

HITLAB



Scaling Healthcare Through Intelligent Interoperability with HiXConnect

AN EVALUATION BY HITLAB

March, 2026



This report presents HITLAB's evaluation of HiXConnect, an interoperability platform that enables seamless data integration, real-time monitoring, and governed data exchange to support scalable, transparent, and data-driven healthcare collaboration.

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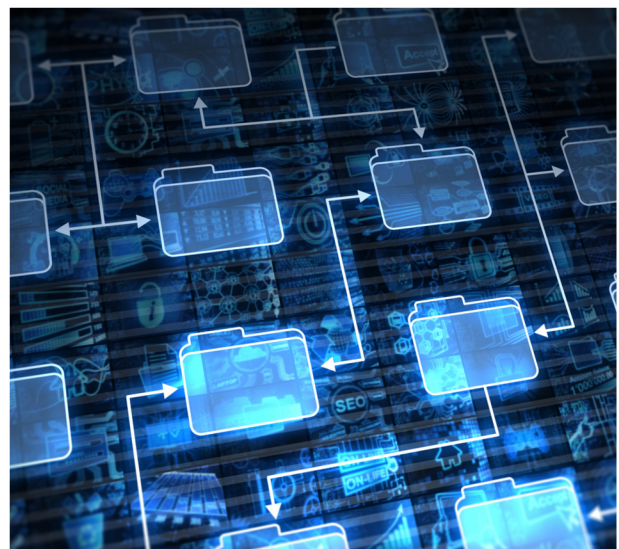
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Executive Summary

This whitepaper presents HITLAB’s heuristic evaluation of HiXConnect, an enterprise interoperability platform designed to streamline healthcare data integration and enable scalable, governed data exchange across complex ecosystems. HiXConnect addresses persistent interoperability challenges by transforming fragmented data pipelines into structured, configurable workflows that support real-time monitoring, analytics, and operational transparency.

Using Jakob Nielsen’s Usability Heuristics for User Interface Design, HITLAB conducted a comprehensive review of the platform’s workflows, navigation structure, and usability across enterprise interoperability scenarios. This evaluation assessed how effectively HiXConnect supports the needs of key stakeholders—including health system IT leaders, payer interoperability teams, public health data exchange professionals, and clinical research data partners.



Findings indicate that HiXConnect demonstrates strong foundational usability with clear strengths in modular architecture, guided integration workflows, and real-time monitoring capabilities. The platform’s structured design enables users to configure integrations, monitor system performance, and analyze data flows through centralized dashboards that align with real-world interoperability operations. The HITLAB evaluation identified opportunities to further enhance the user experience through improvements in onboarding support, visualization clarity, navigation continuity, and governance transparency.

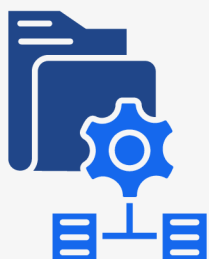
Overall, HiXConnect demonstrates strong adherence to user-centered design principles and represents a scalable infrastructure for enterprise interoperability. HITLAB’s findings provide a roadmap for continued refinement as the platform evolves to support next-generation healthcare data exchange, analytics readiness, and cross-sector collaboration.

Introduction

Why Does Interoperability Still Lag in Modern Healthcare?

Healthcare systems worldwide have rapidly digitized, yet true interoperability remains elusive. Despite widespread adoption of electronic health records and emerging standards such as FHIR, healthcare data continues to exist in fragmented silos across providers, payers, and digital platforms. This fragmentation is not solely a technical challenge; it reflects deeper issues spanning governance, incentives, usability, and ecosystem coordination. Evidence from interoperability research consistently shows that the gap between data availability and data usability remains a major barrier to innovation, care coordination, and AI readiness. The following analysis synthesizes insights from user research, ecosystem discussions, and heuristic evaluation to outline the key structural challenges limiting scalable health data exchange and their downstream consequences.

Interoperability Silos and Slow Integrations



- **The Problem:** Fragmented data across EHRs and HIEs persists despite standards like FHIR, as technical connectivity often fails to enable meaningful longitudinal exchange (Adler-Milstein et al., 2017; Mandel et al., 2016).
- **The Consequence:** This results in incomplete patient records, forcing clinicians to make decisions based on partial information (National Library of Medicine, 2019), which consequently increases clinical risk and undermines continuity of care.

