

Resource for Privacy and Security Programs: Version 5.0 of HIMSS CPRI Toolkit Expands to Include Privacy Topics

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by Barbara Demster, MS, RHIA, CHCQM

The breadth of available privacy and security literature can be daunting to even the most dedicated HIM professional. With the explosion of information on the Internet, access to authoritative-as well as questionable-resources is easy and instantaneous. The problem of access has morphed into one of identifying and validating sources in an environment that is constantly changing and growing in complexity.

The HIMSS CPRI Toolkit is a free resource for healthcare professionals. It explains the basics of privacy and security and provides tools for building and managing a viable program within a healthcare organization. Rather than spending hours searching for key words and topics on search engines and then vetting the massive number of citations returned, users can turn to the toolkit, which provides an organized portal to resources and materials already completed and screened by privacy and security experts.

How Can the Toolkit Help You?

The toolkit addresses all dimensions of privacy and security. It is written for healthcare professionals who may not have much technical expertise, and it provides technical experts with a foundation in and an understanding of healthcare delivery processes through case studies. The toolkit provides a communication bridge between users and the technical processes of an organization. At the same time, the toolkit is based on the belief that maintaining information privacy and security is a function of the everyday work of all members of the organization, not just security, IT, or privacy specialists.

Drawing on a combination of existing literature, supplemented with commissioned articles, case studies, sample forms, documents, and a wealth of links to vetted resource sites, the toolkit provides an organized portal to resources needed to develop privacy and security expertise as well as implement and maintain an organizational privacy and security program.

Who's behind the Toolkit?

Founded in the early 1990s, the Computer-based Patient Record Institute (CPRI) was a voluntary industry collaborative of providers, vendors, professional organizations, academics, and government agencies committed to promoting and facilitating the healthcare industry's adoption of computer-based records.

Recognizing the importance of information security in managing electronic records, and in the absence of healthcare-related resources, CPRI chartered the Work Group on Confidentiality, Privacy, and Security in 1993 to promote this process. The work group developed and published a series of topical guidelines on improving the security of electronic information.

With the passage of HIPAA legislation in 1996, Ted Cooper, MD, chair of the CPRI work group, envisioned a collection of resources to aid the development, implementation, and maintenance of a security program for healthcare organizations.

Using the existing CPRI guidelines and soliciting documents, case studies, and new materials from industry experts, the work group published version 1.0 of the toolkit in 1997. That same year, the Friends of the National Library of Medicine sponsored a national seminar series on privacy, security, and confidentiality using the toolkit and its developers as the foundation for the series.

In 2002 CPRI merged with the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS), producing versions 4.0 and 5.0. Version 5.0 is the first version to incorporate privacy topics, adding 17 new chapters dedicated to privacy. The

phenomenal growth of the Internet along with technological advances and expansion of the available literature on privacy brought new potential to version 5.0 and subsequent major change in the structure of the toolkit.

Rather than depend on documents developed and maintained in-house, the work group decided to link to sources online. In the spirit of collaboration, AHIMA agreed to allow public access to articles and documents selected for the toolkit from its FORE Library: HIM Body of Knowledge. Privacy work group members reviewed more than 150 AHIMA documents for currency and applicability and crafted the new chapters.

Inside: Documents, Links, and Samples

The toolkit provides resources for planning, developing, and implementing health information privacy and security programs. The information is scalable to any organization, regardless of size or complexity. The toolkit contains information applicable to a variety of provider settings such as acute care, ambulatory, physician office, and long-term care. In addition, it offers a wide variety of tools in its 23 chapters.

Links to applicable laws, regulations, and standards are provided throughout the toolkit. In addition, links to state, federal, and Canadian agencies provide direct access to privacy and security laws, regulations, frequently asked questions, and other resources provided by those agencies.

While HIPAA is a central driver, Gramm-Leach-Bliley, the US Patriot Act, the Homeland Security Act, and other pertinent laws are also included. For instance, there is a chapter devoted to alcohol and substance abuse and another to research. The last chapter deals with international privacy initiatives including the European Union privacy directive and privacy legislation in Canada.

Links provide access to the resources and materials of standards development organizations and other authoritative industry groups. Topical links in the HIPAA privacy final rule connect particular issues to their locations within the regulation.

Essays and topical articles address specific privacy and security issues, including the implementation specifications for HIPAA. Topics cover everything from risk assessment to enforcement. These writings come from AHIMA, CPRI security booklets, salient literature identified by work group members, and items specifically commissioned for the toolkit.

The toolkit contains extensive samples of policies, procedures, forms, and templates for various types of required privacy and security documents and plans. There are also links to major provider organizations with examples of their implementations.

Case studies provide information on how others have addressed their privacy and security needs and offer valuable lessons learned. Extensive training and educational resources are provided for both privacy and security, incorporating the interplay between the two.

Updates Ahead, Suggestions Welcome

The toolkit is supported under the auspices of the HIMSS Privacy and Security Steering Committee's toolkit work group, which guides its development. The work group is composed of industry volunteers with an interest and expertise in privacy and security of healthcare information. The membership roster may be found on the HIMSS Web site and in the toolkit. Authors are solicited from recognized experts when no existing literature is found for an identified need.

With the healthcare industry in a state of constant change, the work on updating the toolkit is ongoing. The time it takes to create, review, and edit the content for a new version ranges from 12 to 18 months, excluding the time required by Web services to publish on the Internet. Version 5.0 required extensive coordination with AHIMA staff, as more than 100 articles and documents were linked into the toolkit. The work group is now working on version 6.0, which will focus on the security portion of the toolkit.

The work group welcomes submission of additional material, suggestions for content, and general comments from AHIMA members and the public at large. Please contact Joyce Sensmeier at jsensmeier@himss.org to submit new material or offer feedback for the work group.

The toolkit is available on the HIMSS Web site at www.himss.org. Select Topics and Tools, then choose Privacy and Security.

10 New Things to Look for in the Toolkit

Version 5.0 of the HIMSS CPRI Toolkit offers 17 new chapters on privacy that provide:

1. An introduction to federal and state privacy laws
2. Administrative requirements for privacy programs
3. Interaction between privacy and security regulations
4. Links to topical articles in the AHIMA FORE Library: HIM Body of Knowledge
5. Links to relevant government Web sites
6. Links to relevant authoritative private-sector resources and documents
7. New sample forms and templates such as notices of privacy practices, consents, authorizations, and business associate agreements
8. Information on marketing and fund-raising
9. Information on special issues and concerns such as alcohol and drug abuse, long-term care, educational programs, clergy, shadow charts, outsourcing, mental health, public health, and disaster situations
10. Canadian privacy legislation and oversight agencies

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