

# H.I.S.-tory

## - By Vince Ciotti

*The following observations are from the January 1989 issue of “U.S. Healthcare” — a precursor to HCI.*

**Featured Ads:** A stunning 2-page, full-color ad from SMS graced the pages of U.S. Healthcare. It extolled the virtues of two innovative approaches to installing “Independence,” SMS' then-current name for its ageless shared financial system. (Note that systems weren't “implemented” then; they were “installed.” Wow, have we made progress!)

“**READY** — a complete model system with pre-designed screens, pathways, and master files already set up and in place.” It seems advances in flexibility like screen painters and report writers were slowing down installs, so this canned approach helped speed them up. Does that sound familiar? Aren't some leading HIS vendors today offering a “factory build” approach to speed up their time-consuming installations, I mean, implementations?

“**AIM** — SMS' Advanced Installation Methodology facilitates the creation of a flexible, comprehensive work plan that is specific to your hospital and your system.” From SMS installs we worked on back then, I believe AIM was based on “Microsoft Project,” a leading PC-based project planning tool in the DOS-era, which is still in use (in Windows of course) by many vendors today.

At the risk of embarrassing him, below is a testimonial from the SMS ad by a leading CIO, later to become vice president/CIO at the Detroit Medical Center, where we worked together installing Cerner's aptly-named Millennium just before Y2K:



Terry and I have both sprouted a few grey hairs since then; I wonder how many of SMS' competitors finished the quote of READY, AIM... with what a firing squad says next!?

**Consultant Forum** — A five-page spread featured spokesmen from the leading HIS consulting firms in 1989, followed by the eventual fate of them and/or their firms:

**Andrew Kaskiw of Price Waterhouse** — merged with Coopers & Lybrand.

**Rich Helppie of Superior** — acquired by ACS, which Rich recently left.

**Bob Feldman of Sneider & Associates** — firm has been defunct for many years.

**Tom Roovers of Roovers & Associates** — Tom is retired, I believe?

**Frank Cavanaugh of Coopers** — still working as part of “Cardinal.”

**Mark Schneider of A.D. Little** — one of the now-defunct Big 8 firms.

**George Kennedy of the Kennedy Group** — sadly passed away.

**Mark Gross of Ernst & Whinney** — merged with Arthur Young.

**Art Randall of Randall & Associates** — sadly deceased last year.

**Ron Johnson of Johnson & Associates** — now brokering vendor deals.

**Vinson Hudson of Jewson Enterprises** — still consulting in M.D. practices.

**Jim Reep of First Consulting** — sadly died before CSC acquired First.

**Sheldon Dorenfest of SIDA** — sold his “3000” data base to HIMSS.

**Optical Disks** — breakthrough technology in 1989:

Imagine, a disk the size of a 33RPM record (for you of the iPod generation, they were the “LPs” of yester-year, over a foot wide) could store the information equivalent of 80,000 pieces of paper. Interesting, that's about how many pages of magazine articles have since been written arguing for the adoption of EMRs.

### **Sidebar**

Vince Ciotti is founder and principal at HIS Professionals, LLC. His blog can be found at [http://www.healthcare-informatics.com/vince\\_ciotti](http://www.healthcare-informatics.com/vince_ciotti).

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