Slow Integrations



- **The Problem:** Healthcare integrations remain slow because custom connections still require months of engineering and validation (Adler-Milstein & Pfeifer, 2017).
- **The Consequence:** The prolonged timelines delay deployments, increase costs, and hinder innovation scaling (McKinsey & Company, 2025).

Introduction

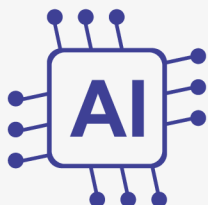
Why Does Interoperability Still Lag in Modern Healthcare?

Unclear Value Ownership



- **The Problem:** Ambiguity around who pays versus who benefits reflects misaligned interoperability incentives across stakeholders (McKinsey & Company, 2025).
- **The Consequence:** This misalignment slows adoption as organizations hesitate without clear ROI pathways (Katz et al., 2021). As a result, otherwise viable platforms struggle to reach scale.

AI Readiness Constraints



- **The Problem:** AI deployment is constrained by fragmented and non-standardized datasets (National Library of Medicine, 2019).
- **The Consequence:** Without integrated data ecosystems, models struggle with accuracy and scalability. This slows the translation of AI from pilots to clinical impact.

Trust and Governance Barriers



- **The Problem:** Reluctance to share sensitive data stems from unclear governance and stewardship models (Katz et al., 2021).
- **The Consequence:** This restricts collaboration and reduces data liquidity across ecosystems (WHO, 2021). Ultimately, trust deficits stall multi-institutional innovation.

Introduction

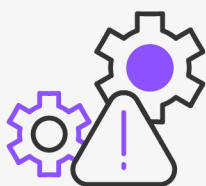
Why Does Interoperability Still Lag in Modern Healthcare?

Public Health Limitations



- **The Problem:** Weak interoperability impairs real-time surveillance and reporting (WHO, 2021).
- **The Consequence:** This reduces responsiveness during population health crises. Delayed data flows weaken preparedness and response effectiveness.

Semantic Interoperability Gaps and Operational Inefficiencies



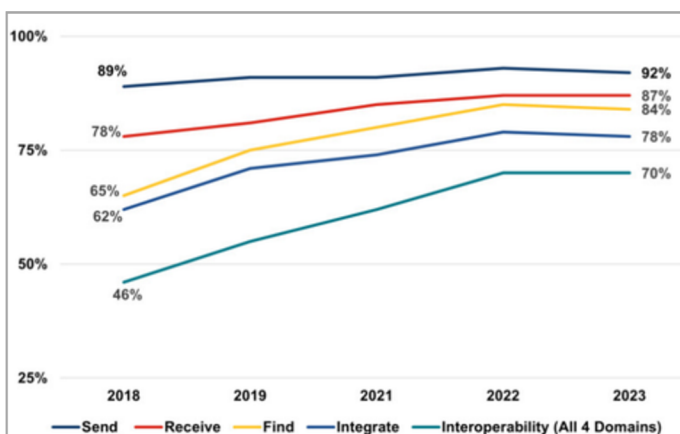
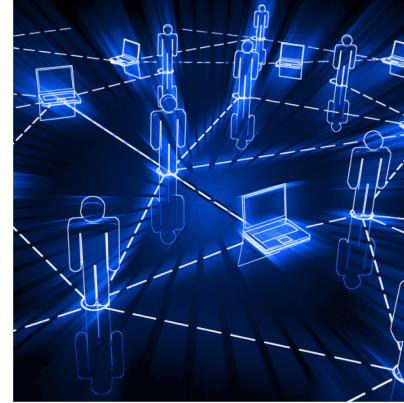
- **The Problem:** Transport standards alone cannot ensure semantic alignment across systems (Mandel et al., 2016). Disconnected systems hinder care coordination and transitions (WHO, 2021).
- **The Consequence:** This leads to inconsistent data quality and limited analytics readiness. Poor semantic alignment reduces the reliability of downstream insights. This fragmentation drives redundant testing and higher operational costs (McKinsey, 2025). Inefficiencies compound across care pathways, inflating system burden.

