need for standards, a few vendors that were willing to sponsor our meetings, a staff of 4, and a wing and a prayer.

Well, 10 years have passed since then (still can't believe that!) and now the Partnership, along with other standards initiatives has been successfully consolidated into Canada Health Infoway's Standards Collaborative. The standards mandate, which has been expanded to include all phases of the standards life cycle, has solid financial support, a strong and passionate membership, a very capable team (of more than 4) and Canada is recognized internationally as a leader in the standards domain.

It's gratifying to see that so much progress has been made in the standards arena – and fun to look back. Looking at old photos can't help but trigger memories and cause one to pause and reflect (it's also taught me that no matter how bad you think a photo looks at the time, remember - 10 years from now you'll be thinking you looked pretty darn good!)

The dawning of a new year, like the viewing of an old photo, also presents an occasion to look back and reflect. The airwaves and the print media are ripe with 'the Best of' lists and highlight reels. As we, the

Canadian health informatics community, begin 2007 (already!) what would make it to our highlights tape? Here are a few that I suggest for the list:

- Canada's leadership role in international standards;
- Unprecedented growth of health informatics spending across the country;
- Establishment of many new health informatics programs at the undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate level at colleges and universities across Canada.

Speaking of lists, many also choose January 1st as a time to draft a list of New Year's resolutions. In this regard, I believe that there are two kinds of people; those that take this annual ritual very seriously and those that don't. The first group is meticulous in documenting their resolutions for the coming year and setting short term goals toward achieving said resolutions. The second group is comprised of those that will vehemently deny ever making New Year's resolutions and dismiss them as an example of setting one's self up for failure. My theory is that there is a genetic predisposition in all of us to view a new year, like a significant birthday, as a time to resolve to... Whether we do it overtly or not, we do it, we can't help it.

For those of you who are still in denial, I have taken the liberty to draft a list of health informatics resolutions for 2007.

Promote Awareness of Health Informatics Beyond our Community

We need to get out more. We need to get beyond our

health informatics community to promote awareness of the good work that we are doing and have others better understand the benefits of e-health. We need to expand our audience.

Continue to Collaborate and Consolidate

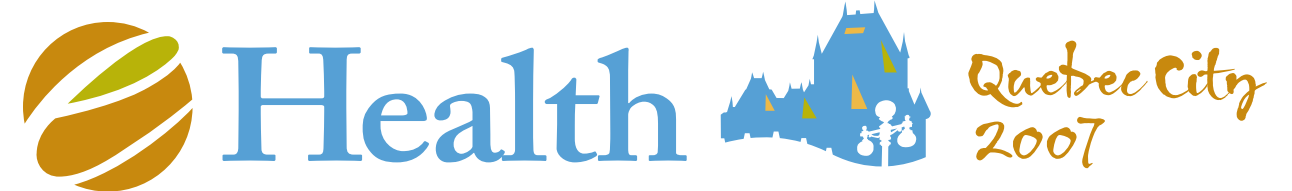
We've made significant progress and will continue to do so if we can continue to be open to learning from others; we need to adopt/adapt proven solutions. We have limited resources in this country, human and fiscal. Let's continue to leverage what works.

Recognize and Celebrate Success

On November 16th last year COACH and CHITTA hosted the Canadian Health Informatics Awards Gala. Representatives from these associations as

well as the Canadian Society of Telehealth (CST) and the Canadian Health Information Management Association (CHIMA) were on hand to recognize and celebrate leadership and innovation in our industry. It was a wonderful evening and a good reminder to us all to take the time to celebrate our achievements and those of our peers, everyday.

Celebrate success, and remember to take lots of photos - you'll look back at them in 2017 and marvel at how young you looked! ●



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