Coordinating Ballot Submissions

Voting rights in HL7 exist for individuals, HL7 organizational members and HL7 affiliates. Individual voting is straightforward. Each individual member is responsible for registering themselves and then for submitting their votes, reviewing the disposition of their comments and deciding whether or not to withdraw them.

However, for organization and affiliate members, there are a limited number of "voting" members who may need to represent the opinions and feedback of other members of their organization or affiliate. This page describes approaches for managing this process using the Jira ballot environment.

Basic principles

HL7 is bound by ANSI rules when conducting ballots. The key concept that is most relevant here is that each voter must manage their own vote. They are responsible for the decision of how to vote and are also responsible for the decision of whether to retract or withdraw their vote. As such, each voter must have their own set of login credentials to the HL7 Jira site and is expected to manage their own account.

Coordinating votes

While each voter is responsible for managing their own vote, it is common for some affiliates and organizations to submit comments "as a group". In this scenario, all voters choose to vote the same way and reference the same set of comments. This is legitimate behavior for voters whether part of an organization or affiliate or not. Any group of voters can choose to coordinate and submit the same vote on the same set comments if they wish. However, Jira is set up to somewhat simplify this process for organizational and affiliate members:

1. All Specification Feedback SHOULD be submitted by the user who actually has the comment. In the past, comments could only be submitted by registered balloters. However, with Jira, anyone with an email address is free to register and submit comments. As such there is no barrier to anyone who wishes to submit comments, whether they're a registered voter or not.
   a. It is important that the person who posts a ballot item is the person who actually has the comment because they will be the one best positioned to answer any questions the work group has and to evaluate the work group's proposed resolution. By submitting the comment, the user with the issue will automatically receive updates when comments are made and resolutions are proposed and can thus be part of the conversation.
   b. The ballot tooling makes no provision for submitting comments "on behalf of" another user. Any user who submits a comment is expected to be able to explain, respond to questions about and evaluate the resolution of whatever comments they submit.
2. Only a voter can remove or edit the content of their submission. (Editing can only be done prior to the issue being triaged. Closing can only be done prior to resolution.) There is no mechanism for an organization or affiliate to edit the comments submitted by those in their organization, though anyone is free to add comments to an issue. Voting members can choose to not attach votes to all comments submitted by members of their organization or affiliate if a decision is made that a particular comment is inconsistent with organizational/affiliate policy.
3. Voters are free to vote on Specification Feedback comments submitted by themselves or any other commenter. Voters can search for comments submitted by user name and can Coordinating Ballot Submissions#Bulk Vote on the items found. Submitting votes for all commenters from a particular organization simply requires knowledge of the names of all relevant voters. It is the responsibility of an affiliate or organization to manage this process. Typically this occurs by soliciting participants from within the organization or affiliate to identify themselves. Anyone who fails to do so won't gain the benefit of the affiliate/organizational vote.
4. To eliminate the need for all voters to select the same set of issues and submit their vote, the ballot tooling does support a mechanism to allow voters to vote "the same as" another voter. This feature is only available when a voter's Ballot Submission is associated with an organizational or affiliate vote. It is available provided the following conditions are met:
   a. Both the base voter and the voter who wants to vote "the same as" must be registered for the ballot and associated with the same organization or affiliate for the purposes of that ballot
   b. The base voter must have voted - I.e. their Ballot Submission must have a vote other than No Vote
   c. The voter who wants to vote "the same as" cannot have any vote comments associated with the ballot
5. If a voter chooses to link their vote to the vote of another voter, at the time the ballot closes, their vote will be set to the same value as the “vote same as” ballot and their Ballot Submission will be linked to the same Ballot Submissions with the same ballot weight.

