



Message from the Chair – August, 2011

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Chair, Section of Pharmacy Informatics and Technology (2011-2012)

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Dear Colleague:

Last month I advocated that we should create new software as part of exploring future possibilities for the practice of pharmacy.

The process of creating new software requires *precisely* defining the terms used to describe functions and features. As pharmacy informaticists, we have our own “new new” language, to borrow an expression coined by author [Michael Lewis](#). We routinely use a set of neologisms to suggest meanings that are still a short distance away from general acceptance. *Our ‘terms of art’ are the words of the future describing concepts that are changing the world.*

Yet we have to recognize how our new new terms are not always well understood. What is an ‘orderable?’ What does ‘multi-route’ mean? What does it mean if something is ‘scannable’ or ‘unscannable?’ What does it mean to be ‘overridable?’

Some of these words are so fresh that, although we may hear them frequently, when asked, we struggle to define them precisely ourselves. Varying notions of our fashionable terms can lead to uncomfortable moments of misunderstanding.

Recently, during a leadership meeting, a physician colleague mentioned the “order of her orders.” I could not discern from context if she meant, (a) the *orderliness* of her orders (because her orders were well crafted), or, if instead she meant, (b) the *sequence* in which her orders were presented, placed or executed. Because I did not understand, I interrupted her and requested clarification.

At that moment, our CNIO enthusiastically acknowledged our collective challenges with language. She called for us first to recognize that our terms describing healthcare software are *idiosyncratic*, and, second, to publish a glossary so that we achieve *shared understanding*. Ironically, our CNIO then noted that when we understand our new new terms collectively, it will be easier to express ourselves meaningfully, or, as she put it, to “nail the sucker!” (For an example glossary of internet terms, check out: <http://www.netlingo.com/dictionary/all.php>)

Just as software matters, the new new descriptive language we use to describe medication-use software also matters. I look forward to working together within our Section to achieve universal understanding of our medication-use software terms. Please share your thoughts on the developing terminology we use to describe medication-use software, and on the challenges we face as pharmacy informaticists communicating software-related concepts using a new new language.

I want to congratulate and thank our [Section Advisory Group](#) Chairs and Vice-Chairs who spent the month of July updating and refining plans for the next year. We are now very well prepared to have another productive year and I am certain we will increase our ability to influence the future of pharmacy practice via the [Pharmacy Practice Model Initiative \(PPMI\)](#).

Chairs, Vice-chairs and Key Opportunities for the coming year are as follows:

[Section Advisory Group on Ambulatory Care Informatics](#)

Chair: Shobha Phansalkar, R.Ph., Ph.D.

Vice-Chair: Kathleen Vieson, Pharm.D., BCOP

This group's primary focus will be on e-prescribing, interoperability and online pharmacist documentation in the electronic health record. Key opportunities include influencing the standardization of prescription SIGs, sharing controlled-substance e-prescribing lessons-learned and collaborating to better define the pharmacist's role as co-author of the patient care record.

[Section Advisory Group on Clinical Information Systems](#)

Chair: Trinh Le, M.S., RPh, FASHP

Vice-Chair: Franklin P. Crowover, RPh, MSHI

This group will continue to focus on Meaningful Use and Clinical Decision Support while it seeks also to identify data-driven approaches to PPMI-inspired initiatives and to promote pharmacy informatics research. Key opportunities include follow-up on its ongoing, national drug-drug interaction alert survey, developing best-practice guidance for clinical decision support, providing future visions for pharmacy informatics roles and advancing the use clinical information system technology.

[Section Advisory Group on Pharmacy Informatics Education](#)

Chair: Elizabeth Breeden, DPh, MS

Vice-Chair: Joseph Lassiter, MS, RPh, BCPS, CPHIMS

This advisory group will advance our domain by determining a strategy for professional certification in pharmacy informatics and by leading an effort to define pharmacy informatics' scope and standards of practice. Key opportunities include awareness-raising of pharmacy informatics as a career option and an assessment of the educational needs of practicing pharmacy informatics specialists.

Section Advisory Group on Pharmacy Operations Automation

Interim Chair: Barbara Giacomelli, PharmD, MBA, FASHP

Vice-Chair: Kavish J Choudhary, Pharm.D., M.S.

This advisory group will advance our domain by determining a strategy for professional certification in pharmacy informatics and by leading an effort to define pharmacy informatics' scope and standards of practice. Key opportunities include awareness-raising of pharmacy informatics as a career option and an assessment of the educational needs of practicing pharmacy informatics specialists.

Educational Steering Committee

Chair: Robert Christiansen, R.Ph., M.B.A.

Vice-Chair: Armen Simonian, Pharm.D.

The Educational Steering Committee is responsible for developing educational meeting sessions for the ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting. The Educational Steering Committee chooses a pharmacy informatics theme each year and recruits experienced members and associates to share their challenges, successes and learnings during four to six thematic sessions. The committee also organizes the content for the Informatics Pearls, an important MCM highlight.

Write me at ajflynn@med.umich.edu and share your experiences, thoughts and opinions on our software-related vocabulary and on the focus and priorities of our ASHP Section.

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For more information about the Section of Pharmacy Informatics and Technology, please visit our website at www.ashp.org/informatics.