HiXConnect addresses systemic interoperability barriers by transforming integration from a complex engineering effort into a scalable platform capability. Through UI-driven integrations, modular connectivity, and standardized data exchange, it reduces technical friction and accelerates ecosystem participation.

The Great Data Disconnect

Navigating the 2026 Regulatory Surge

The U.S. healthcare system has reached a critical **"Data Paradox."** While nearly all hospitals have digitized their records, the ability to move that data meaningfully between entities remains the industry's most significant hurdle. As of early 2026, the focus has shifted from simple connectivity to **"Interoperability at Scale"** and intelligent automation. In response to these issues, several transformative developments have emerged in the 2025–2026 cycle.



Percent of U.S. Non-Federal Acute Care Hospitals Engaged in Interoperable Exchange of Electronic Health Information: 2018-2023 (Gabriel et al. 2024)

- **70%** of U.S. non-federal acute care hospitals engaged in interoperable exchange (send, find, receive, integrate) in 2023.
- Routine **interoperability rose 54% since 2018, yet only 43% engage routinely and 27% occasionally.**
- **Lower-resourced hospitals** (small, rural, critical access, independent) participate less frequently.
- **71% have access to external clinical data, but only 42% of clinicians routinely use it.**

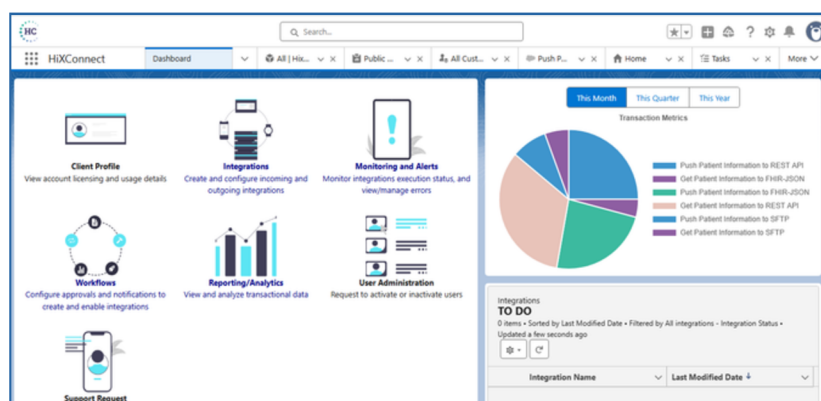
Recent Developments: The Shift to Intelligent Exchange

- **CMS Rule CMS-0057-F:** From Jan 2026, Medicare Advantage, Medicaid, and ACA plans must use FHIR APIs for response times to prior authorizations: 7 days (standard) and 72 hours (urgent) (CMS, 2025).
- **AI Semantic Mapping:** AI pipelines now auto-convert non-standard data into FHIR, normalizing unstructured notes with ~95% accuracy (Osamika et al., 2025).
- **Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement (TEFCA) Rollout:** Nationwide exchange via Qualified Health Information Networks (QHINs) is enabling bidirectional data sharing, creating a true “network of networks.”

HiXConnect Platform

Secure, Streamlined and Integrated Health Data for Smarter Decisions

HiXConnect is a technically mature enterprise interoperability platform with strong design fundamentals and clear alignment with healthcare data exchange needs. It enables healthcare organizations to unlock value from connected data through secure, validated, and transparent integrations.



- **Enterprise Interoperability Orchestration**
 - HiXConnect provides a structured orchestration layer that connects EHRs, HIEs, registries, and APIs into a unified ecosystem.
 - It helps reduce data silos and fragmentation while supporting interoperability across payer, provider, public health, and research environments.
- **Governance & Compliance Enablement**
 - The platform embeds validation controls and PHI de-identification features to strengthen data governance.
 - Audit-ready workflows and adherence to standards like FHIR, REST, and SFTP support regulatory compliance and secure data exchange.
- **Operational Efficiency**
 - HiXConnect improves operational workflows through real-time visibility into integration performance and reduced manual reconciliation.
 - Its scalable, low-code configuration model enables faster deployment with built-in preview and validation before activation.
- **Decision Support Infrastructure**
 - The platform centralizes analytics and reporting to enhance transparency across integrations.
 - By improving visibility into data performance and completeness, it supports stronger oversight and more informed decision-making.

