The Virtual Student Symposium was held on May 27th 2007 in Quebec City. The event was billed as a proof of concept event, designed to test the feasibility of hosting a student-led synchronous presentation including both offsite and onsite participants. Expert panel reviewers were on hand to provide feedback to students on their research work. The primary goal of the symposium was to provide a forum for the communication and sharing of ideas and research, potentially identifying opportunities for collaboration amongst students, faculty and industry conducting investigation in the Health Informatics domain.

Process:

The Symposium was designed to be an accessible venue for undergraduate and graduate students to present their research work in eHealth and Health Informatics. The range of topics and disciplines were as varied as the submissions received in the initial Call for Abstract that ran from early January 2007 to mid-March 2007. Authors of abstracts were notified of their success in early April. All authors of accepted papers (see Appendix A) were requested to provide a 2-3 page summary of their project one month prior to the event. These summaries were posted on the www.ehealthstudents.org website and a notification email was sent out to all participants who had electronically registered for the Symposium by mid April. Equally, all presenters who planned to present electronically were given one-on-one virtual instructional seminars by SCHI planning committee members to familiarize them with the web-conferencing software in the weeks prior to the Symposium. The typical flow of the presentations included approximately 20 minutes of presentation, followed by 10 minutes of balanced critique from the expert panel (see Appendix B), with the remaining time dedicated to questions. Participation of participants both virtually and onsite was moderated by our onsite Moderator.

The invited keynote speaker of the Symposium was Richard Alvarez, President & CEO, Canada Health Infoway. Mr. Alvarez spoke for approximately 35 minutes on the various challenges and hurdles facing the Canada’s healthcare system and how student involvement in research was necessary. He also addressed the frightening shortage of health informatics professionals and the subsequent call to increase the number of informatics programs across Canada.

Members of the SCHI planning committee were interviewed by the Conference newsletter editors. Richard Booth and Josephine McMurray provided information on the Symposium and reinforced the added value for participants that the Symposium provided. Future plans were also discussed, including establishing closer linkages with other informatics associations both nationally and internationally (see Appendix C for article).

Overall, the Symposium was well-received and deemed a success by the participants, expert panelists, and planning committee.
Results:

Qualitative and quantitative feedback was collected via an electronic questionnaire that was broadcast to all presenters shortly after the symposium. A summary of the feedback is as follows:

How they heard about the Symposium:

- Presenters stated that they heard about the Symposium through numerous avenues including other colleagues, thesis supervisors, and the e-Health Conference 2007 organizers (Advance Group).

Response from SCHI: We are pleased with the response – 20 abstracts were submitted, and over 45 participants registered for the Symposium. We expect future events to be equally, or more successful due to our past experience and increased network of connections and liaisons.

Was the SCHI Symposium a worthwhile experience?

Presenters were generally satisfied with the experience. They felt it was an excellent venue for networking and provided a valuable opportunity for sharing their research work with other students and expert panelists.

Participant Testimonials:

- “The SCHI Symposium was definitely a worthwhile experience. Being able to meet and network with other students and to meet some of the experts and hear their feedback was very valuable. In addition, I was seeking a chance to practice public speaking my public speaking, and this was a great medium to do so in.”

- "It was the difference in me choosing to attend this year's e-Health conference."

- "It was 100% worth it! The ability to participate collectively in the e-Health research efforts of students across the country was amazing!"

Response from SCHI: We are extremely excited about these comments. It reinforces the need to create more student events in support of HI research.

What recommendations would you make for future Student Symposiums?

- Participants wanted more notice of events. One stated that he/she did not receive notification through their university of the event. Others stated that “more student involvement” in HI conferences was needed. Some presenters stated that there was a need to improve the audio component of our Symposium.

Response from SCHI: We are currently attempting to ensure that all universities with or without HI programs are kept up to date regarding SCHI activities. Unfortunately, due to the massive
logistics required and limited administrative/financial support (all volunteer), this is an ongoing challenge needing to be addressed.

The majority of the hardware/software and technical support was provided by sponsors or the SCHI committee members. Due to financial restrictions, obtaining conference room quality 2-way speaker phones was not possible, compromising the audio component of the symposium.

Factors enabling the success of the Symposium:

- Significant funding to support the travel costs of SCHI planning committee members was provided by Canada Health Infoway (maximum of $5,000) and COACH ($2,000). Equally, a portion of the sub-Bronze conference funding was earmarked to support SCHI. Without this funding, none of the SCHI planning committee members would have been able to have attended the conference.

- Support from the e-Health Conference and COACH continue to provide SCHI with room locations, food/beverage coverage, and promotion in conferencing proceedings/advertising.

- Support from the e-Health Conference 2007 conference management team (Advance Group). Our main liaison, Zoie Woodgate, was instrumental in facilitating the coordination, and finer details of the room booking, A/V equipment, and ‘day-of’ logistics. Without this receptive support, the Symposium would not have been able to have achieved as much as it did.

- Support was provided in terms of access to the Elluminate Live software, via the University of Calgary, Faculty of Medicine, Telehealth/e-Health Research and Training Program. The Telehealth/e-Health Research and Training Program kindly allowed SCHI to use their Elluminate Live software and provided significant amounts of technical support to ensure the setup and configuration was adequate to meet our needs.

