Author’s response to reviews

Title: The Cancer Translational Research Informatics Platform

Authors:

Patrick McConnell (patrick.mcconnell@semanticbits.com)
Rajesh C Dash (r.dash@duke.edu)
Ram Chilukuri (ram.chilukuri@semanticbits.com)
Ricardo Pietrobon (pietro@duke.edu)
Kimberly Johnson (kim.johnson@duke.edu)
Robert Annechiarico (bob.annechiarico@duke.edu)
A Jamie Cuticchia (jamie.cuticchia@duke.edu)

Version: 8 Date: 18 November 2008

Author's response to reviews: see over
Referee 1 Comments

In the results section of the Abstract, line 5:

..."either the a Simple Interface"...

Here "the" should probably be taken out.

We have removed ‘a’

On the next page, 2nd paragraph, line 8:

"Having as its initial focus on outcomes analysis" should probably be changed to:

"Having outcomes analysis as its initial focus, ..."

We have made the correction

In the case study, second paragraph, there is a second bracket missing in or after (Her-2/neu_overexpression.

We have replaced the ‘.’ with a ‘)’

Referee 2 Comments

I agree with other reviewers that review of other similar software is incomplete.

One very similar system is called the Shared Pathology Information Network.

I remain unconvinced that an illustration of how information is integrated by
caTRIP in the Duke implementation would be too low level. I suggest adding the
following in the Results section: an example query from a user, the sources of
data from which results are fetched, and how the information is joined. I believe
such an illustration or two would add substance to a paper that lacks other results.

We have added a new subsection within the Results section that addresses this comment. It provides a specific example, including the actual query and results.

Her-2/Neu should be written in a consistent manner. I found at least the following spelling variants: Her-2/new, Her-2new, Her-2/neu, Her-2/neu_, her2/neu, Her2/neu

We have replaced all instances with Her-2/neu

Background section, page 4:
"Having as its initial focus on outcomes analysis,..."
Recommend rewriting this sentence as "Having outcomes analysis as its initial focus,..."

We have made the correction

Section Implementation at Duke, para 1:
Please define what is the "Duke Breast SPORE"?

We have defined the acronym

In the earlier section titled "Technical Requirements", the description of GEMS implied it was a data system. In this section, GEMS is referred to as an investigation. Please clarify.
We have revised the first use of GEMS to indicate that we were referencing data form the GEMS study.

Section "Security: Authentication":
Please expand the abbreviation SAML the first time it is used.

We have expanded the abbreviation

Referee 3 Comments
The case study, at the beginning, looks more like a "a priori" justification for the system. The best case studies are used later, for systems's evaluation. This justification looks ad-hoc, too ideal and for this reviewer it does not add anything to the paper, only questions.

We believe that the case study provides useful context for understanding the purpose and motivation for caTRIP. We have added an example system query based on other referee’s comments that should provide some of what the reviewer is looking for an a later case study. Per reviewers statement that the comment can be used or not, the authors are choosing to leave the case study section as-is.

The design objectives are also quite circumstancial and address concrete topics. The design objectives could be more scientific and generic, addressing the different problems that appear from a scientific or technological perspective in all the topics that the system try to solve, not quite concrete cases.

We previously had very high level technical objectives/requirements in the first draft of the paper, but they were removed due to comments by reviewers. What is left are scientific objectives specific to the design of this system. We believe that
these are actually of fairly broad interest, such as “Determine the distribution over time of a number of factors that may contribute to or reflect progression of a disease state” and “Identify pathology reports of interest”. Per the reviewers suggestion that these edits are not critical nor compulsory, we have chosen to leave the objectives as-is.

Anyway, these comments are quite personal, and do not affect the quality of the paper. They can be used or not.

We have chosen to not use these comments.