

The National Programme for Information Technology in the UK Health Service

Dependability Challenges and Strategies

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The National Health Service (NHS) provides the majority of health-care in the UK. Its main section, that for England, serves a population of over 50 million, employs 40,000 general practitioners (family physicians), 80,000 other doctors, and 350,000 nurses, and includes over 300 hospitals. Its National Programme for Information Technology (NPfIT) is the largest civil IT project in the world. (Estimates of its total cost have ranged from £6.2 billion up to £20 billion.) This project, which was launched in 2002, aims to implement electronic care records for all patients and to provide a reliable and secure information service, for medical records, radiography, patient administration, etc., for all the hospitals, and all general practitioners' premises, to which all the NHS health professionals in England will have strictly-controlled access. This Special Plenary Session will provide an overview of NPfIT, and its dependability challenges and strategies. Speakers will, it is hoped, include representatives of Connecting for Health (the NHS Agency responsible for NPfIT), the medical profession, and the dependability research community.