Heuristic Evaluation

Conducted by HITLAB

METHODOLOGY

HITLAB conducted a heuristic evaluation of the HiXConnect platform by applying structured usability inspection methods to assess the interface design, workflow architecture, and analytical functionality. The evaluation examined how effectively the platform supports enterprise interoperability workflows, integration monitoring, and governed data exchange, while identifying areas where usability improvements could strengthen operational clarity and user experience.

The assessment was guided by Jakob Nielsen’s Ten Usability Heuristics, a globally recognized framework for evaluating interface design. Each heuristic principle—visibility of system status; match between system and the real world; user control and freedom; consistency and standards; error prevention; recognition rather than recall; flexibility and efficiency of use; aesthetic and minimalist design; help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors; and help and documentation—was systematically applied to identify strengths and opportunities for refinement.

Test scenarios simulated real-world interoperability operations such as configuring data integrations, validating data mappings, monitoring transaction flows, and reviewing analytics outputs to assess how effectively the platform supports secure, scalable, and transparent healthcare data exchange across connected systems. The findings should be interpreted within the context of methodological, scope, and testing environment limitations.



Personas

The heuristic evaluation focused on how well HiXConnect supports enterprise interoperability, real-time integration monitoring, and governed data exchange while enabling scalable workflows, transparent analytics, and seamless coordination across complex healthcare data ecosystems.

Heuristic Evaluation

Conducted by HITLAB

Evaluation Persona 1

45-year-old Healthcare IT leader



Daniel Brooks

Occupation: Director of Health IT Integration

Age: 45 years



In a complex healthcare environment, my priority is ensuring secure, reliable data exchange without disrupting clinical operations. I need integrations that are scalable, compliant, and easy to manage.



Background <p>Daniel leads interoperability initiatives across hospitals & outpatient centers in the US, overseeing integrations between EHRs, HIEs, registries, analytics platforms & CRM systems. He collaborates with clinical & compliance teams & prefers scalable, configurable solutions that reduce custom development.</p>	Goals <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Standardize data exchange across integrated systems.• Ensure compliance with U.S. healthcare data regulations.• Enable real-time & scheduled integrations.• Reduce operational risk associated with interface failures.	Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Managing integrations across multiple vendors and legacy systems.• Addressing inconsistent data formats & quality gaps.• Maintaining visibility into integration performance.• Ensuring HIPAA-compliant handling of PHI.
Motivations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduced downtime & operational risk.• Stronger governance controls & compliance.• Real-time, reliable data exchange.• Scalable solutions with less IT burden.	Frustrations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disconnected systems & failed interfaces.• Heavy reliance on custom coding & inconsistent data formats.• Compliance pressure around PHI.• Limited visibility into integration issues.	Needs <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Secure orchestration layer across systems.• No-code configuration & normalization tools.• Preview & testing before activation with flexible execution modes (one-time, scheduled, real-time).

Heuristic Evaluation

Conducted by HITLAB

Evaluation Persona 2

46-year-old Interoperability Director across payer-provider

Laura Mitchell



Occupation: Director of Interoperability

Age: 46 years



“Interoperability isn’t optional anymore—it’s a regulatory requirement and a care coordination opportunity. It’s also key to reducing friction between payers and providers.”



<p>Background</p> <p>Laura leads interoperability across payer-provider networks. She oversees claims, prior authorization, care management, & quality data exchange while coordinating with providers & regulatory teams and understands that interoperability is both a regulatory requirement & a pathway to better care coordination.</p>	<p>Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet CMS interoperability mandates. • Improve payer-provider data exchange. • Enable value-based care coordination. • Reduce administrative overhead. 	<p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex provider integration landscape. • Rapidly evolving regulations. • Limited real-time data access. • Scaling integrations across networks.
<p>Motivations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory compliance. • Better member outcomes. • Operational efficiency. • Competitive differentiation. 	<p>Frustrations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manual reconciliation workflows. • Fragmented provider connectivity. • Delays in data availability. • Compliance pressure. 	<p>Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure payer-provider data exchange layer. • Standardized APIs and normalization. • Real-time and batch integrations. • Governance and audit controls.

