

# Obituary for Peter Pharow

Bernd Blobel<sup>1</sup>

This obituary is dedicated to acknowledging and honoring our unforgettable friend and colleague Peter Pharow, Co-Chair of the EFMI WG Cards and its successor EFMI WG Personal Portable Devices (PPD), active member of different other EFMI WGs, and heavily engaged in the pHHealth community and its EFMI-supported pHHealth conference series, who suddenly and unexpectedly passed away on 4 July 2020. Peter Pharow was an extraordinary personality, who decisively influenced the development and improvement of the health informatics and pHHealth domains.

Starting from an educational background in Cybernetics and Automation received at the Technical University Ilmenau and early employments in companies with the focus on safety and security, Peter entered the healthcare arena when he joined my department Medical Informatics at the Medical Faculty of the Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg in 1995. Here, he was engaged in several projects within the European Commissions' 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programmes, focusing on mechanisms, technologies and infrastructures for security in health information systems, such as DIABCARD or TrustHealth, confronting him among others with cards as security tokens, but also with privacy concerns. This engagement strongly benefited from Peter's technical competence, but also from his extraordinary organizational and communications talents, making him indispensable when administering projects or organizing scientific and other events. As he had always been a trustworthy, competent and reliable personality and valued friend, I was happy about Peter's decision to join me in the move from Magdeburg to the Fraunhofer Institute for Integrated Circuits in Erlangen, where I launched the Health Telematics Group, and thereafter to the Medical Faculty of the University of Regensburg, where I launched the German National eHealth Competence Center (eHCC). In all those institutions, Peter's role was far more than that of my right-hand man. Many achievements would not have been possible without his invaluable support. When the eHCC came to an end with my retirement, he moved to the Fraunhofer-Institute for Digital Media Technology (IDMT) in Ilmenau. As before, also here he was very successful in the acquisition of national and international projects, first continuing the engagement in the health area, followed by a move to digital media in education and training, including adaptive systems, machine learning, etc. All this engagement resulted in a significant number of acknowledged papers and a series of edited books.

The projects work was always accompanied by engagements in national and international bodies such as our scientific associations GMDS (national), EFMI (international) or the German Standards Institute DIN, but also the German Association for Security and Privacy (GDD), where he brought me in. After engaging as member in the Security WGs of GMDS (later also acting as my Co-chair), EFMI and IMIA, together with other international experts, he launched and co-chaired the EFMI Cards WG, which

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later became the EFMI WG Personal Portable Devices (PPD). All those WGs have been Sponsors of the pHealth Conferences all time.

Peter's energy was amazing, lasting until a few days before he passed away. Peter was always a trustworthy, competent and structured personality and reliable friend. It has been indeed an honor to have been counted to his friends. The EFMI and the pHealth community will always thankfully remember Peter Pharow with affection and respect.