Datavision™ – What do medical writers need to know?

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Abstract

Datavision™ is a publication planning software tool that is widely used across the healthcare industry to manage publication programmes. Medical writers are one of the key Datavision user groups, and need to know how to use the elements of the tool that are relevant to their tasks and responsibilities. Within Datavision, a medical writer's activities will be focused on the Workbench to manage their assigned projects; the Journals, and Congress database to identify potential targets for discussion with authors; and the Documents management area for managing project specific details, sending out drafts for review and approval, and collating comments and feedback received.

Keywords: Datavision, Publication planning, Software

What is Datavision™?

Datavision is a software tool for publication planning and management that is used by more than 50 pharmaceutical, biotechnology, and device companies worldwide. It provides global transparency and consistent management of their publication programmes and related projects, to help ensure compliant data disclosure. Given the widespread use of the system within the healthcare industry – there are currently 85 000 registered users – if you have not yet come across Datavision it is likely you will do so in the future.

Datavision is built around three workflows that encompass the overall publication planning process:

1. Planning (including needs assessment and budget approval)
2. Project Execution (GPP2 supported workflow templates)
3. Tracking and Reporting (global transparency and a metrics programme)

As with many software solutions, users will have different roles and responsibilities and will therefore access and use distinct areas of the software. The work of medical writers is centred on two core areas: (1) translation of information and data, both written and verbal, into an effective communication piece; and (2) project management to ensure timelines are met such that delivery of the project meets the expectations of the authors and the stakeholders. This article focuses on the second workflow – Project Execution – as this is where functions and processes most relevant to the work of medical writers are.

Who uses Datavision?

Datavision is used by various parties involved in publication planning and development, both internally within a company and externally among its collaborators, including:

- Publication managers
- Internal auditors
- Medical writers
- Project managers
- Authors (internal and external)
- Reviewers and approvers (including statisticians, medics, legal and intellectual property officials, and regulatory team members)
- Senior decision makers, e.g. medical directors, compliance leads

Some of these individuals (publication managers and project managers) as well as system administrators will access Datavision through the desktop application, which effectively serves as a publication plan or programme management interface, while others (authors, reviewers, and approvers) will access it through the web-based review portal. Senior management within a pharmaceutical or healthcare company, in addition to potentially being reviewers on some publications, may view metrics through an 'Executive Window' to enable them to evaluate their publication programmes in terms of compliance, financials, effectiveness, and

efficiency. Medical writers can access Datavision through either the desktop application or through a specialised web-based portal known as the 'Writers Workbench', depending on their clients' preferences for user functions and access rights (Figure 1).

Core aspects of Datavision for a medical writer

The complete functions of Datavision cover the wide range of roles outlined above, and include reports and charts that are often used to monitor the publication plan, and to organise individual document records according to key criteria such as congresses or clinical trials relating to the publication. However, the core tasks of medical writers involve individual publication projects and therefore require them only to access 4 of the 10 functional tabs within Datavision: Workbench, Journals, Congress, and Documents.

Workbench – for managing my projects

The Workbench tab of Datavision allows writers (and indeed all users assigned tasks for publications) to see all their current, upcoming, and/or overdue tasks and publication plan items, and to link directly to the relevant document record from the Workbench tab itself (see Figure 2). This functionality enables writers to manage their time and tasks effectively and efficiently. In addition, the Messages and Tasks sections of the Workbench will highlight any review or approval feedback on your assigned documents.

Because the Workbench feature extends to all individuals who are assigned document-related tasks, writers can use the Workbench to view the tasks assigned to others (including authors and reviewers), allowing teams to manage their overall workloads according to deadlines and priorities. Alongside the Workbench, the Datavision Chart View can allow a writer or team to visualise all the projects that comprise a publication plan and how these projects fit into the overall plan (Figure 3).

Finding journals and congresses

Datavision has a built-in Journals and Congress database that gives access to details of approximately 5000 journals and 3000 congresses. The details of these journals and congresses are maintained by a dedicated team that works with publishers and societies to ensure the information is as up-to-date and complete as possible. This database constitutes an invaluable resource to writers (see Figure 4).

