

# Does anyone have Julian Assange's phone number?

Some of you might think that this issue's cover is intended to highlight the need for communications between caregivers in order to improve the healthcare system. Clearly, this is at the core of why technology is crucial to the future of our healthcare system.

But that's not why I chose this image. I chose it because it is becoming increasingly clear that we have a huge issue of communications between the policy-makers and stakeholders who create the framework for the healthcare industry into which technology must be delivered. I'm not talking about doctors communicating with doctors. I'm talking about Ministries communicating with physicians, and administrators communicating with vendors, and agencies communicating with policy-makers. We're lacking open and honest communication in the health IT sector in this country, plain and simple. Something's broken and we have to fix it.

So what is going on, or rather not going on?

Complaints are numerous; some would say out of control. In my one-on-one private discussions with people of influence across the entire industry, I am continually hearing about elephants in the room, naked emperors, and some principle penned by a man named Peter. I continue to hear it's "their" fault. What's amazing is that while I hear these comments in private conversations, rarely do I hear them expressed in open and public forums. I routinely hear individuals say one thing to me privately, and then with great aplomb say something different in a public setting.

The statements, range from accusing people of not listening, to not knowing what they are doing, to information being deliberately

withheld, to stakeholder groups who should be cooperating, competing with each other. The private discussions have reached a fevered pitch. If I hear another word about elephants in rooms, naked emperors, or the Peter Principle I think my head will explode.

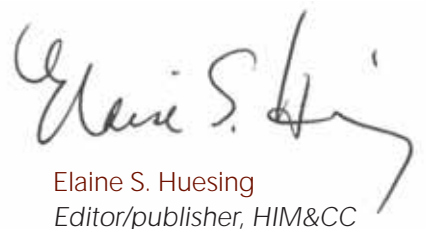
The role that this journal plays is a unique one. This journal was borne out of a promise to foster open dialogue and debate. This is a legacy I have a moral obligation to uphold, and one in which I have a fervent belief in my own right. If this journal is to thrive, it has to be on the back of new ideas and solutions, which are correspondingly dependent on an open and honest discussion of our challenges, problems, and difficulties. If we quell debate and dialogue, and we punish those who challenge the status quo instead speaking of only our successes and not entertaining honest debate about our failures, we in effect kill innovation. If we kill innovation, we will not only kill this journal, we will kill the jobs innovation spawns.

While I completely agree with freedom of speech and opinion for this publication, I also appreciate the need for holding back information in specific situations and for ensuring that criticism is respectful and constructive. But it appears as though we've carried this a bit too far, and worse, have created an environment of fear. Dare I say, a CPHIMS-CA certified Julian Assange (~ WikiLeaks) may be exactly what our industry needs.

To that end HIM&CC exists as a forum and catalyst of dialogue. This is a place where new ideas can be communicated and challenged, and where successes and failures can be shared. If something in the

pages of this journal causes you pause, good! In such a case, I will have done my job, and this journal will have fulfilled its mandate. In that vein, I encourage you to read the article submitted by Chris Sherback on page 42 of this issue. HIM&CC is proud to publish this opinion piece, you will find him to be very forthright and honest in his article and I know many who will agree with his thoughts on the topic. I also know many that won't (be forewarned, he uses the forbidden "p" word.) What will be the impact of this debate? I'm not sure. That is up to you. But I am fearful that these types of thought-provoking ideas are being withheld in other forums where they would otherwise stand to truly drive progress.

This takes me back to the beginning of this editorial. Given that we have a problem that needs fixing, we have no choice but to resolve this. To that end I invite you to continue to email, write, or call me with your comments regarding what appears – and what doesn't – in the journal. But do so knowing that my mandate as Editor is to catalyze debate with an aim to progress. Rest assured, we must have open and honest dialogue. I'm not ruling out calling Julian Assange if we don't resolve this ourselves.



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