JOHNS HOPKINS
U N I V E R S I T Y

Center for Clinical Trials

Department of Biostatistics   *Department of Medicine*
Department of Epidemiology   *Department of Ophthalmology*
Department of International Health   *Oncology Center*

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Memorandum

To: Center personnel

Fr: Curtis Meinert

Re: Dating

This is not about what you think, but something as important to people in data centers - how study forms and documents are dated.

The usual convention is to represent dates numerically. Here, for example, September 10th, 2016 is denoted by 9/10/2016. But in Europe and many other parts of the world the same date is represented by 10/9/2016. Obviously, if you are the business of data collection, it is not wise to use a format where one has to know where the numbers were written to correctly deduce the date.

Data centers avoid the potential for confusion by requiring clinic personnel to date data collection forms using dd mmm yr formats so 9/10/2016 here and 10/9/2016 in Europe becomes 10 Sep 2016 in both places.

So, if that format is a good idea for data collection, why don't we use it for dating everything we produce? If it is important to have data forms unambiguously dated is it not just as important to do the same for everything else we produce in places like this?

Of course.

So what holds us back? Because old habits are hard to break. I know because it took years to completely break the d/m/yr habit.

If you want to improve your dating you have to start by changing defaults on your word processing packages. Do it now! Get with it and start using a dating system that means the same thing any place in the world.

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