Skills for an e-HIM Environment

Save to myBoK

Susan H. Fenton, MBA, RHIA

Preparing for e-HIM® will likely require education and training, as HIM professionals may encounter concepts and applications they may not have studied in their HIM programs. The following chart lists some skills and technologies used in e-HIM and lists outlets where training may be found.

It is possible that the areas in which HIM professionals need training will change within the next year or two. One key to staying current is to pay attention to the updates received from AHIMA in e-Alerts, *Advantage*, and the *Journal of AHIMA*. HIM professionals should also establish a relationship with programmers or other technical experts in the information systems department. Programmers are often aware of newly emerging technology.

In this day and age it is impossible to become an expert in all aspects of technology. Determine which ones are pertinent for your needs or find those you are interested in and search for training. As you can see from the list, it is often only a click away.

Skills and Technology	e-HIM Application	Training Sources
Relational databases—includes MS Access, SQL Server, Oracle, Sybase	The base software of EHR and e-HIM applications	Training in relational databases is widely available. MS Access training is offered at most colleges and even in community education programs. Training in SQL (structured query language), which is used with relational databases, is available online and from numerous computer skills training centers.
Messaging standards—Health Level Seven (HL7), Accredited Standards Committee (ASC) X12, National Council for Prescription Drug Programs (NCPDP)	Methods for transmitting data between healthcare providers	HL7 training is available from Health Level Seven at www.hl7.org or through various consulting companies, which can be found by searching the Internet. ASC X12 tutorials are available at www.xl2.org. Other tutorials can also be found via an Internet search. NCPDP offers training at www.ncpdp.org.
Project management	Special skills for managing EHR development and implementation	AHIMA offers a set of courses on e-HIM, which are available at http://campus. ahima.org. Training is also available in many different formats from many places. Some are designed specifically for IT. HIM professionals should start with an Internet search. Costs are usually comparable to college classes for quality courses.
Clinical vocabularies and terminologies	Foundation for fully functional EHR	AHIMA offers online training on SNOMED-CT and clinical terminology systems, available at http://campus. ahima.org. AHIMA also usually offers at least one institute on vocabularies and terminologies a year and presents a track and workshops at the annual convention. SNOMED-CT (www.snomed.org) offers Using SNOMED, an EHR course.

Nationwide health information network	Framework for establishing interoperability for health information in the US	Visit the United States Health Information Knowledgebase at www.ushik.org/ registry/x for information and available courses. The American National Standards Institute's Healthcare Information Technology Standards Panel is one of four HHS projects.
Extensible markup language (XML)	A mechanism for identifying structures within a document; used extensively for transfer-ring information via the Internet	Courses on XML are available in most colleges with computer science courses. Classes are also available online via an Internet search to locate resources.
Data management, including data modeling, data dictionaries, and data warehouses	Data modeling is often the first step in database design. It details the relationships between the data elements. Data dictionaries define the data elements. Data warehouses store the data.	Data management courses are available online. eLearners.com is a compendium of online training courses. Data modeling can be taken as a separate course. Data dictionaries and data warehouses are usually incorporated into broader data management.

Susan Fenton (susan.fenton@ahima.org) is a practice manager at AHIMA.

Article citation:
Fenton, Susan H.. "Skills for an e-HIM Environment." *Journal of AHIMA* 77, no.8 (September 2006): 70.

Driving the Power of Knowledge