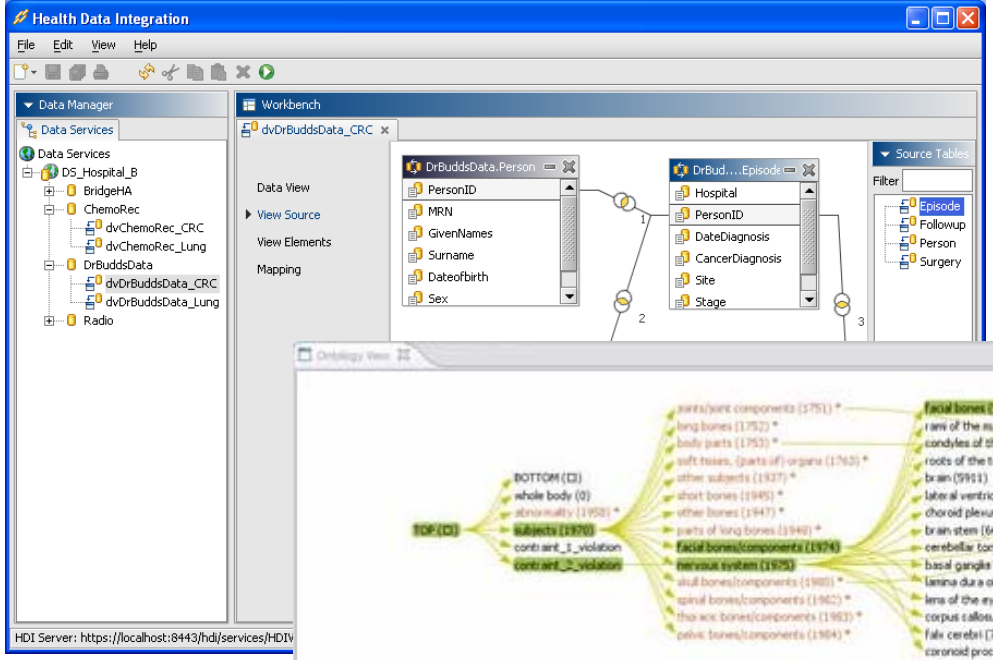
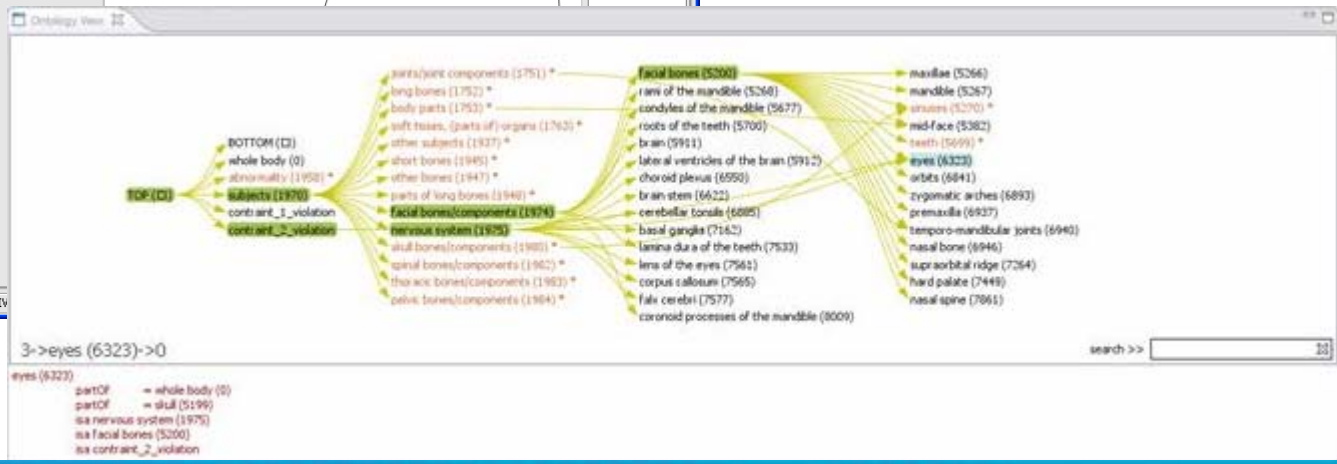




www.csiro.au

Converting ad hoc terminologies to SNOMED CT extensions

M.J. Lawley, D. Vickers, D.P. Hansen

The Australian E-Health Research Centre, CSIRO ICT Centre, Brisbane, Australia

Aug 2008

CSIRO

Goal

- Better tool support for consistent querying of health data from multiple sources

