Author's response to reviews

Title: The caCORE Software Development Kit: Streamlining construction of interoperable biomedical information services

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Author's response to reviews: see over
November 16, 2005

Dear BMC,

On behalf of myself and my co-authors, I am pleased to submit a revised version of The caCORE Software Development Kit: Streamlining construction of interoperable biomedical information services. This revised version of the manuscript includes changes recommended by the two Referees. Below please find an itemized list of the Referees' comments with brief descriptions of how the comment has been addressed. I believe the revisions address all the outstanding issues that were raised. Thank you again for your patience, and I look forward to your decision regarding publication.

Sincerely,

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Referee 1:

COMMENT: “This paper does not provide any significant description of the types of information systems or applications (e.g., cancer registries, genomic research databases, case report forms systems) that can be or have been constructed using caCORE SDK. Hence it is difficult to evaluate the usefulness and value of caCORE SDK to the community. It is important to add a description of the potential applications in the early sections of the paper.”

RESPONSE: We have added a section under Results that describes the systems that have been created using the caCORE SDK.

COMMENT: “A brief introduction to the applications of the caCORE system also is needed. caCORE is describe as a framework for creating interoperable services? With which kinds of services will it interoperate? More details on the applications that are being built with caCORE is important. Are these applications already in use at NCI?”

RESPONSE: The focus of this paper is the caCORE SDK rather than caCORE itself. caCORE 1.0 was previously published, and a new manuscript describing caCORE 3.0 is in preparation. Nonetheless, we agree that some additional descriptive information on caCORE and applications that have leveraged caCORE is relevant, and have added that information to the Background.

COMMENT: "In addition, please provide more details on caBIG. What applications are envisioned for the grid? Who are the members of this group?"

RESPONSE: Additional information on the caBIG program has been added to the Background.

COMMENT: “The section titled Results does not in fact describe the results of a study. This section needs a different title. For results, the authors should describe actual applications that
have been constructed using the SDK. Please provide also actual or estimated number of current users if any. As a denominator, it might be useful to consider the membership of caBIG.

RESPONSE: We used the guidance in the instruction to authors for naming the sections. We therefore defer to the editors on whether the section name should be changed, but have left it unchanged in the current revision. We have added a list of systems that have been built or extended using caCORE SDK to the Results section. We do not specifically track the number of users of the caCORE SDK, and we hesitate to offer an estimate.

COMMENT: "A brief discussion of the value of description logics in this system is needed."

RESPONSE: We have added a paragraph that briefly describes description logics to the Implementation section.

COMMENT: "Several of the references for standards only provide the name of the standard and the URL. Please include the name of the standards publishers/authors, the title of the standards reference document, and the year of publication. For software references, please include the name of the software development organization and software version number."

RESPONSE: We are using the Electronic Citation format that is governed by the Reference Manager application and the output style provided by Biomed Central. The information the referee is asking for is mostly available at the web sites given. Software versions are all given in Availability and Requirements, and also in Table 1. We therefore respectfully decline to make any additional changes to address this comment.

Referee 2:

COMMENT: "The paper is studded with laboratory specific acronyms and acronyms that are in more general use. Some are introduced at the beginning, some throughout the text, some not at all. A glossary of all acronyms would increase the readability substantially."

RESPONSE: We appreciate the challenge of keeping track of all the components described in the paper. We have gone back through and checked that each acronym is fully spelled out the first time it appears in the manuscript.