



Newsletter no. 2, August 2005

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One year has passed since the Baltic eHealth project was launched at a kick-off meeting in September 2004, and much has been accomplished. This newsletter will give an overview of the project and its progress.

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The infrastructure of the Baltic Health Network

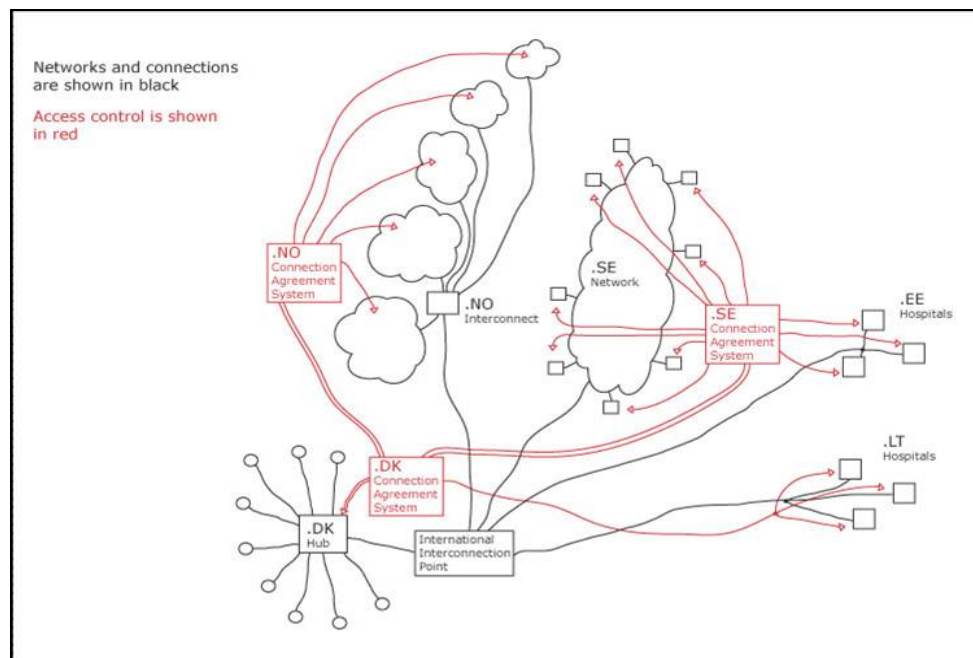
Since September 2004, technicians have worked hard to establish the first cross-border health data network of its kind, connecting the health networks in the Baltic Sea Region. Through the Baltic Health Network, it will be possible to exchange data even though every small part of the different health systems and networks have their own firewall, security, administration, access control mechanisms etc. The solution has been to connect the different national and regional networks through an "agreement system".

The connection agreement system makes it possible for the owner of a healthcare IT-system to control who and on which conditions an external part can access the system. All services are put into the system by the systems' owners. Users that want to get access or exchange data with the system can find it in a directory. When both partners have accepted the connection, the system generates the necessary rules and the connection is opened.

On the connection agreement system, everybody can find the service, which is needed – and all other users. The main advantage of the agreement system is that it eliminates the need for administering a huge number of Virtual Private Network (VPN) tunnels, and it establishes documentation of who ordered what connection - and for how long it is supposed to exist. It simplifies security administration and it is a simple and inexpensive solution to a problem that is common to all nationwide health care systems.

The below image illustrates how the agreement system functions as the basis for securing the data and authentication of the services on the Baltic Health Network.

The network is not yet fully operational. However, it is expected that by September 2005 the network will be in place and ready for the first clinical trials.