In addition to searching the full database, users can add specific journals and congresses to the Datavision publication plan they are working on to give a succinct target list for the plan. Also, the journals and congresses can be linked directly to
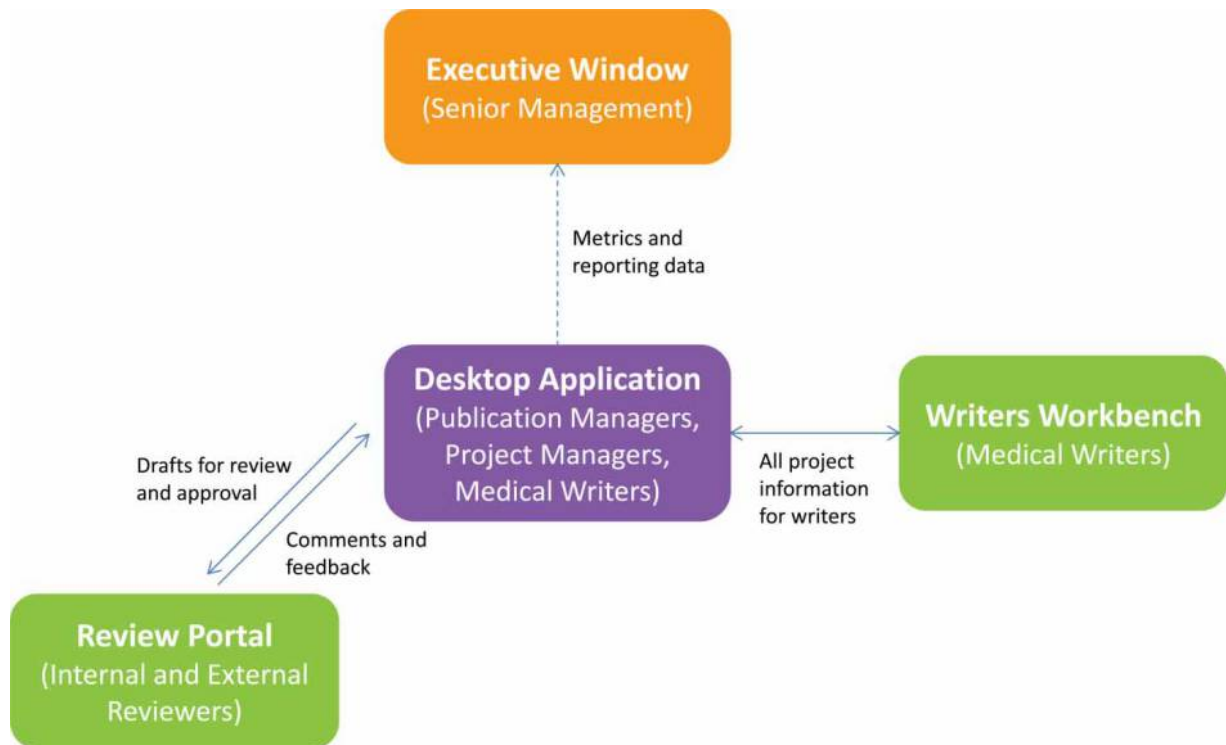

