

Keeping Up with the Pace of Change

Save to myBoK

by Jessica Squazzo, assistant editor

"I envision the future of the HIM profession through an IT perspective. HIM managers need to focus on the quality, security, and access to patient information. The profession is expanding beyond the medical record."

--Genet Kidane, RHIA, product manager, Mobile Computing Group, McKesson Information Solutions

The laptop was a big deal five, six, seven years ago," says Genet Kidane, RHIA. "Today I walk around with a wireless BlackBerry (hand-held computer)--I have it on all the time."

It's no wonder that Kidane, a product manager for the mobile computing group at McKesson Information Solutions, is involved with IT on a daily basis. With more than 25 years experience in healthcare, half of that in IT-related healthcare, she has seen technology emerge across the HIM profession as well.

Finding Solutions

Kidane's main project is managing an enterprise messaging notification product, one of many that can be integrated as part of an overall IT solution. She spends her days evaluating market requirements and making sure customers' needs are met based on where they are on the technology curve.

"We're beginning to have many more users of mobile healthcare IT solutions, but the important thing is to provide options that enable users to choose the kind of information access that's most appropriate and useful for them," she says. For Kidane, this means understanding that the latest and greatest technologies may not be suitable for every organization just yet.

Part of the System

Kidane became interested in systems in 1981 when she went to work at Emory University Hospital in Atlanta, GA. "I was in a traditional hospital system for many years. Being in a manual world, I wanted to be in automation," she says. "I started out as a file clerk in college. By the time I was done with my college years I pretty much knew every position in a medical record department."

According to Kidane, it was easy to make a correlation between HIM and IT. This is because IT solutions were widely available to assist with key business operational issues that faced HIM.

Challenges Equal Rewards

The rewards Kidane reaps from her career go hand in hand with the challenges. "The evolving pace of technology in general" is what she finds most rewarding. But to reap the benefits of change, you must keep up with it. "Technology is constantly changing, so you must stay on top of the literature and latest innovations," she says.

And then there's always the matter of technology's newest gadgets, including Kidane's own hand-held computer. "The challenge (with this new technology) is that it makes you work all the time," she says, laughing. "You have to discipline yourself," she says, admitting that she has to set aside certain time during the day just for e-mailing; otherwise it would be easy to do so all the time.

Keeping up with the fast-paced world of HIM and technology is not just a task for a product manager at McKesson. These days, as technology evolves at lightning speed in HIM, Kidane recognizes that everyone in HIM has a part to play and they can start by staying informed about what technology can offer to improve HIM processes.

"They may not be able to be hands-on, but there's a lot they can inform themselves with," she says. Specifically, she suggests that HIM professionals keep up to speed by reading both IT and HIM magazines and attending conferences and seminars. "Take an active role, even in volunteer opportunities," she says. For younger members and students, Kidane suggests adopting a mentor to look up to while embarking on a career in HIM.

With words like "enterprise," "wireless," "automation," and "system" prevalent on Kidane's resume, it is clear that her career is moving ahead just as rapidly as technology is moving ahead with HIM.

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