The Connection Agreement System on the Baltic Health Network

Clinical pilots on the Baltic Health Network

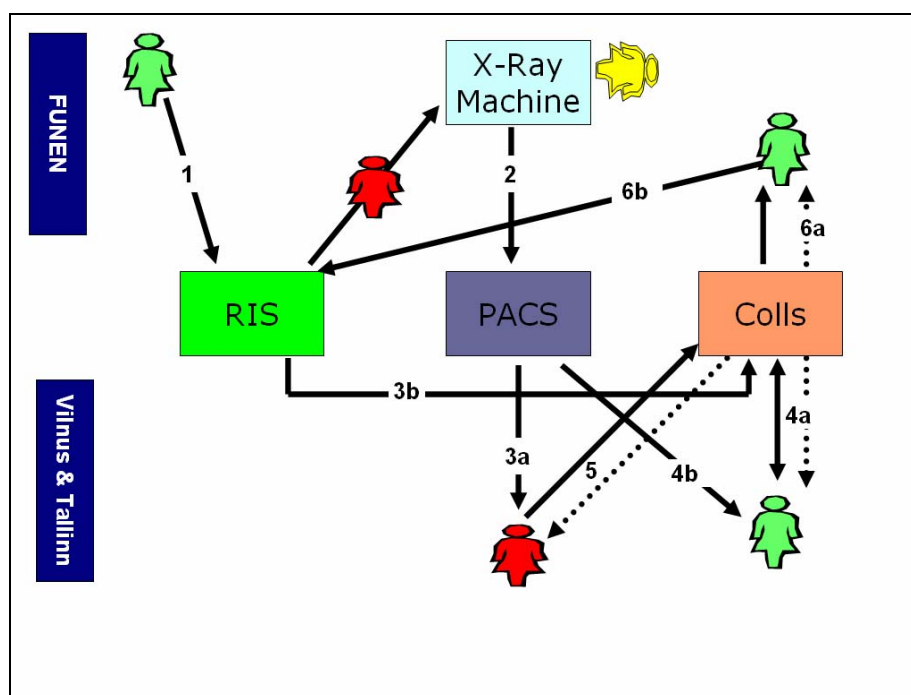
The clinical trials that will be conducted on the Baltic Health Network will test the infrastructure as well as the communication flows between health professionals. Two different medical specialities are included in the pilot project regarding cross-border assessment of digital images:

1. **eRadiology** between the Funen hospital (Denmark) and the East-Tallinn Central Hospital (Estonia) and the Vilnius University Hospital Santariskiu Klinikos (Lithuania);
2. **eUltrasound** between The Fetal Medicine Unit (FMU) at the University Hospital of Umea (Västerbotten County Council - Sweden) and the National Center for Fetal Medicine (NCFM) at the St. Olav's Hospital (Norway).

During an eRadiology work shop in June 2005, three radiologists from the participating departments assessed the same 39 digital images of knees and produced reports using a standardized reporting tool. The work shop had two main goals. The first goal was to examine if specialists from the three participating hospitals will reach the same conclusions when assessing the same images. Secondly, the usefulness of developed structured reporting tool needed to be tested.

The conclusion was that the differences in the knee reports were insignificant, as differences were only found in ten per cent of the assessments and it was agreed that these differences could be found internally in any radiological department. The second conclusion was that the structured reporting approach was useful as it eases translation matters. It was therefore decided to develop the structured reporting tool further and to integrate it into the Collaboration Platform. The Collaboration Platform was developed under the PICNIC project and later in the ciTTis project (www.cittis.org).

In the figure below it is possible to see the structure behind the RIS, PACS and Collaboration Server on the network.



The structure behind RIS-PACS-Colls (Collaboration Platform) on the Network

Regarding eUltrasound, the Swedish and Norwegian partners are ready to start second opinion in ultrasound scans on pregnant women. The Fetal Medicine Unit (FMU) at the University Hospital of Umea in Sweden is currently waiting for the Baltic Health Network to be established so they can start on synchronous and asynchronous second opinion from the National Center for Fetal Medicine (NCFM) at the St. Olav's Hospital in Norway.

Work shop for vendors

The European authorities as well as the industry are very interested in the Baltic eHealth project. Therefore, a Baltic eHealth Industry Workshop will take place on the 4th of October 2005 in connection to the conference 'Management in Radiology' on October 5-7 in Copenhagen.

Here it will be discussed how European vendors can get involved in and give support to the Baltic eHealth project. Project partners and interested vendors are invited.

In order to register to this event, please contact *Senior Advisor Roald Bergstrom* from KITH (Norwegian Centre for Informatics in Health and Social Care) as soon as possible roald.bergstrom@kith.no

Legal issues discussed in Baltic eHealth publication

Telemedicine and eHealth are in a field of massive and rapid development and this is obviously affecting legislation and legal issues. In that sense, the published "Report on identified legal issues of the Baltic eHealth project" should be seen as a status report on how the legal group of the Baltic eHealth project considers the situation as of today.

The report aims at identifying some of the most important legal issues and problems, which the project raises and it is based on general knowledge of issues usually relevant for eHealth projects. Issues covered in the report vary from patient security and rights to reimbursement and licensure.

However, not all imaginable issues or questions are covered in the report. Someone once compared legal issues in telemedicine with peeling an onion; there is always another layer. Therefore, the report only covers the issues relevant to the Baltic eHealth project. During the project period, a second deliverable will be published by the legal group, and this will be a set of guidelines on legal issues. The report can be found on the Baltic eHealth web site (www.Baltic-eHealth.org) or it can be sent by writing to info@baltic-ehealth.org.

Contact details

Please find further information on the project's website www.Baltic-eHealth.org
Or contact the coordinator of the project, Mr. Henning Voss at the Danish Centre for Health Telematics www.cfst.dk at hvo@cfst.dk

