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Studies in Health Technology and Informatics

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Health Informatics: 
Building a Healthcare Future 
Through Trusted Information

Selected Papers from the 20th Australian National Health Informatics Conference (HIC 2012)

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Preface

A record of twenty years of productive scientific output is a substantial achievement in any field of ICT, and especially in the youthful domain of health informatics. The Health Informatics Society of Australia, with the active support and involvement of the Australasian College of Health Informatics, is justifiably proud to have sustained the annual Australian National Health Informatics Conference (HIC) series of meetings through to this stage of maturity. As the largest national event of this type in Australia and New Zealand, with a dedicated scientific stream on health informatics, HIC provides a valued platform for academic and research contributions and interchange. It also consolidates the Australasian profile of strong and current research contributions in health informatics, marking our place on the world stage.

The HIC 2012 theme of “Health Informatics: Building a Healthcare Future Through Trusted Information” emphasises the importance of assuring the integrity and security of health data and communications. At a time when large scale health information flows are being initiated, through both the inauguration of the personally controlled electronic health record (PCEHR) and the National Broadband Network rollout, these issues need to remain prominent in the minds of designers and developers as well as the priorities of administrators and executives. They are naturally a major concern for consumers, and an immutable responsibility for vendors. A more trusted environment for managing and using health information will help to consolidate and accelerate the use of health informatics solutions as change mechanisms to drive the establishment and adoption of new models of care and new technology-oriented healthcare processes.

Papers in this volume will be found to both align with this theme, and to add colour to the landscape within which it resides by addressing peripheral but related topics. As always, it is a strength of HIC that a wide diversity of work is presented, and that a set of papers has been collected here that ranges from deeply theoretical to intensely practical. The careful reader will be rewarded with exposure to much diversity, and many elements of contemporary health informatics research endeavours.

The double blind peer review process established for HIC 2011 in a previous volume has been continued and augmented. All papers were reviewed by either 3 or 4 experts in the field of health informatics, selected as prominent academic and industry specialists. The assistance of the Australasian College of Health Informatics in supporting this processes through the voluntary efforts of a number of their Fellows is gratefully acknowledged, as is the similar contribution made by many senior members of the Health Informatics Society of Australia. This phase of reviewing resulted in the provisional acceptance of 38 papers from a much expanded submission field of 61 (compared with 39 for HIC 2011). The Scientific Program Committee, composed of several previous Scientific Program Chairs of past HIC conferences, then undertook a validation process for all such papers that were resubmitted in amended form, to ensure that reviewers’ recommendations were appropriately addressed or rebutted. This resulted in 35 papers finally being included for publication in this book.

Anthony J. Maeder
Fernando J. Martin-Sanchez
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