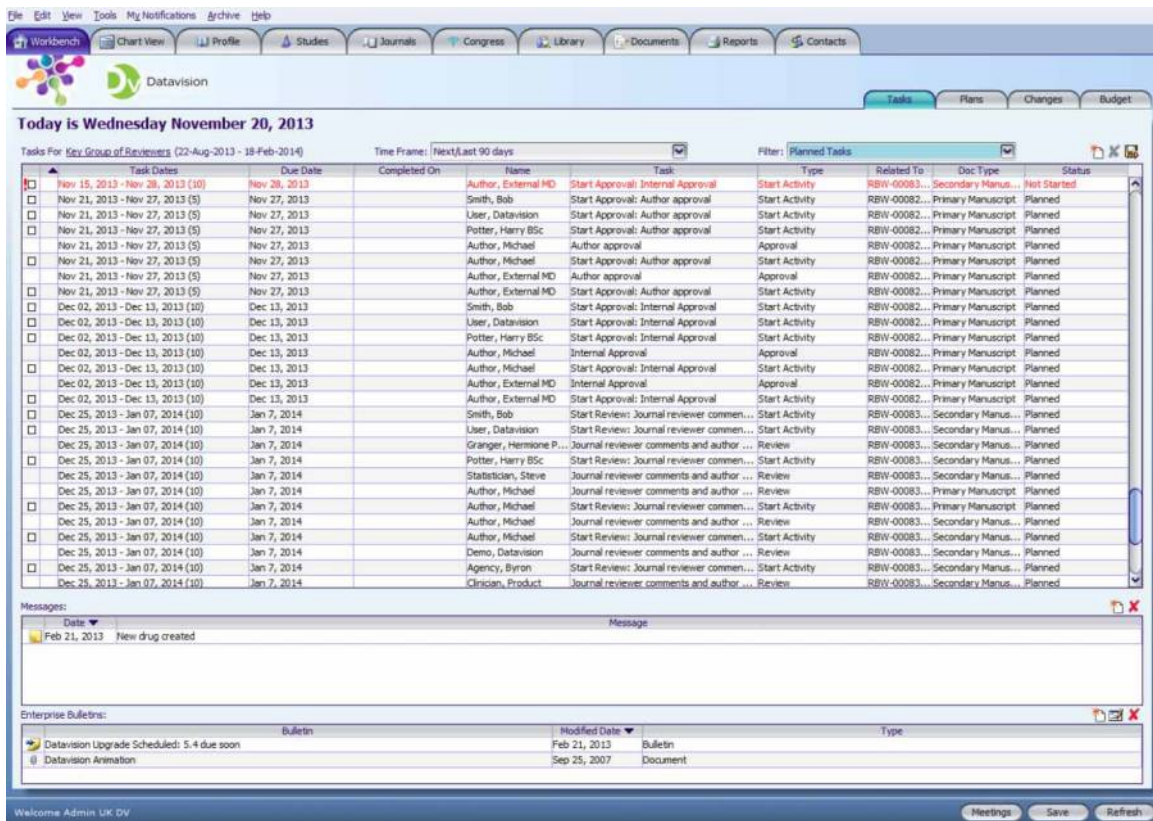Figure 1: Elements of the Datavision system and related user roles.