Heuristic Evaluation

Conducted by HITLAB

Evaluation Persona 3

46-year-old Public Health Data Exchange Lead



Karen Alvarez

Occupation: Public Health Data Exchange Lead

Age: 46 years



Timely data exchange is essential for surveillance and population health decisions. Without reliable data flow, public health response is always reactive instead of proactive.



Background

Karen oversees statewide data exchange across hospitals, labs, HIEs, and federal agencies. She focuses on registries, surveillance systems, and emergency reporting infrastructure; and leads statewide public health data exchange across hospitals, labs, and government agencies.

Goals

- Enable real-time public health reporting.
- Standardize statewide data exchange.
- Improve data completeness and quality.
- Strengthen emergency readiness.

Challenges

- Fragmented reporting standards.
- Delayed data submissions.
- Resource constraints.
- Limited modernization budgets.

Motivations

- Faster public health insights.
- Reliable surveillance data.
- Stronger population health outcomes.
- Scalable digital infrastructure.

Frustrations

- Inconsistent data formats.
- Low data completeness.
- Manual reporting workflows.
- Limited interoperability infrastructure.

Needs

- Standardized data ingestion layer.
- Data normalization and validation.
- Real-time reporting pipelines.
- Cross-agency interoperability tools.

Heuristic Evaluation

Conducted by HITLAB

Evaluation Persona 4

43-year-old Clinical Research & Data Partnerships Lead

Dr. Ethan Clarke

Occupation: Clinical Research Data Partnerships Lead

Age: 43 years



Access to reliable, real-world data determines how quickly we can generate meaningful evidence. The right data infrastructure can accelerate both trials and regulatory readiness.



Background

Dr. Ethan leads real-world evidence and clinical data partnerships, building secure, compliant data pipelines with providers and research partners. In a CRO-aligned role, he also oversees clinical trial data strategy and ensures high-quality data flow across sites, vendors, and regulatory stakeholders.

Goals

- Build scalable real-world data and clinical trial pipelines.
- Accelerate study timelines and evidence generation.
- Ensure regulatory-ready data quality.
- Improve standardization across research partners.

Challenges

- Fragmented data access across providers.
- Long integration cycles with research partners.
- Variability in site-level data quality.
- Complex compliance and governance controls.

Motivations

- Faster clinical development timelines.
- Higher-quality real-world evidence.
- Stronger research partnerships.
- Competitive R&D advantage.

Frustrations

- Slow onboarding of new data partners.
- Manual data harmonization efforts.
- Limited interoperability standards across research networks.
- Delays in trial readiness due to data infrastructure gaps.

Needs

- Secure orchestration layer for research data exchange.
- Data normalization and de-identification tools.
- Flexible integrations across trial sites and systems.
- Audit-ready compliance and governance controls.

Heuristic Evaluation

Conducted by HITLAB



Findings

The HiXConnect platform demonstrates a robust foundational design with consistently positive performance across key usability dimensions. The platform’s modular architecture supports scalable integrations and enables users to manage diverse healthcare datasets within a unified analytical environment.

The evaluation also identified targeted opportunities to improve system feedback, visualization clarity, and governance transparency. Enhancements in onboarding support, error prevention, and granular access controls will help reduce cognitive load and strengthen trust in high-impact workflows. Addressing these refinements will further elevate usability maturity as the platform scales across research, public health, and enterprise deployments.

