1. BEGINNINGS OF THE IMIA HISTORY PROJECT

The IMIA Board meeting in Hiroshima in 2009 approved the creation of the IMIA History Taskforce, consisting of representatives from the various international regions that comprise IMIA: George Mihalas (Europe); Hyeoun-Ae Park (Asia); Sedick Isaacs (Africa); Alvaro Margolis (Latin America), Casimir Kulikowski (North America –Chair). With the passing of Sedick Isaacs in 2012, representation for Africa has been assumed by Lyn Hamner.

There have been meetings of the IMIA History Taskforce at Medinfo 2010 in Cape Town, and at two IMIA-sponsored regional meetings since then (INFOLAC 2011 and APAMI 2013). A number of original contributions to the IMIA History Project have been solicited and are beginning to be published as articles in the IMIA Yearbook (1, 2, 3, 4).

These add to the growing collection of published materials, including recollections of IMIA leaders such as (5) and pioneering historical informatics work from the USA’s National Library of Medicine (6), of Morris Collen (7), and the Nursing Informatics History Project (8, 9).

During 2013 George Mihalas, Jana Zvarova and Casimir Kulikowski organized a panel on the history of EFMI at the EFMI STC in Prague (10), in April, and a workshop was organized by Casimir Kulikowski at the World Congress of Medical Informatics (Medinfo 2013) held in Copenhagen in August (11). Both these meetings were very successful in eliciting many commitments to contribute archival documents and produce new historical papers from biomedical and health informatics researchers and practitioners from around the world. This paper is an updated version of the presentation at the EFMI STC meeting in Prague, and joins those from other European contributors at that meeting.

2. PROTOTYPE MEDIA PRESENTATION REPOSITORY FOR IMIA ARCHIVAL AND HISTORICAL MATERIALS

To help collect original IMIA-specific documents and other archival materials, and making them available to the authors contributing to the 50th Anniversary volume, we have built a prototype media presentation repository, or wiki, at Rutgers University’s Department of Computer Science, focusing on those who have contributed to IMIA over the past five decades, and the events and publications they have been involved in (http://infohistory.rutgers.edu) (12). A screen shot of a timeline with selected medical informatics events related to the evolution of IMIA is illustrated on Figure 1.

The wiki supports visual and graphical summaries, with timelines connecting events and people mentioned in documents, providing a spatial and temporal indexing that facilitates navigation through the original materials, also facilitating the analysis of their contents. Materials comprising the major original documentary contents currently available through the repository at Rutgers include:

- Correspondence related to the formation of IMIA and its Bylaws;
- Board and General Assembly meeting notices and minutes;
- Correspondence about decisions regarding the World Congresses of Medical Informatics (Medinfos), and the preparations and other documents, flyers, and minutes of meetings;
• Correspondence about special (usually Working Group) conferences sponsored by IMIA and links to resulting publications;
• Correspondence and documents related to IMIA’s relations to regional and (national) member societies. In addition, we are producing short summaries of notable events involving IMIA, together with short biographical sketches (profiles) of IMIA contributors. Both include photographic records of people and locations, focusing on IMIA-related activities, and pictures of the research and publications of the IMIA participants designed to illustrate the contributions of the members to medical informatics. These materials have been scanned and made available by former IMIA Secretary, Diarmuid UaConaill, and the current CEO of IMIA, Peter Murray, while also drawing on the records of Steven Huesing, the first IMIA Executive Director. Besides the correspondence materials related to significant IMIA events along the association’s timeline, we have added links to the tables of contents from the IMIA Yearbook of Medical Informatics, and major journals of the Association: Methods of Information in Medicine, and the International Journal of Medical Informatics. We are also gradually adding tables of contents from other early journals in the discipline like Computers in Biomedical Research, and Computers in Biology and Medicine. The purpose is to have available as much material as possible so text analysis methods can be used to carry out temporal correlation analyses of participations and contributions to IMIA events and publications.

3. FUTURE PLANS
The challenge facing the IMIA History Taskforce and the Editorial Board of the 50th Anniversary History Project, is how to summarize the international dimensions of the evolution of a highly interdisciplinary scientific and technological field like biomedical and health informatics. The prototype repository at Rutgers provides a preliminary version of an easily accessible archive for the documents of IMIA, and information about its contributors, events, and organizational evolution. The overview timeline provides a convenient point-of-entry to compile and search for specific dates, periods, and people. The indexing by document-type will enable the writers of the history to access the items of interest by region, country, or working group, and special interest group, as well as the World Congresses on Medical Informatics (Medinfos) and other meetings sponsored by IMIA. In addition to conventional archival media-based approaches, we will be exploring more recent software analytics tools for analyzing the text in the documents and correlating the contents with that in the published literature, so as to develop a detailed picture of the participation...
of different researchers and research groups in the activities of IMIA throughout its history. This can show how “professional social networks” of scientists, practitioners, and education specialists have led the activities of the organization, complementing conventional citation analyses. The patterns of participation and interaction between different regional and world-wide activities of IMIA will be clearly outlined and displayed on maps and correlated to summaries of the subfields of specialization of medical informatics. In this way, the main themes that have dominated the discourse and publications in our discipline can be more clearly defined, and included in the interpretive historical narratives. The sessions at EFMI-STC in Prague (12) and the Workshop at Medinfo 2013 (11, 13) have led to the commissioning of the histories of the different national and regional societies and associations that comprise IMIA so they can be included in the 50th Anniversary IMIA History volume. By investigating the use and development of new analytical summarization and visualization methods, these activities also contribute to the development of specialized informatics methods in support of historical research. And, they will be doing this to produce comprehensive, interesting narratives about the accomplishments and challenges of a unique international professional organization in informatics itself: IMIA.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: NONE DECLARED.

REFERENCES