- The University of Toronto, Global Centre for eHealth Innovation also provided financial support ($100) to assist in the remuneration of SCHI planning committee members’ planning costs.
## Appendix A: List of Presenters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time (EST)</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:10 – 10:50</td>
<td>Jennifer Gillert (p)</td>
<td>University of Waterloo</td>
<td>Literature Review of Clinical Decision Support in CPOE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:55 – 11:35</td>
<td>Albert Crous Tseanaclis (p)</td>
<td>University of Sherbrooke</td>
<td>Biochemical Laboratory Data Quality and Analysis Dashboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:50 – 12:30</td>
<td>Veronica Law (p)</td>
<td>University of Toronto</td>
<td>Internet Use among Occupational Therapist in their Clinical Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:35 – 13:15</td>
<td>Katrina Hurley (v)</td>
<td>Dalhousie</td>
<td>Clinical Pathway Ontology for Generating Patient-Specific CarePlans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:20 – 15:00</td>
<td>Samina Abidi (p)</td>
<td>Dalhousie</td>
<td>Ontology-based Modeling of Breast Cancer Follow-up Clinical Practice Guidelines: A Decision Support System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:05 – 15:45</td>
<td>Krista Elvidge (v)</td>
<td>Dalhousie</td>
<td>Implementing a Case-Based Reasoning System for End-of-Life Cancer Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:00 – 16:40</td>
<td>Sajjad Hussain (v)</td>
<td>Dalhousie</td>
<td>Prototype for Clinical Practice Guidelines-based Clinical Decision Support System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:45 – 17:25</td>
<td>Ludovic Lebel (p)</td>
<td>University of Sherbrooke</td>
<td>iCareProMoT: The Intelligent Care Process Modeling Tool</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p = presenting at Quebec City  

v= presenting virtually
Appendix B: Listing of Expert Panel Reviewers

Dr. Raza Abidi, Dalhousie University
Dr. Marilyn Hebert, University of Calgary
Dr. Ian McKillop, University of Waterloo
Dr. Andre Kushniruk, University of Victoria
Dr. Marion Lyver, McMaster University
Dr. Andrew Grant, Université de Sherbrooke
Appendix C: E-Health 2007 Newsletter Article Featuring the Symposium

The Cutting Edge: A Virtual Student Symposium

IN A CUTTING EDGE combination of face-to-face and virtual participation, eight students presented their completed work or work in progress to a panel of virtual and live experts and participants from across Canada. “This year, we wanted to focus on academics and allow students to have in-depth feedback from industry and academic experts,” said Richard Booth, a graduate of the University of Western Ontario, who called the Student Collaborative in Health Informatics (SCHI) symposium “a proof of concept.” With the help of sponsors, the 2007 edition of SCHI hosted both live and virtual presentations, with the added windfall of synchronous expert questioning and feedback.

The first SCHI symposium, held in 2005, offered the original venue for graduate students to present their work. During the 2006 symposium in Victoria, students identified components for education in informatics, in conjunction with government, vendors, and industry. This year’s virtual symposium was organized by Booth (with colleagues Josephine McMurray and Selena Davis) partly in an effort to recruit members for a student organization that could result from the collaborative.

The in-depth feedback that student presenters received is rare and, as McMurray noted, is clearly “an added value for participants.”

SCHI’s primary goal is to assemble a collaborative network of students and grow their competence in health informatics, Booth explained. Specifically, the collaborative aims to bring students together to share research results, develop research projects, and link to vendors in an effort to “support and move forward eHealth in Canada.”

What are SCHI’s future plans? While the collaborative wants first and foremost to link students within Canada, it also hopes to team up with the International Medical Informatics Association to expand its student network.

In the Halls:

The integration! Before, it was a pile of little silos. The interoperability project is a good example. Also, the systematic supervision of the process; someone’s holding the purse strings! There’s also coordination and knowledge-sharing across the country.

Doctoral student, Waterloo ON

The awareness and understanding that we have to work with vendors to accomplish what we want to see happen. They don’t have complete solutions; we have to work together to come up with designs that work for all.

Analyst, Toronto

An acceptance of the value of sharing health information across providers. It’s important for quality of care, which includes continuity of care and patient safety, as well as efficiency in the health care system. It’s also important for patient experience and confidence that health care providers have information at their fingertips so that they don’t send you for the same lab tests they did months ago.

Project management office, Edmonton AB

Program Update

Plenary session The Great Debate will take place at 1:30–2:30 today. Dr. David Dalen, Director, Medical Informatics, Trillium Healthcare Centre, will join the panel.

At 3:30 today, the Physicians and Electronic Records session will be held in room 2000CD.

Tuesday’s Plenary Session at 9:00–10:30 will feature keynote speakers Dr. Edward M. Brown, CEO, and Ron Reisentback, CFO, of the Ontario Telemedicine Network.

Session The EHR: Beyond Clinical Care has been rescheduled to 1:30–3:00 Tuesday.

Exhibitor Alcatel-Lucent will be at Booth 213.