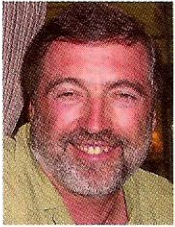


Happy Third Anniversary, HIMSS!

Two decades ago fledgling HIMSS finally edged out ECHO.

by Vince Ciotti



A look back 20 years ago to "Healthcare Informatics" magazine from April, 1990:

HIMSS 1990: Held in New Orleans on Feb. 3, the HIMSS annual event attracted 1,700 attendees who watched 120 education sessions and visited 128 vendor booths. By 1990,

HIMSS had supplanted its former rivals as *the* annual HIS show:

- **AHA** — Starting in the 60s, the American Hospital Association's annual convention was the place where early vendors like SMS, McAuto and Meditech showed their wares, along side of Hill-Rom, Baxter, and McKesson.

- **ECHO** — IBM's "Electronic Computing Heath Oriented" (ECHO) was the annual show for Big Blue mainframe devotees. When they allowed users of System 34 and 38 minis in, they opened the floodgates to "mere" community hospitals, and ECHO lost a lot of its exclusive AMC panache ...

Amazing to think HIMSS has grown to 20,000 attendees last year.

Featured Ad: Texas Instruments (Remember them? My first home computer was a TI-94A purchased in 1980) took out a 4-page center-spread featuring futuristic quotes from leading mavens in HIT such as:

- "The single most important information system need of the 90s is the need to automate the medical record." — *Sheldon Dorenfest, President of SIDA*

- "The CEO has to educate all the professionals and support staff as to why they must move toward fully computerized patient records." — *Carolyn Davis, Director of HCFA*

- "Hospital productivity adequate enough to cope with late 20th-century pressures cannot be gained with paper-work systems from Charles Dickens' London." — *Jeff Goldsmith, Ernst & Young*

- "Every vendor's department-level system being developed today should for easily into the ultimate organization-wide system." — *Steve Lazarus, MGMA*

- "A physician's three top priorities are saving time, saving time, and saving time — while delivering the highest quality of care." — *Larry Klainer, Unisys*

Interesting how these same quotes could be made today, 20 years later, in press releases from ONCHIT, HITECH and the ARRA stimulus program.

Golden Oldies: A list of the vendors who advertised two decades ago in the magazine:

- **NCR** — Advertized its "Open" computing approach running UNIX on its Tower hardware backbone. Acquired by AT&T in 1991, since spun-off.

- **Applied Informatics** — Advertized its "Iliad" micro-computer-based clinical informatics knowledge base; amazingly ahead of its time, since defunct.

- **Emtek** — A subsidiary of Motorola, selling its "System 2000" to automate manual charting. One of the pioneering beside systems, since defunct.

- **American Express** — Yes, that Amex, they bought Saint, small-hospital leader, and then McAuto, 2nd largest HIS vendor; gobbled up by HBOC.

- **Antrim** — A leading LIS vendor, Antrim specialized in reference laboratories, rather than hospital LIS. Absorbed by Cerner and sunset.

- **AMS** — A leading purveyor of Materials Management systems, with 120 hospitals clients. Acquired by Leward Systems, still in business today.

- **Emergisoft** — Selling a dedicated ER system with bedside terminals, triage modules, etc. Still in the ER business today, 20 years later!

- **Ameritech** — Formed during the 1984 AT&T divestiture, Ameritech advertised its communications expertise. Today part of AT&T Midwest.

- **RL Johnson & Associates** — One of the early pioneers in HIS, Ron was an early Technicon salesman like Bill Childs, sold HIS vendor reports. You still out there, Ron?

- **Gerber Alley** — A dynamite player back then with 18 new clients in 1990 alone, running on both HP and DEC minis; eventually acquired and sunset by HBOC.

- **Knowledge Data Systems** — Whose Keystone system promised "All the patient information you need in one second. In one place. At any time." Amazing! Acquired by Ameritech in December of that year.

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