Figure 2: Managing projects with the Datavision desktop workbench. The Datavision desktop workbench enables an individual to manage all their projects in one place, creating clear focus for a writer.
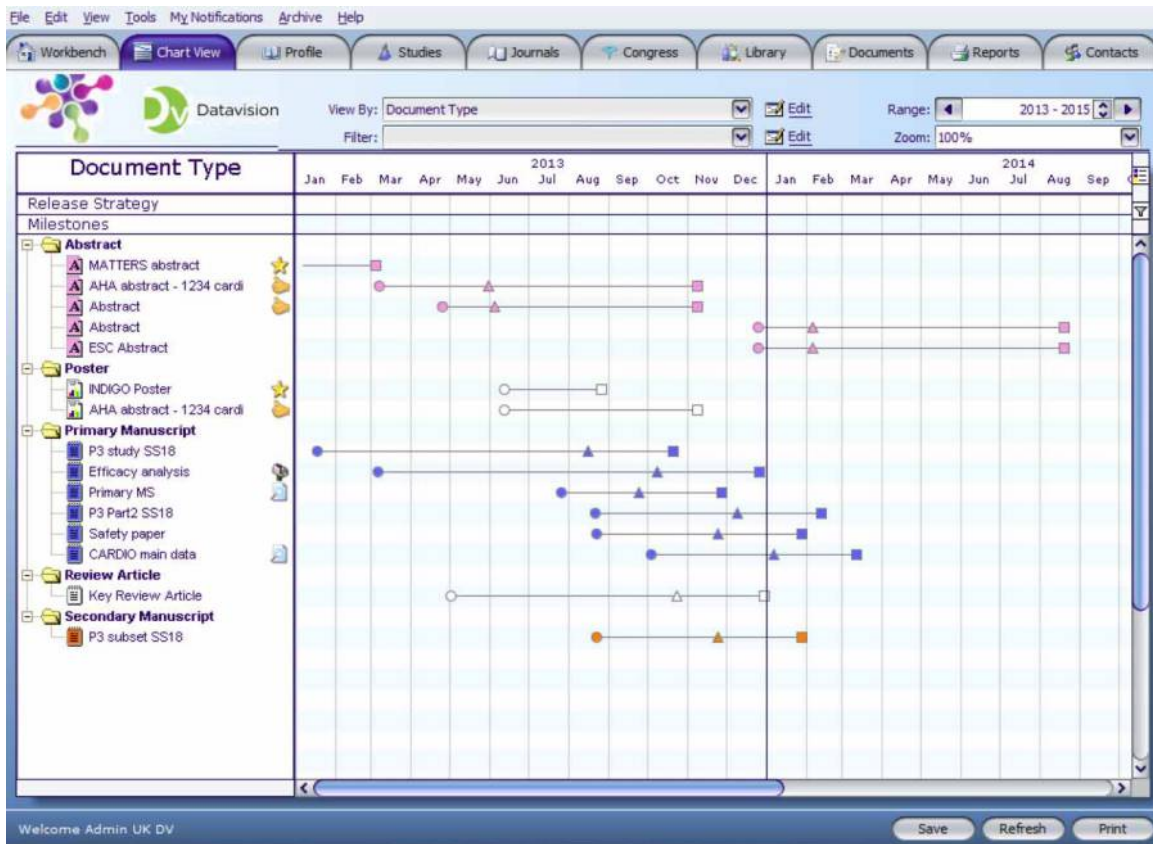

