



Connectathon Goes To Austria

The Eighth annual European interoperability testing event known as the IHE Connectathon will be held at Vienna, Austria on April 20th-25th.

The Connectathon, organized by IHE-Europe - the Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise initiative - is a 'connectivity marathon' during which systems exchange information with complementary systems from multiple vendors, performing all of the transactions required for the roles they are implementing.

At the IHE Connectathon, all companies which have implemented IHE's Technical Framework specifications in their products have the chance to test them with many other companies' products in a real interoperability environment.

The Connectathon provides a unique opportunity for application interoperability testing. Vendors have the opportunity to identify and solve many 'bugs' during the event. According to vendors who have participated in previous Connectathons "the cost of identifying and solving a bug during a Connectathon is about 10 times less than the cost of a bug identified on site". The specialist of each company is present at the Connectathon, as well as standards specialists.

The results of the Connectathon will be published in the "Connectathon Results table" on the IHE-Europe website. Vendors may use the "IHE Integration Statements" to show the compliance of their products with the IHE Integration profiles. This is a clear benefit to vendors when responding to Requests for Proposals from users.

IHE-Europe is the European organization of the international IHE organisation. 'Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise' (IHE) is a joint initiative of healthcare professionals and industry to improve the way computer systems in healthcare share information. IHE promotes the coordinated use of established standards such as DICOM, XML and HL7 to address specific clinical needs in support of optimal patient care. Systems developed in accordance with IHE specifications communicate with one another better, are easier to implement, and enable care providers to use information more effectively.

For more information on IHE go to: www.ihe-europe.org

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Connectathon Overview

The IHE Connectathon is the healthcare IT industry's only large-scale interoperability testing event. Connectathons are held annually in Asia, Europe and North America.

During the Connectathon systems exchange information with complementary systems from multiple vendors, performing all of the transactions required for the roles they have selected, called IHE Actors, in support of defined clinical use cases, called IHE Profiles. Thousands of vendor-to-vendor connections have been tested overall, and tens of thousands of transactions passed among the systems tested. The sponsoring organisations publish the results of this testing for public review (see below).

The Connectathon provides detailed validation of the participants' interoperability and compliance with IHE profiles. Participating companies prepare for the event using testing software—the MESA test tools—developed for this purpose. It offers vendors a unique opportunity for connectivity testing—removing barriers to integration that would otherwise have to be dealt with on site, at the customer's expense. Companies taking part have responded overwhelmingly that the IHE process addresses important issues in their product development plans.

Organisations interested in participating in future European Connectathons are encouraged to refer to www.ihe-europe.org.