

# Frequently asked questions about the EEPD

## 1. EEPD in General

### **Why not start with something smaller?**

Websites, like all computing, suffer from the basic principle "Massive creativity at the start; almost impossible to cost-effectively change anything later!"

In fact each time there has needed to be an essential improvement to what became the EEPD, virtually the whole website has had to be re-written in every detail. As a result, thought and space have been given to the foundations of many volumes which do not yet have any useful content

### **Surely someone else must be doing something similar?**

One would have thought so because, although the reasoning used is tedious to follow, the logic is basically quite simple.

But so far we have not come across any similar initiative, and all the other hits on Google seem, unlike the EEPD, to be only concerned with using data collected by others, not by how analysable, standardised data can be collected in the first place.

Hopefully someone will get in touch soon if we are wrong.

### **Why call it an "Encyclopaedia" when it isn't?**

Simply by mistake. As more fully explained in the EEPD Introduction section entitled "What the EEPD is; and Is Not", it clearly wasn't a "Dictionary" or a traditional "Dataset"

In retrospect it should have been called The "Electronic Storehouse (or Repository) of Perinatal Data" (ESPD or ERPD) but the basic principle of all computing remains "Massive creativity at the start; almost impossible to cost-effectively change anything later!" so now it's too late to change the name.

### **Why pay for it personally? Surely someone else should be paying for it?**

Of course. Indeed I would much rather at my age have paid off my mortgage, and be pottering along in retirement instead of trying to go as flat out as I can every day. But like so many new concepts, it seems that the EEPD needs to be developed to a state of widespread visibility before its need can be recognised.

As so well commented by Professor Trisha Greenhalgh in her inaugural lecture as Professor of Primary Care, Royal London Hospital / Queen Mary's College (8th March, 2011): "The most important paper you have ever written is also the one that is most likely to get rejected by all the leading journals"

and

"Let's not kid ourselves that introducing innovative ways of thinking in medicine will be politically neutral. As Nicolo Machiavelli put it in 1505: '...it ought to be remembered that there is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things. Because

the innovator has for enemies all those who have done well under the old conditions, and lukewarm defenders in those who may do well under the new.’ ”

### **You're now aged 70 and “Retired”, so why not give up?**

Having got so far it seems a pity to stop;

although there are many occasions when I feel that human nature is such that we will never, ever, be able to cope with using computers cost-effectively and rationally in shared hospital/community medical care. Certainly, I see no sign elsewhere of any rationality, having heard of a Birmingham hospital which has recently found out that it has over 250 databases all different, unconnected, and for all practical purposes un-connectable.

I have also some highly valued supporters whose opinion I value and who encourage me to keep going.

### **Why is progress so slow?**

Because that is the nature of computing. As so well said by G.R. Sampson in his website [Whistleblowing for Health](#):

“In the world of informatics, authority is impotent. Bring as much pressure as you like to bear on a flawed software system, and what you get will be a worse-flawed system. (That is one reason why we insist that computing students learn to program. Many of them will go into jobs where they never write a line of code; but anyone working in our industry needs a feeling for the intractable nature of the industry’s basic resource, and only personal experience can create that awareness.)”

For example it took hours and hours of concentration just to add the dotted line across the page between every one of the 800 logical priority questions on 250 pages of text and then to move the WHEN text from after the question to it's more logical place before the question. Twice it took Helga all night to arrange for each logical priority question to a link to the appropriate place in the [discussion forum](#).

### **Lots of people seem to have made millions out of unique IT ideas, why not the EEPD?**

Because of the basic principle that logical and chronologically arranged, flow-patterned questions and all answer options will only be useful if standardised;

And will only become universally standardised if they are open-source and cost-free to all potential users.

Just as Wikipedia has given fame but no fortune to Jimmy Wales so hopefully the EEPD will be known for its unique humanitarian value not for the non-existent fortune, which, by its very nature, it cannot make for its creators.

### **What is your biggest problem?**

How to move the EEPD from its present unfunded dream of one individual into the kind of long term Wikipedia-like organisation which will outlive its creator.

### **How can I get involved and contribute to EEPD?**

It's easy to start by joining and contributing to our [EEPDTalk discussion forum](#).

## 2. EEPD - Specifics

### **Why this obsession with "Standardisation" of flow-patterned, questions and all allowable answer options?**

Because it will be many years, if ever, before computers can cost-effectively cope with completely free text. If the data collected electronically is to be used as anything other than a different and often inaccessible way to use electronic paper then "free text" can only be allowable within separate answer options e.g. "Other (free text)" or "Unknown (free text)" or "Previous Pregnancy Medical Problems (free text)". This is more fully explained in the article "[Defining the right Answer Options](#)"

### **What is "Logical Priority" and why is it so important?**