Figure 3: Visualising the publication plan via the Datavision Chart View. The Datavision Chart View allows a user to view the overall plan and how specific projects fit into this plan.
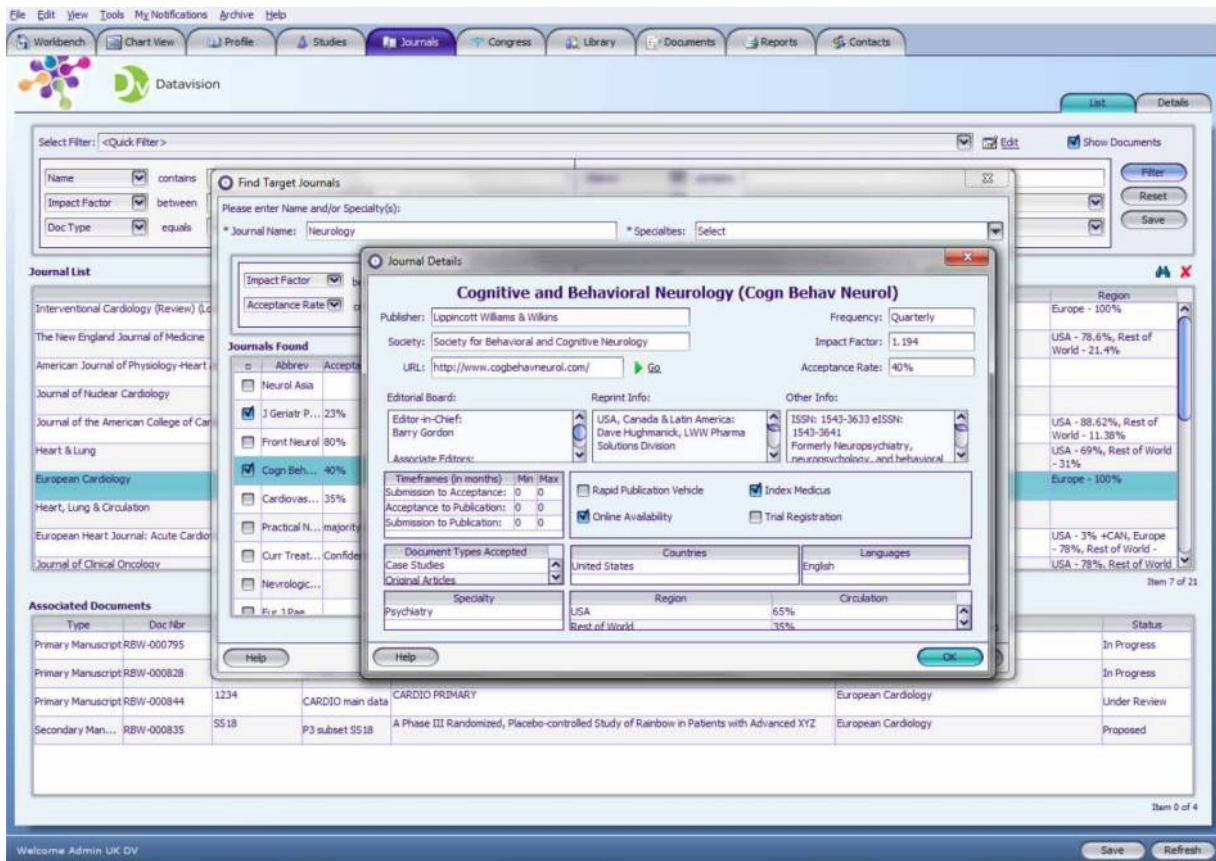
Figure 4:   Searching the integrated Journals and Congress database.

