An Innovative view of eHealth Security

Press Release │ KONFIDO H2020 Action completes the analysis of user needs

EU, (7 February 2018). The Horizon 2020 funded KONFIDO Action concluded its activities related to User Requirement Analysis on December 2017. This initial phase of the Action entailed a gap analysis study about secure and interoperable solutions at the systemic level, the definition and analysis of user scenarios, the user requirements elicitation, and an intense interaction with the KONFIDO end-users (both patients/citizens and healthcare professionals) for the identification of barriers and facilitators concerning eHealth acceptance coupled with cybersecurity technologies. This phase set the basis for designing a secure and interoperable toolkit capable of fostering cross-border exchange of health data within the European Union that KONFIDO aims to develop.

"Without a clear, comprehensive and thorough analysis of user requirements, the failure of any eHealth project is predetermined", said Dr. Vassilis Koutkias (the Researcher with the Institute of Applied Biosciences, Centre for Research & Technology Hellas – CERTH, Thessaloniki, Greece, who led the User Requirement Analysis activities), "so our approach was to move fast to identify the challenges for such a development, and provide useful input for the design of the KONFIDO solution. Apparently, this solution will not rely only on technological foundations/advancements, but also on organisational, legal and human aspects".

The lack of understanding users, their needs and the environment in which a new technology is to be applied is a frequent failure factor for eHealth projects. Instead, stakeholder engagement from the very beginning can have positive effects. To this end, the KONFIDO gap analysis study reviewed and mapped relevant technical and legal frameworks as well as ethical and social norms at the EU level. Secondly, it defined and analysed user scenarios with an emphasis on cross-border health data exchange and, based on these, it conducted a user requirements elicitation phase starting from the definition of the underlying business processes and proceeding to the identification of threats, assets and, ultimately, high-level user goals. Finally, pursuing intense interaction with the broader eHealth ecosystem, KONFIDO identified a set of barriers and facilitators for eHealth acceptance linked with cybersecurity, by conducting a pan-European survey involving all relevant stakeholders, i.e. healthcare professionals, health Information Technologies developers, industrial stakeholders and patients/citizens, and two Workshops, which validated the methods and the outcomes of the approach.

The 36-month KONFIDO H2020 project exploits proven tools and processes, as well as new cutting-edge technologies and approaches to create a scalable and holistic example for secure internal and cross-border exchange, storage and overall healthcare data management in a legal and ethical way, both at national and European level. The KONFIDO consortium consists of 15 partners with complementary expertise and roles from seven European countries, including technology providers, universities, research institutes and end-users.

To find out more about KONFIDO, please visit the project Web site at: http://konfido-project.eu/

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