Surgery

PersonID
DateDiagnosis
DateSurgery
Procedure
Surgeon
ProcedurePerformed

Procedure

Right hemicolectomy
Ext right hemicolectomy
Left hemicolectomy
Sigmoid colectomy
Total colectomy
Subtotal colectomy
Proctocolectomy
High AR
Low AR
Ultralow AR
APR
Hartmanns
Other

Procedure

MRN
EpisodeNo
ProcedureCode

ProcedureCode

Surgical Procedures

32003-00 (Sig colectomy)
32000-00 (Sig colectomy)
32003-01 (Right hemicolectomy)
32000-01 (Right hemicolectomy)
32005-01 (Ext right hemicolectomy)
32004-01 (Ext right hemicolectomy)
32006-00 (Left hemicolectomy)
32006-01 (Left hemicolectomy)
32005-00 (Subtotal colectomy)
32004-00 (Subtotal colectomy)
32012-00 (Total colectomy with
32009-00 ileorectal anastomosis)
32015-00 (Total colectomy with
32051-00 proctocolectomy +/- ileoanal
32051-01 reservoir/ pouch procedure)
32030-00 (Hartmann's procedure)
32024-00 (High anterior resection)
32025-00 (Low anterior resection)
32026-00 (Low anterior resection)
32028-00 (Ultra low anterior resection)
32099-00 (Other procedure on rectum)
32108-00 (Other procedure on rectum)
32039-00 (Abdomino-perineal excision)
32029-00 (Formation of colonic J pouch)

Querying

- Need to *consistently* query existing health data
- Data uses controlled vocabularies with unspecified (or special-cased) semantic relationships
  - 32003-00 Sig colectomy with *anastomosis*
  - 32003-01 Right hemicolectomy
  - 32012-00 Total colectomy
- Queries of data need to account for these implicit relationships
  - e.g., *find procedures involving a colectomy*
- Leads to semantics being embedded in the queries
  - bad

Semantics embedded in queries - bad

- SELECT S.*
  FROM Surgery S
  WHERE S.procedure = ’32003-00’
  OR S.procedure = ’32003-01’
  OR S.procedure = ’32012-00’
  ...;

- SELECT S.*
  FROM Surgery S, ProcedureCodes C
  WHERE S.procedure = C.code
  AND C.text LIKE ’%colectomy%’;

Formal Ontology

- Use an ontology to make the relationships explicit
  - Approach taken by SNOMED CT
- Make these relationships available for querying

- SELECT S.*
  FROM Surgery S, Ontology O
  WHERE O.ancestor = 23968004
  AND S.procedure = O.descendant;

How to construct the ontology?

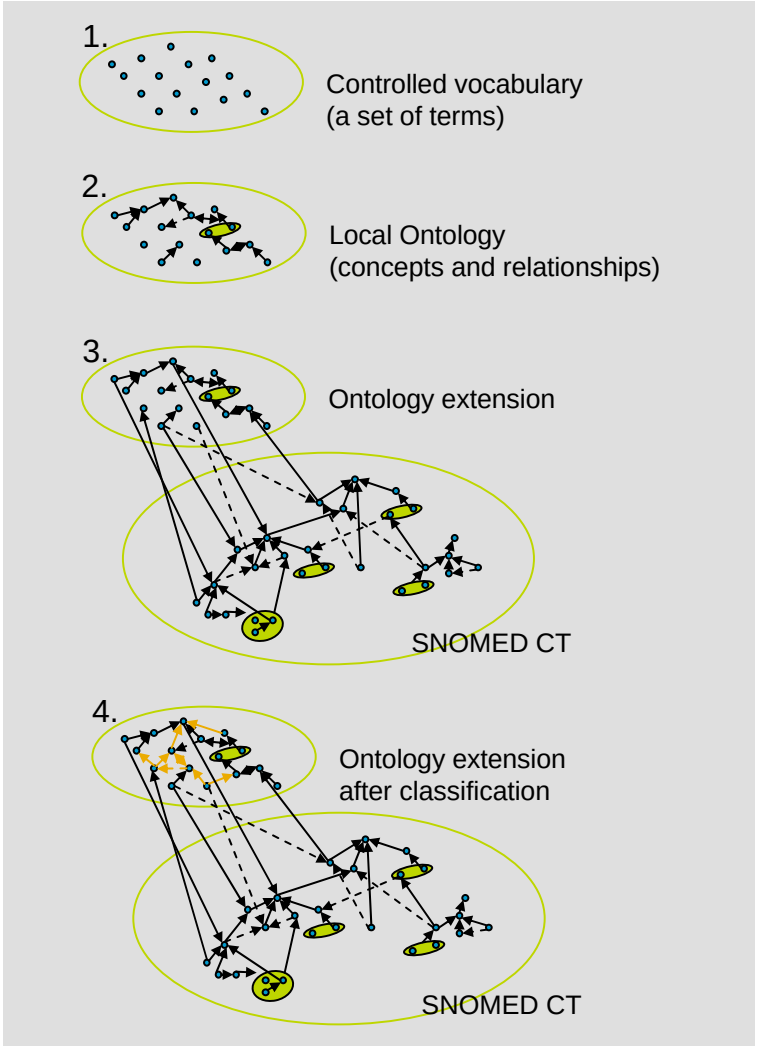
- Could start from scratch, but
  - may need to explicitly encode lots of additional relationships
  - requires good modelling expertise (as well as domain knowledge)