project document records. This allows for specific planning around 'real' timelines; the linking of all abstracts for a particular congress to view all relevant activities; and tracking of the number of times a particular team submits to any one journal (for example). In addition, this helps the team to develop metrics around output and productivity, highlighting the good work being done by the team.

If you cannot find a journal or congress within the current database, you can at the click of a mouse ask the Datavision team to search for it and add its details. This new record will be added within one working day and will be maintained along with the rest of the database. In the case of a congress, subsequent years' events will be added as details become available from the organisers.

Document reviews and approvals

The core feature of Datavision from the medical writer's perspective is the Documents tab. From this tab, and its sub-tabs, you can manage all of a particular document's details, the time plan for the project, versions and drafts of the document, and reviews and approvals, together with associated feedback as the document's development enters its final stages.

The Documents tab has a number of sub-tabs and functions (see Figure 5):

- The List sub-tab allows you to view details of all publications within a publication plan, or a particular subset. This document list is actually a flexible ad hoc report to use as needed; columns can be added, removed, and rearranged based on any of the available fields. The resulting display table can be filtered by chosen criteria and exported to a selected file output such as Adobe PDF or Microsoft Excel. In addition, users may create 'watch list' tables focusing only on their specific projects, which can be manipulated and exported in the same manner. All these tables are 'active', which means that double-clicking on any project displays its details and corresponding Plan tab to facilitate direct management of that specific project. The default plan for a document uses incorporated timelines based on templates that are defined to match the company's standard operating procedure (SOP) and publication best practices, thereby facilitating straightforward project management.
- The Details sub-tab allows users to manage all the elements related to a specific project:
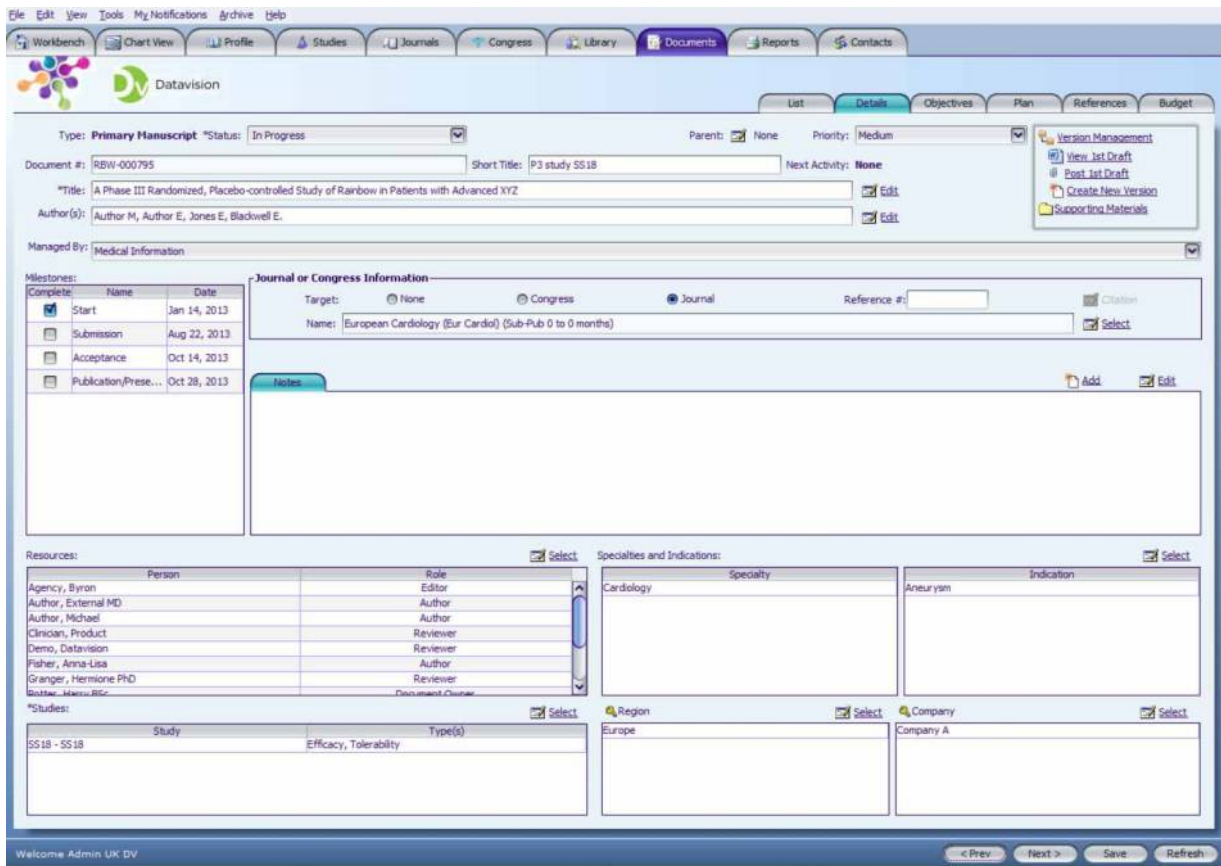
Figure 5:   The Documents sub-tabs and Details page.

document versions and drafts, authors and other people involved in the project, links to related studies, specialities and indications, assigned target journal or congress, and notes relating to the progress of the project.

- The Plan sub-tab houses the project plan for the document, which was previously set up at document creation using templates appropriate to the company's SOP (as described above), and is where users can set up and send out reviews and approvals, and also view and download the feedback received from authors and other stakeholders who review or approve documents. The plan templates are built around the SOPs of the client sponsor, but additional review steps, for example, can be added as and when required (see Figure 6).

The web-based Writers Workbench

Some companies using Datavision have chosen to implement the optional web-based Writers Workbench. This web-only portal condenses all the features of the Documents tab into one interface, without any of the other Datavision functions, and so allows medical writers to focus only on the tasks and actions relevant to their job and to their

workload (see Figure 7), and helps them to ensure best practice and compliant documentation with respect to potential audits of the client company's publication department.

The Writers Workbench includes wizards for starting reviews and other actions for ease of use, and will show you only those projects you are currently working on. In all other aspects, this portal functions similarly to the desktop-based user application in terms of managing project details, the time plan, reviews and approvals, and document feedback.