Note that work groups will be performing reconciliation of comments, even while a ballot is open. Furthermore, voting is only possible on unreconciled comments. As a result, if you want a comment to be weighted with a vote, it’s important to vote on the comment soon after it has been recorded. If not, the work group might already have voted on the comment and marked it as resolved. If the resolution is agreeable, this isn't a problem. If the resolution is not agreeable, then submit a new issue referencing the original issue, noting the reason the resolution is not considered acceptable and vote on that instead.

Bulk submissions

Jira allows ballot submissions to be submitted via a spreadsheet. Voters who are voting as organizational or affiliate members can submit spreadsheets containing comments submitted by other individuals than themselves, though all individuals listed must have Jira accounts. However, when submitting via a spreadsheet, the voter is responsible for managing the upload process. This can involve a considerable amount of clean-up to ensure that the spreadsheet is completed correctly and is able to be imported. Imports are performed using the Import ballot comments from a spreadsheet option on the HL7 Balloting Dashboard.

Finding relevant feedback items to vote on

Organizations may set up queries to find all Specification Feedback items submitted by users associated with their organization. To do this:

1. Select Issues, Search.
2. Using the drop-downs, filter the Project to the appropriate Specification Feedback project (e.g. "FHIR Specification Feedback" for a FHIR-associated ballot).

3. Filter the Status to "Submitted", "Triaged" and "Waiting for Input" (items that have already been resolved cannot be voted on).

4. Filter the Issue Type to "Change Request" if you're only interested in items that support negative votes, or "Change Request" plus "Question", "Comment" and "Technical Correction" for items that can be voted affirmative as well.

5. Use the More button to allow filtering on Specification and select the specification that is under ballot.

6. If appropriate for the ballot, use More filter to allow filtering on Related Artifact(s) and/or Related Page(s). (Use caution with these filters as it's possible to accidentally exclude ballot-relevant feedback items if you're not careful.)

7. To limit to comments submitted by specific individuals, use the More button to filter by Reporter and specify the user(s) whose comments you are interested in. Note that Jira does not track a user's organizational affiliation - you will need to enumerate the users whose comments are of interest.

8. If desired, click Save As to record the search for future. Saved queries can be found in the left-hand panel on the search screen under "Favorite Filters". You can also open an existing saved search and use Save As to make a copy of it with changed criteria.

**Bulk voting**

Once all open comments submitted by a balloter that are related to a ballot, registered voters can use the "bulk change" process to submit votes on multiple items at the same time. The steps to do this are as follows:

1. Filter to the list of relevant feedback items using the "Issues", "Search" option.
2. Click on Tools, Bulk Change - all [x] issues.
3. Use the checkbox at the top to "select all" or select/deselect items as appropriate to choose the items on which you wish to vote, then hit Next. (Note that if you want to vote some comments as negative and others as affirmative you'll have to go through the process twice - once for those items you want to vote negative, then one for those you want to vote affirmative.)
5. Choose either Vote Negative or Vote Affirmative and press Next. If neither option appears then none of the selected items are currently eligible for vote under one of the open ballots for which the current user is a registered voter.
6. You will need to select the relevant ballot from the drop-down of available ballots.

Note that there are limits to bulk voting:

- Voting will only work on items that fall within the scope of one of the open ballots during the period in which the ballot is open.
- The bulk change process will require the selection of a single ballot, so each ballot will need to be voted upon separately. Items that are not eligible for the selected ballot will result in an error and will not have a vote submitted.
- Votes cannot be submitted on items that have been already voted on by the voter. One feedback item can only be associated with a single ballot submission per voter.
- Negative votes can only be submitted against "change proposals". Votes submitted against technical corrections, questions and comments are constrained to only be affirmative.

**Reconciliation and Resolution**

Once the ballot is closed, vote comments are propagated to all "same as" voters. From that point forward, each voter is responsible for the retraction/withdrawal of their own votes. Voters will receive notifications when other voters who have voted on the same comment have retracted or withdrawn, but the retraction or withdrawal of a comment by an original voter will not affect the status of a vote by a "same as" voter.