INTERNATIONAL HEALTH TERMINOLOGY
STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION

Revision-controlled collaborative terminology authoring

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Audience

Terminologists, release managers, or software engineers interested in terminology management and authoring.

Objectives

- To introduce how the methodologies of collaborative development can be applied to terminology authoring
- To present how repositories with revision control capabilities can support collaborative terminology authoring

Abstract

The concepts of collaborative development aided by revision control systems have been well known in the software industry for decades. Some of these systems have been adopted in terminology authoring tools like the IHTSDO Workbench to support collaborative authoring workflows.

This talk discusses implementation challenges and lessons learned when applying collaborative development techniques to terminology authoring. Representative terminology authoring use cases from the Singaporean, Australian, and Canadian National Release Centers will be discussed in terms of their impact on revisioning requirements. A concrete scenario for SNOMED CT will be demonstrated including examples for versioning, comparing versions and patching an older version. The scenario will be driven through a representative collaborative workflow.

Useful open-source components will be discussed along with practical experiences in integrating them with Snow Owl, a commercial terminology authoring application. Revision control features including change history, comparison, versioning and patching of the terminologies will be discussed and compared to alternate approaches. The impact of workflow to drive the process will be illustrated using the tool. Optimizations and performance challenges will also be briefly covered.