Summary

For medical writers who assist with industry-supported publications and publication plans, Datavision is an interface and tool they will likely use to help facilitate and document their work. Datavision encompasses features that enable medical writers and the teams with whom they work to plan, execute, and track publications as they progress from their earliest stages to the final published or presented versions. As a central resource for both internal and external stakeholders, Datavision accounts for the collaborative nature of medical and scientific publications by ensuring all

reviews, inputs, decisions, and relevant correspondence are accounted for across each document's 'lifecycle'. Whether interfacing with Datavision through the desktop application or the web-based Writers Workbench portal, medical writers can develop and manage publications in a detailed,
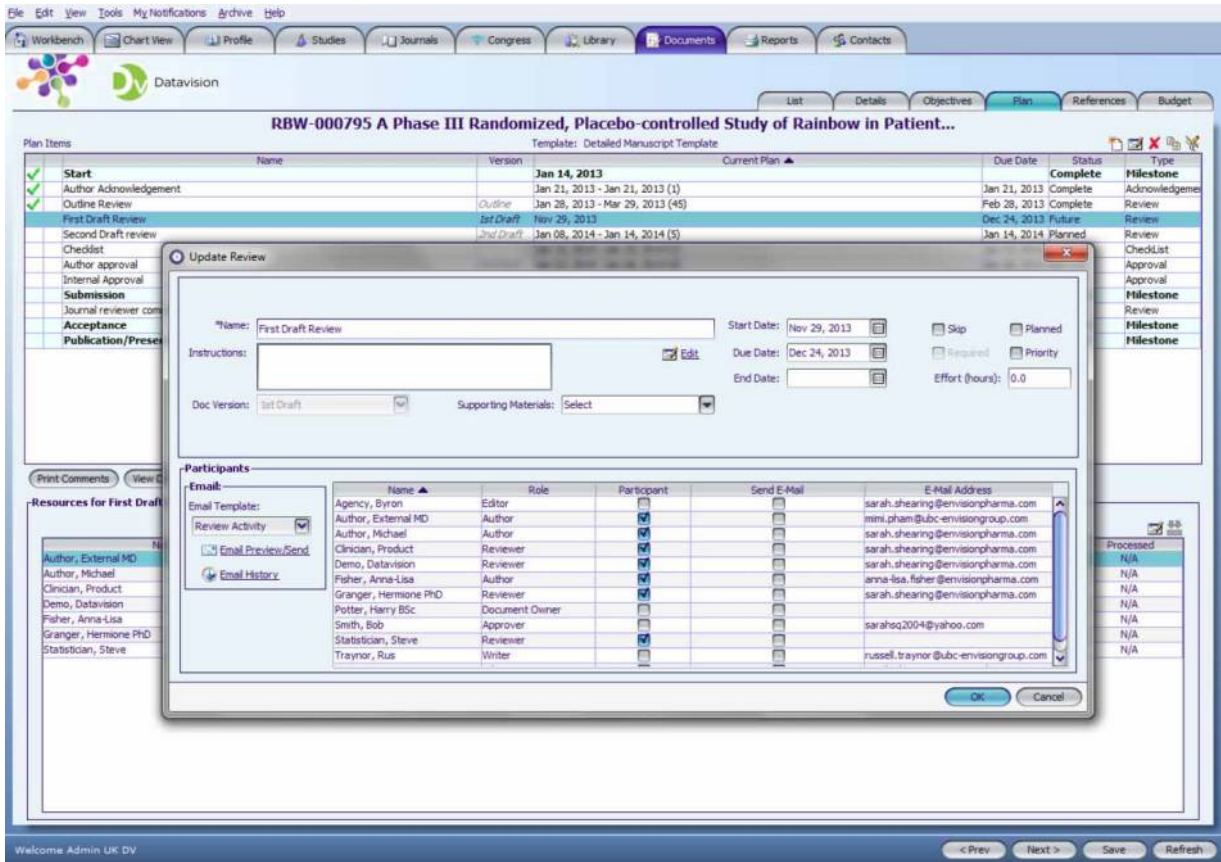

