

TESTATHON: The First Healthcare Interoperability Testing Event in India

Philips Innovation Campus, in association with HIMSS India, pioneered the organization of **TESTATHON: the first ever Healthcare interoperability testing event in India**. The event was organized from 15th to 16th March 2012 at Philips Innovation Campus, Bangalore. The main objective of this TESTATHON was to bring together the healthcare vendors of India and start thinking about Interoperability testing and standardization of clinical workflows in the Indian scenario.

The event was similar on lines of IHE Connectathon conducted by Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise (www.ihe.net). These events are regularly held in EU & US for the around 10 years and also being conducted at Japan, China, Australia and Korea for the last 4-5 years by engaging the local healthcare vendors. This is a first such event in India, organized by Philips Healthcare in association with HIMSS India. Interoperability TESTATHON in India is the first step towards the formation of IHE India.

The event was conceptualized, when Philips Healthcare organized a Colloquium on 'Interoperability Testing of Healthcare standards for Emerging Markets like India' by Cor Loef, Program Director Interoperability at Philips Healthcare in May 2011. The event had participants from Philips, GE, Siemens, AllScripts, Wipro and a few other vendors from India. Everyone present agreed that it's time to think about forming IHE India organization and conduct an event similar to Connectathon. Following this initial event, a series of Telecons were held, engaging healthcare vendors based in India, Physicians & Radiologists, people from IHE international organization and also independent organization like HIMSS India. The discussions finally resulted into TESTATHON.



The TESTATHON itself constituted of half day of Colloquium on Healthcare and Interoperability in India, followed by one and half day of Interoperability testing. The event was inaugurated by Mr. Ravi Ramaswamy, Sr. Director, Philips Innovation Campus and included talks by experts like Mr. A Vijayarajan, CEO Clintics & President HIMSS India, Dr. Chandil Gunasekara of Religare Technologies & Vice-President HIMSS India and Dr. A.V. Prasad from Philips Healthcare. The key highlights of the talks were

- *Standards provide a fair playground for big and small vendors to compete with each other and facilitate innovative solutions for the customers.*
- *Healthcare has attracted huge investments lately in India driven by increased demand for high-end healthcare services. Considering the projected healthcare & IT growth in India, there is a growing need for Interoperable Healthcare products. The winners will be the ones who adopt standards based solutions, which improves the overall productivity in healthcare.*
- *There is an increased trend in owning one's health by the individual, which implies that connected health care is a right not a privilege. Connectivity & Interoperability can play a vital role in connecting healthcare records.*
- *Often healthcare vendors are overwhelmed by a gamut of standards used in the industry. There is a need to define a Meaningful subset of standards which can be used in the Indian Healthcare scenario and ask vendors selling their products in India to comply with these standards. TESTATHON is a first step in the right direction.*

The colloquium was followed by Interoperability Testing event, which included 16 Healthcare products consisting of PACS, Modalities, Workstations, RIS and HIS systems. These products belonged to nine different Healthcare vendors represented by around 35 participants, who travelled from various places in India. The participants performed rigorous testing on the Interoperability Interfaces of their products with other vendors based on Standards like DICOM, HL7 and IHE. The tests were monitored by few experts who had previous experience in participating in the IHE Connectathons. Most of the vendors present at the TESTATHON found issues in their Interoperability Interfaces, which would have been difficult to find at their own sites and would have otherwise cropped up in Hospitals, when these products get commissioned.

Overall it was a very successful event and a very good first step towards the formation of IHE India organization, and conducting formal Connectathons going further. Some of the comments from the participants are below:

"Interoperability not only streamlines workflow and enhances quality of care but improves the overall productivity in the hospital. I congratulate the Philips India Team for organizing this event. Good turnout & enthusiastic participants. This is an important first step needed by all in the Healthcare Ecosystem" – Mr. A Vijayarajan, CEO Clintics & President HIMSS India.

"Kudos to Philips for taking time and effort to arrange the event. It also gave us an important platform to network with co-industry professionals" - Dr. Suresh Viswanathan, Managing Director, Raster Images

"Thanks to team Philips for the excellent opportunity provided. Great initiative. Wish to participate every year in such events"- Siva Vageesan, CEO AmbalSoft InfoTech Private Ltd