Errata and 'technical corrections'

Introduction:

Despite best efforts, standards developers make mistakes. (insert 'GASP' here).

One would think that the obvious solution is to fix them before anyone else notices.

But in the standards world that can be complicated.

If for example:

- A conformance statement was developed that states "The length of a standard foot SHALL be 21 inches."
- If the obvious typographic error was discovered before publishing a technical correction which alters the document to convey the original intentions could be issued.
  * "The length of a standard foot SHALL be 12 (twelve) inches."
- However, if publication had already occurred when the error was discovered the industry would have faced a real challenge.
  * Some manufacturers would have begun to use the twenty-one inch measurement.
  * At this point fixing the error can be an onerous process, not to mention a loss of credibility.

Farfetched you say . . everyone knows the length of a foot. It is a standard. More about that later.

What do you do when a specification is broken as published (BAP)?

The HL7 Technical Steering Committee (TSC) adopted definitions based upon recommendations by the HL7 Architecture Review Board (ARB) and the HL7 Standards Governance Board (SGB):

- An HL7 errata is a package of documents that conveys the application of a technical correction to one or more published versions of a standard.
- A technical correction is a change that alters a document so that it says what the Work Group intended to say.
- The definition addresses four cases:
  - Non-substantive technical corrections to a balloted specification published as Normative
  - Substantive technical corrections to a balloted specification published as Normative
  - Changes to a balloted specification published as STU
  - Changes to a balloted specification published as Informative

The full text can be found at Definition: Errata, Technical Correction.

Back to that 'everyone knows the length of a foot'

The American Softwood Lumber PS 20-20 *** dictates the a lumber product "shall be double-end-trimmed to a length that is not less than the nominal length and that is not more than 76 mm (3 inches) in excess of the nominal length.

Which makes a one-foot board anywhere from twelve (12) to fifteen (15) inches.

* 2020-02-24 TSC Agenda/Minutes
**Standards Governance Board Definitions: Substantive change
*** American Softwood Lumber Voluntary Product Standard PS 20-20