Heuristic Ratings

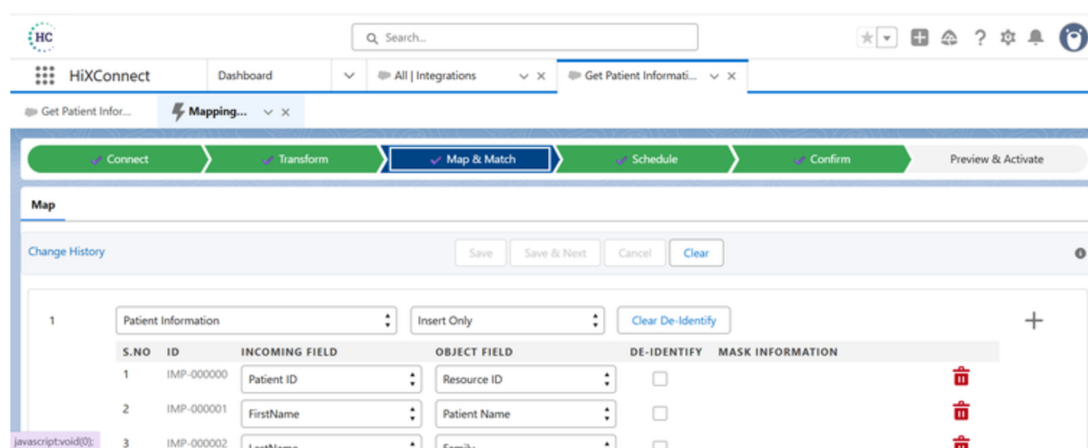
	Scale	1	2	3	4	5
Visibility of system status				4		
Match between system and the real world			4			
User control and freedom			3			
Consistency and standards			4			
Error prevention			3			
Recognition rather than recall			4			
Flexibility and efficiency of use			4			
Aesthetic and minimalist design						5
Help users recognize, diagnose, recover from errors			4			
Help and documentation			4			

HiXConnect Platform

Secure, Streamlined and Integrated Health Data for Smarter Decisions

HiXConnect is addressing targeted UX refinements, particularly in governance clarity, onboarding, and data interpretability, will elevate it from strong usability to market-leading interoperability infrastructure.

HiXConnect offers a structured interoperability architecture designed to streamline healthcare data exchange across complex ecosystems. Its feature set emphasizes guided integrations, real-time monitoring, and configurable workflows for enterprise-scale deployments.



Key features

- **Guided Integration Setup:** Provides step-by-step connectivity configuration with built-in validation before activation.
- **Advanced Data Mapping:** Supports field-level mapping with structured insert and update transformation logic.
- **Data Quality Layer:** Includes a transform layer for validation, filtering, and normalization of incoming data.
- **Flexible Execution Modes:** Enables one-time, scheduled, and real-time integration workflows.
- **Real-Time Monitoring Dashboard:** Provides live visibility into integration performance and system status.
- **Platform Architecture:** Thoughtfully designed and streamlined for speed and accuracy. Users can clearly view each step of the connection, easily identify errors, and perform prompt troubleshooting. This enables rapid, high-quality data transformation, ultimately driving more effective outcomes.

HiXConnect Platform

Secure, Streamlined and Integrated Health Data for Smarter Decisions

Key features

- **Modular Dashboard Layout:** Features a tile-based interface organizing integrations, monitoring, and reporting in one view.
- **Transaction-Level Insights:** Enables drill-down analysis of individual transactions for detailed troubleshooting.
- **Inline Error Feedback:** Displays real-time alerts and validation messages within workflows.
- **Pre-Activation Testing:** Supports integration testing and verification before deployment.
- **Unified Analytics:** Consolidates reporting into a centralized analytics and insights layer.
- **Time-Based Filtering:** Allows users to analyze performance using month, quarter, and year filters.
- **Multiple Data Views:** Supports table, Kanban, and split views for flexible workflow visualization.
- **Structured Workflow Design:** Uses step-based integration flows to guide users through complex processes.
- **Visual Transaction Metrics:** Displays performance data through interactive dashboard visualizations.
- **Printable Reports:** Provides exportable and print-friendly reporting views for operational sharing.
- **Longitudinal Analytics Roadmap:** Plans to support deeper, trend-based insights across the healthcare ecosystem.