- Easier to build on (extend) an existing base
  - SNOMED CT
    - ~400,000 concepts
    - ~1,500,000 relationships
    - provides a path to future integration, (esp. in Australian context)

    - size can also be a problem
    - contains errors
  - Need to be careful that extension doesn't corrupt base
    - conservative extension

Steps to create a SNOMED CT extension

- examine existing terms
- look at their use in the data
  - use is the determinant for semantics
- find corresponding SNOMED CT concepts
  - or model as post-coordinated expressions
- are they equivalent or primitive?
- classify, look for problems
  - snorocket supports *bottom*, ⊥, and thus disjointness constraints
  - found problems with Skeletal Dysplasia terminology in REAMS
    - used "eye" for both *optic nerve* and *bony orbital structure*
- when done, export the classified extension



The impact of scale

- Benefits
  - breadth
  - rich relationship structure
  - established concept model
- Costs
  - sheer size is hard to manage
  - standard tools struggle or can't cope
  - when classification takes ~45min you don't do it often
  - but...

New classification algorithm

- Polynomial-time classification algorithm published by Baader, Lutz, and Suntisrivaraporn
  - "CEL"
  - LISP, Linux only
  - ~30min
- Our implementation
  - "snorocket"
  - Java, tested on Windows, OS X, Linux (RedHat, ubuntu), Solaris
  - ~1min
- `/usr/bin/time /System/Library/Frameworks/JavaVM.framework/Versions/1.6/Home/bin/java -Xmx2G -server -jar target/snorocket-1.1-SNAPSHOT-jar-with-dependencies.jar --krssFile ../ontologies/snomedct-stated-2007-07-30.krss`

```
     66.27 real        65.39 user         2.16 sys
```

- unoptimised incremental version of algorithm gives sub-second results

Feasibility

- Essential approach has been trialled
  - *see "Experiences Mapping a Legacy Interface Terminology to SNOMED CT"*, Geraldine Wade and S. Trent Rosenbloom
  - 2002 terms mapped to combination of single and post-coordinated concepts
  - about 75% were equivalencies (20% of these were to single concepts)

- General issues identified
  - one term may be used for multiple concepts
  - many relationships may not be explicitly represented/have a corresponding term
  - complete concept may be composite and representationally split across multiple columns (and tables)

Future

- Evaluation projects
  - current
    - ANZICS Intensive Care Unit terms (APACHE III)
  - future
    - Community Health
    - Patient Safety

- Tool support
  - editor specifically for building such extensions
    - real-time feedback via fast incremental classification
    - build in the concept model
    - pinpointing to assist debugging?
  - querying integrated with (extended) ontology

- Problems
  - Negation
  - Free text (NLP)

Australian e-Health Research Centre
Michael J Lawley
Project Leader

Phone: 07 3253 3609
Email: michael.lawley@csiro.au
Web: aehrc.com/hie

www.csiro.au

Thank you

Contact Us
Phone: 1300 363 400 or +61 3 9545 2176
Email: enquiries@csiro.au Web: www.csiro.au

CSIRO