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Cross-Border e-Health

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Point-to-point cross-border e-Health has been initiated and tested in the Baltic e-Health project, a project part financed by the European Union under the BSR INTERREG IIIB programme, and, so far, the results are promising.

The limitation of the system is, however, that only organisations and institutions that are linked to the Baltic Health Network are able to benefit from the cross-border e-Health services. The next step in the development of cross-border e-Health is to establish an eMarketplace for healthcare services on a European level and this is the vision of what is Known as the R-Bay project.

Point-to-Point E-Health

Traditional eRadiology, often referred to as tele-radiology, is provided using point-to-point connections between clients and providers.

The Baltic e-Health project has proved that the establishment of an IT network allowing point-to-point cross-border e- Health services is an important step in the direction of securing adequate access to healthcare services in sparsely populated areas/regions as well as preventing brain drain from the same areas/regions.

However, there are restrictions of this structure: due to the nature of the pilots in the Baltic e-Health project which only allow point-to-point cooperation, based on bilateral contracts between the partners.

The European E-Marketplace

The reality in Europe today is that some regions experience a shortage of radiologists while others have a surplus. A new vision is therefore that traditional eRadiology is extended by creating an eMarketplace, in line with other online marketplaces, that will act as a commodity brokering and exchange service.

On one side, there are sellers with products that they make available at a price and for standardised specifications (speed of response, value added options etc), and on the other side there are customers willing to buy the services over a trusted and secure network. The eMarketplace will enable the viewing and consulting of images from other organisations, regions or nations, thus enabling the sharing of healthcare resources on a pan-European basis.

R-Bay

The R-Bay project aims to establish this eMarketplace and thus it paves the way for the creation of an internal market for the exchange of e-Health services. The clinical services will be exchanged across European borders as anonymised images and will be the first in Europe that are based on market terms. In the project, image processing and analysis methods, which have been developing rapidly during the past years, and tools for efficient 3D visualisation, segmentation and image fusion will be market validated based on a "pay per click" model.

Goals and Objectives

R-Bay aims to create a virtual and secure exchange for the provision and consumption of radiology services. The new working environment for health professionals uses interoperable, secure and trusted Internet technologies to move all media and data types. Thus R-Bay modifies healthcare working environments by making available specialist capacity, and generating new business models and business streams.

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Criteria for Success

As a market validation project, the main criterion of success is that the market potential of the R-Bay service is found and clarified for all involved parties (clinical providers, customers, and technology provider).

The project will attempt to accurately identify the demand of the service and determine the value of the different elements of the service. Because the data will be generated by informed users, the conclusions will be highly credible. Consequently, it will subsequently be possible to build a financial business case that will justify the commercial viability of the different models of eService provision.

Partners Coming Together

The R-Bay project is led by the International Office at the Region of Southern Denmark and is expected to be launched in August, when all 11 partners meet in Tallinn, Estonia, for the kick-off meeting.

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