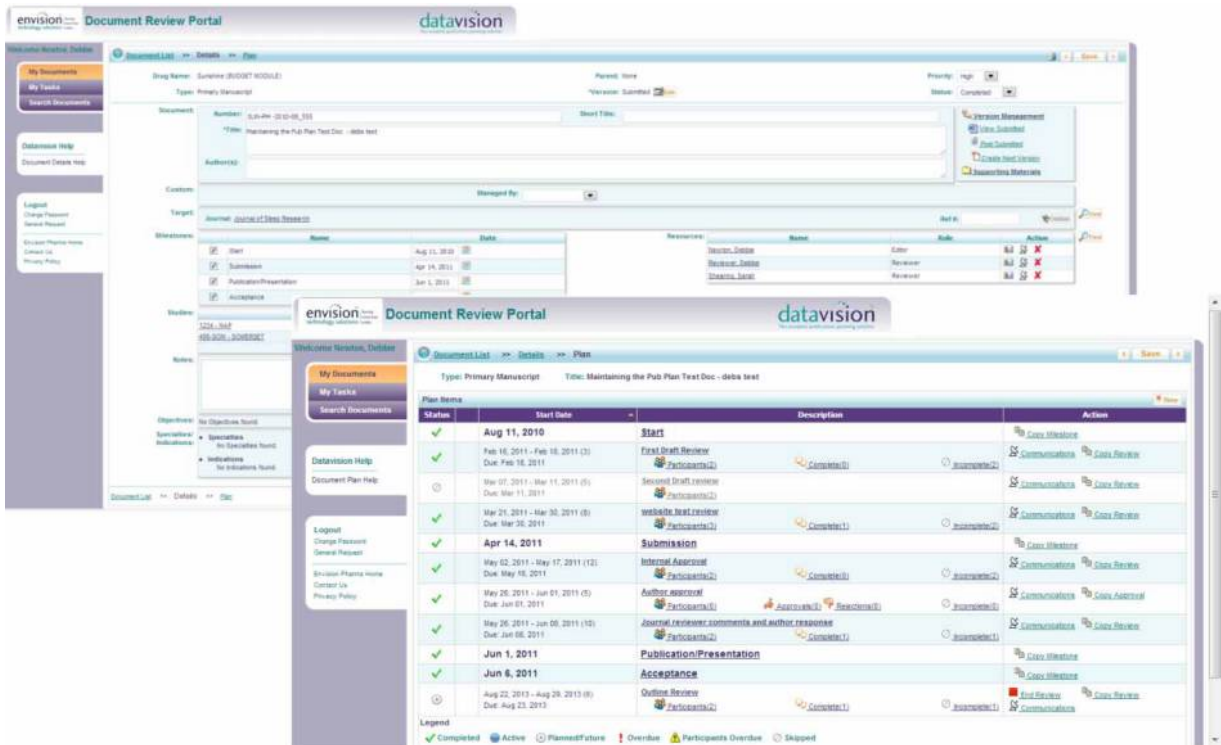Figure 6:   Setting up a draft review in the desktop application.

Figure 7:   The web-based Writers Workbench.

consistent, and compliant manner to achieve the goals of their clients and authors as well as the expectations of both their profession and the medical publication industry.

Author information

Russell Traynor, BSc, MSc, is Business Lead at Envision Pharma Group. He is responsible for working with clients to identify and implement technology solutions to meet their needs. He has served on the Board of Trustees of the International Society for Medical Publication Professionals (ISMPP) for 5 years and is a former ISMPP Chairman. He is an ISMPP Certified Medical Publication Professional™.

Thomas Gegeny, MS, is a Senior Scientific Lead at Envision Pharma Group, which he joined in 2006. As an editor and writer, he has over 15 years of experience across diverse medical publication environments. Thomas is a fellow and past president of the American Medical Writers Association (AMWA). He is an ISMPP Certified Medical Publication Professional™.

Conflict of interest statements

RT and TG are employees of Envision Pharma Group, the developers of Datavision.