

Education is Crucial for Our Future

Save to myBoK

By Lynne Thomas Gordon, MBA, RHIA, FACHE, CAE, FAHIMA, chief executive officer

The AHIMA archives contain a few examples of long-ago medical records, including a sample admission slip from 1916—nearly a century ago. As fascinating as these artifacts are, we know that the tools we use to do our jobs today will seem just as outdated some day.

Consider this: Last year, researchers at Oxford University published a paper that examined the likelihood that certain occupations would be replaced by computers. They concluded that “around 47 percent of total US employment is in the high risk category. We refer to these as jobs at risk—i.e. jobs we expect could be automated relatively soon, perhaps over the next decade or two.”¹ When the authors ranked 700 occupations from most to least resistant to replacement by technology, the majority were more secure than medical records and health information technicians.

The phenomenon of the polarized labor market, when jobs in the “middle” of the skills and wage spectrum disappear, is evident in our own economy and in many other nations. And, as our profession becomes increasingly automated, it is becoming evident in HIM.

It’s a disturbing thought. What can we do? *The Economist* believes that society as a whole can help people through this disruptive period with “education systems.”² The message of continued formal education and lifelong learning has long been one of AHIMA’s mantras. That’s why this month’s issue of the *Journal*, covering education and workforce issues, is crucial reading.

In our cover story, “Mind the Gap,” Mary Butler looks at ways HIM professionals can fill skills gaps in their resume in areas such as data analytics and informatics. AHIMA tools, such as the Career Map and the new HIM Professional Development Inventory, can help HIM professionals in this process.

Changes in our work also mean changes in our understanding of “retirement.” In “HIM After Retirement” Lisa Eramo talks to HIM professionals who have found that retirement creates more time in their schedules for volunteering in the industry or teaching the next generation.

Even familiar roles in the workplace are changing. In “Optimizing PHI Disclosure Management in the Age of Compliance,” Don Hardwick, Mariela Twigg, and James H. Braden share best practices for streamlining the management of protected health information disclosure across an enterprise and how HIM professionals can lead a collaborative effort to combat the trends that are making privacy and security compliance difficult.

Finally, Diana Karff explains how the methods of Documentation Based Coding training can help coders better understand clinical documentation in tandem with learning coding rules and guidelines in “Dissecting the Details.”

What new HIM skills can you develop for the workplace of tomorrow? Chances are we all can think of a few. AHIMA is here to help.

Notes

1. Frey, Carl and Michael Osborne. “The Future of Employment: How Susceptible are Jobs to Computerisation?” Oxford Martin School, September 17, 2013. www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/downloads/academic/The_Future_of_Employment.pdf.
2. “Coming to an office near you.” *The Economist*. January 18, 2014. www.economist.com/news/leaders/21594298-effect-todays-technology-tomorrows-jobs-will-be-immenseand-no-country-ready.

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