

Pulse

Apelon Newsletter

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Welcome to the inaugural issue of **Pulse**, Apelon's bi-monthly newsletter on terminology and data interoperability. Pulse is our response to requests for updates on Apelon's projects and products.



The past year has seen continued growth in our consulting services. Governments, health systems, pharmaceutical companies, integrators and HIT vendors have called upon Apelon's expertise to assist in data management and interoperability-related activities. In the Pulse Consultants' Corner, we describe how some of these organizations are approaching their terminology challenges.

We have also been pleased by the consequences of making our vocabulary server open source. To date DTS has been downloaded over 1500 times by organizations across the globe. The Pulse Product Forum section of this newsletter will provide updates on Apelon products such as DTS and TermWorks.

We hope you enjoy this issue of **Pulse** and look forward to your comments and suggestions. Please feel free to contact us at pulse@apelon.com.

Best regards,

Stephen Coady
President and CEO
[Apelon, Inc.](#)

Consultants' Corner - US Federal Health Projects



The Apelon Consulting Group (ACG) offers expertise in building, deploying and maintaining interoperable, content-driven health information systems. In the Pulse Consultants' Corner, we'll be describing some representative client problems and solution approaches. This issue, we look at ACG's activities with US federal government agencies.

As US federal health spending rises in this era of budgetary constraints, federal agencies are increasing their investments in health information technology (HIT) systems to contain costs and improve care. Apelon has a long history of involvement with federal agencies and we continue to develop innovative solutions for the federal government. Because of our wide-ranging experience with federal HIT projects, we often find ourselves bringing together representatives from multiple agencies to deliver results that no single group could achieve on its own.

- Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) - with an annual HIT budget of more than \$2 billion, representing more than half of all federal HIT spending, VA is a leader in the use of HIT to deliver high-quality, low-cost care. Apelon consultants provide a wide range of support services to the Veterans Health Administration, with a special focus on coordinating VHA's participation in interoperability standards development organizations and development of Terminology Asset Management processes.
- FDA Structured Product Label - also funded by VA, Apelon is helping a coalition of federal agencies including FDA, VA, HHS, NCI, and NLM build and deploy a structured terminology infrastructure based on NDF-RT and other government-recommended vocabularies.
- SAMHSA Security and Privacy informatics - The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has a keen interest in developing robust, implementable policies to keep electronic medical records safe and secure, yet still making sure that needed information is available to provide care. Apelon consultants are working with SAMHSA to develop interoperable standards for safe and secure information exchange.
- NCI caBIG - The Cancer Bioinformatics Grid (caBIG) being implemented by NCI is one of the most ambitious federal data-sharing projects ever undertaken. Apelon consultants are supporting NCI's development of standards and tools to ensure that the next generation of HIT applications has full access to the richly annotated cancer research data currently being produced.

To learn more about Apelon's federal consulting solutions, or just to learn what all those acronyms mean, contact John Carter at jcarter@apelon.com.

Product Forum - DTS Import Wizard Plug-in

Some of the most frequent questions we get on DTS are how to import local data into DTS Namespaces and how to export this data into files for local processing. While it is certainly possible to write custom import/export routines using the DTS API, Apelon Systems Engineering has developed two plug-ins for the DTS Editor that make importing and exporting much easier for common use cases. In this issue of Pulse we'll describe the [DTS Editor Import Wizard plug-in](#). The next issue will give an overview of the Terminology Query Language (TQL) Editor plug-in for queries and exporting.



The Import Wizard is one of a number of DTS Editor Plug-ins available on [SourceForge](#). All of these extensions have been written using the DTS Editor Plug-in Architecture. The Import Wizard plug-in is a DTS Editor addition that supports import of terminology data from either delimited text files or XML files. Common use cases are importing of a new terminology into a DTS Namespace, or importing DTS Associations (mappings) from other applications, including Apelon's TermWorks.

There are four basic steps to loading data into DTS:

1. Data Modeling - Development of a DTS Object Model representation of the input data. This involves defining the basic elements (Concepts and Terms) of the data, their attributes and their relationships using the elements of the DTS Model: Property Types, Association Types, Qualifiers, etc.
2. Data Preparation - Preparation of the data into the format required by the Wizard. For text files, data preparation primarily involves ensuring that each line (row) of the file contains the name of a reference Concept (which can be new or existing) and the data attribute values associated with this Concept (or Term) are in consistent field (column) positions.

3. Namespace Preparation - Creation of the target Namespace for terminology addition and addition of the attribute types defined in Step 1. This is typically performed using the DTS Editor.
4. Data Import - For importing delimited text files, the key step is the creation of an import specification that defines the correspondences between the data value positions (columns) in an import file and DTS attributes, e.g., Property Types, Association Types, Qualifiers, etc. This specification, developed in the Import Wizard pages and saved as an XML file, drives subsequent loading of data from actual file instances. (XML files are self-describing and do not require a specification.) Data files can be loaded from within the Wizard/DTS Editor, or via a separate batch process.

A full description of the import process and the steps involved in using the Import Wizard are available in the Import Wizard User Guide.

For more information about DTS and available Plug-Ins, please contact [Jack Bowie](#).



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