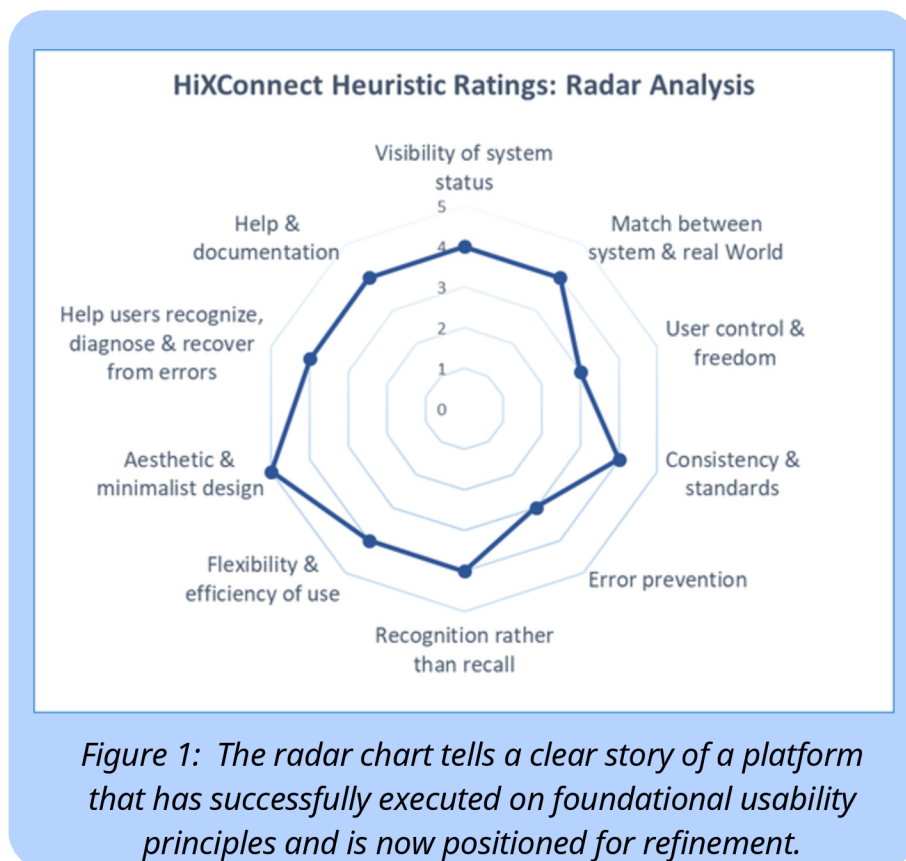
HiXConnect delivers a comprehensive, enterprise-grade feature set that combines structured interoperability, real-time visibility, and scalable workflow orchestration in a unified platform.

Heuristic Evaluation

Conducted by HITLAB

Strengths Identified

- **HiXConnect** demonstrates strong visual design through a clean blue-white professional theme and a **card-based modular layout**. The interface maintains a **clear visual hierarchy with balanced spacing and minimal clutter**, enhancing usability.
- It supports structured, step-based workflows that guide users through complex integration processes. The dashboard shows segmented task categories, providing **flexibility in navigating and managing tasks**.



- It incorporates **validation checks during integration setup to reduce configuration errors**. Inline duplicate detection and structured workflows help **prevent common mistakes**. The transform layer's data quality controls further strengthen **upstream error prevention**.

Heuristic Evaluation

Conducted by HITLAB

Strengths Identified

- The platform follows a **standardized design system with uniform layout and navigation patterns across modules**. **Visual hierarchy and structured configuration flows** remain consistent throughout the interface. Its alignment with familiar enterprise UI conventions enhances predictability.
- HiXConnect aligns closely with **real-world healthcare workflows** using familiar terminology such as FHIR, APIs, and SFTP. **Logical workflow segmentation and time-based reporting** mirror operational practices in healthcare environments.



- The interface **minimizes cognitive load through clearly labeled modules** and visible **step-based integration flows**. Segmented task lists and structured configuration steps support intuitive navigation and task recognition.
- The platform supports multiple workflow views, including table, Kanban, and split formats. Sortable integration lists, unified analytics, and **modular navigation improve efficiency** for both new and experienced users.
- The system provides clear **failure alerts within workflows** to help users quickly identify and address issues.

Heuristic Evaluation

Conducted by HITLAB



Persona-to-Findings Mapping

Daniel Brooks — Director of Health IT Integration (Provider)

Relevant Findings: Locked filters and fixed chart date ranges limit integration analysis; lack of Restore Tabs disrupts debugging; input validation gaps allow misconfigurations; and limited onboarding with overly technical errors hinders troubleshooting.

Implication: Operational friction in complex technical workflows may slow issue resolution and increase integration overhead.

Laura Mitchell — Director of Interoperability (Payer)

Relevant Findings: Single-login visibility across integrations raises access governance concerns; unclear de-identification onboarding may create compliance uncertainty; and minor control inconsistencies reduce predictability across modules.

Implication: Governance confidence risk — especially relevant in payer environments with regulatory scrutiny and cross-entity data sharing.

Karen Alvarez — Public Health Data Exchange Lead

Relevant Findings: Ambiguous dashboard labeling and missing legends complicate interpretation of surveillance metrics; limited date filtering and lack of validation feedback hinder trend analysis; and navigation inefficiencies increase friction during cross-module monitoring.

Implication: Reduced agility in time-sensitive public health analysis where rapid, clear interpretation of data is critical.

Dr. Ethan Clarke — Clinical Research Data Partnerships Lead

Relevant Findings: Missing error details, inconsistent validation feedback and redundant UI elements increase ambiguity and cognitive load during analytical workflows.

Implication: Lower analytical flexibility and potential delays in research data validation and partner reporting.

Heuristic Evaluation

Conducted by HITLAB

Opportunities for Improvement



HITLAB's evaluation identified several targeted refinements to further improve the user experience:

- **Robust Governance and Security Controls:** Introduce secondary authentication or granular permissions across integrations to improve governance and data protection.
- **Streamlined Interface Design:** Remove duplicate elements (e.g., multiple upload tabs, redundant edit icons) to simplify the interface and reduce cognitive load.
- **Seamless Navigation Continuity:** Introduce a persistent Home icon and "Restore Tabs" feature. Interruptions occurred in 4/6 scenarios, increasing cognitive load during cross-module navigation.
- **Reliable Input Validation and Error Feedback:** Apply consistent input validation and clear error messages (e.g., invalid date ranges) to prevent incorrect queries and user confusion.
- **Flexible Data Filtering Flexibility:** Enable flexible filters, including custom date ranges. Limited filtering affected all 5 reporting workflows, restricting trend analysis.
- **Enhance Platform Learnability:** Add onboarding walkthroughs, FAQs, and contextual tooltips for first-time users. Learnability issues appeared in 4/7 workflows, especially during setup, increasing configuration error risk.

Recommended Next Steps

- **Immediate Refinements (0–2 months):** Add onboarding walkthroughs, tooltips, and Home/Restore Tabs navigation. Remove redundant controls and implement stronger input validation with clear error messages.
- **User Experience Optimization (2–4 months):** Improve dashboards with clear labels and legends, add flexible filters (including custom date ranges), and provide guidance for workflows like de-identification.
- **Pilot Validation & Scaling (4–6 months):** Introduce secondary authentication or granular access controls, replace technical logs with plain-language, actionable error messages and clear visibility for fast error detection and efficient data transformation.

Conclusions

The heuristic evaluation conducted by HITLAB confirms that HiXConnect is a thoughtfully designed interoperability platform that transforms complex healthcare integrations into structured, manageable workflows. By combining guided configuration, real-time monitoring, and centralized analytics, the platform enables organizations to manage diverse healthcare data ecosystems with greater clarity and operational control.



HiXConnect demonstrates strong alignment with enterprise interoperability needs, supporting secure data exchange across providers, payers, public health agencies, and research networks. Its modular architecture and validation-driven integration workflows help reduce technical friction while improving visibility into data performance and system activity. While the platform shows clear strengths in usability, scalability, and enterprise readiness, targeted refinements can further elevate its impact.

HiXConnect transforms fragmented healthcare data into unified, actionable insights. It provides real-time integration visibility while maintaining governance and transparency. By enabling structured interoperability and informed decisions, HiXConnect supports scalable collaboration and stronger data-driven outcomes across healthcare ecosystems.

— Stan Kachnowski, Chair,
HITLAB

With healthcare systems increasingly relying on integrated data infrastructure for AI readiness, population health insights, and research collaboration, platforms like HiXConnect will play a key role in enabling scalable data exchange. With continued user-centered refinement, HiXConnect is well positioned to serve as a trusted interoperability backbone for modern healthcare ecosystems.

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HITLAB is a leading healthcare innovation lab dedicated to improving health outcomes worldwide. Through rigorous research, education, and collaboration, HITLAB identifies and supports the development of transformative health technologies.