



Digital Pen and Paper make medicals on the move more efficient

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Steve Watson,
Head of IT & Facilities at Medicals Direct

FACTS

Customer: Medicals Direct Group, providing medical screenings on behalf of insurance companies

Challenge: Providing an effective, secure, speedy system for submitting the results of screenings.

Solution: A solution based on Anoto Digital Pen and Paper technology developed by PaperIQ, incorporating BlackBerry technology.

Benefits: Faster administrative process – the results are delivered more quickly, saving time and money.

Challenge: Nurses on the move

When an organization has a large number of people working independently in different parts of the country, sending out and collecting documentation can be a cumbersome process.

This was certainly the case for UK-based Medicals Direct Group Ltd, part of US company Hooper Holmes Inc. Medicals Direct provides medical screenings on behalf of insurance companies, processing around 500,000 examination forms a year for people who have applied for life insurance policies.

Medicals Direct wanted to migrate its 450 nurses onto a modern data capture technology. The nurses all work in the field, visiting patients at home to carry out checks and rarely going into the office. They would receive instructions over the phone and send back the results of the screenings by post.

This was a cumbersome process, causing delays in the time it took for insurance companies to issue a quote. Medicals Direct's multinational insurance company clients estimate that they lose 0.5 percent of turnover for every day that is added to the time it takes to process a quote. It therefore decided to find a modern technology that would provide a more effective and faster way of reporting.

The options: tablet PC's - more costly and cumbersome

One option that Medicals Direct looked at was Tablet PCs. The company was at one point very close to signing a contract to buy machines for all 450 nurses, but the high capital costs and training and support overheads were a concern to management.

Just before the company was due to sign on the dotted line to acquire the Tablet PCs, it found out about Anoto technology, as adapted by British company PaperIQ, which combined digital pen and paper with the BlackBerry® wireless solution.

The digital pen and paper solution had many advantages. For nurses, the digital pen and paper is as easy to use as normal pen and paper:

“The nurses just didn't feel comfortable using the Tablet PCs,” explains PaperIQ's Robert Bakewell, “It put a barrier between them and their patients.”

“It is more comfortable for patients and for nurses to use pen and paper than for the nurse to be hiding behind a screen.”

Digital pen and paper was also found to be significantly less expensive than the Tablet PC alternative.

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The digital pen and paper solution works thanks to Anoto's patented dot pattern on the forms. This enables the digital pen, which as well as a ballpoint cartridge has a tiny infrared camera, to pick up what is being written.

The advantages: Low cost and speed

In PaperIQ's solution, the pen connects via Bluetooth to the nurse's BlackBerry® smartphone. When the medical is completed, the nurse ticks a box on the digital paper form. The pen then transmits the form data wirelessly to the BlackBerry smartphone, which automatically then forwards it back to the Medicals Direct PaperIQ Enterprise Server for processing.

Robert Bakewell says that the BlackBerry wireless solution is secure, manageable and cost-effective. "The BlackBerry Enterprise solution leads the market in terms of managing large numbers of mobile devices," he says.

Another selling point for the PaperIQ service is that it is hosted in-house by Medicals Direct - something which gave the company control over its own data security.

The PaperIQ system was fully rolled out during 2006. Since then, it has also helped nurses to receive information in a more effective way. As well as transmitting forms back to HQ, they can also receive their instructions direct to their BlackBerry smartphones. This enables them to take the correct pre-printed forms with them to the screening, as instructed by the insurance companies.

The astonishing thing about the use of the PaperIQ system is the amount of money it saves. The system cost Medicals Direct in the region of £400,000 over two years to implement, including digital pen, licenses, BlackBerry smartphone and the airtime cost for the BlackBerry smartphones. The Tablet PC solution, originally considered by Medicals Direct would have cost in the region of £2 million.

"This is a huge saving to achieve the same end," says Bakewell.

Speed of processing medicals conducted by the Nurses has also been a major project benefit, commenting on this, Steve Watson, Head of IT & Facilities at Medicals Direct said "Basically what was a 7 day turn around for the return of medical forms is now a 24 hour turn around. In addition to the reduced turn around times we have also realized a significant saving on postage and improved communications with our nationwide network of nurses".

Partner profile:

With offices in the UK and Ireland, PaperIQ is a leading expert in digital pen and paper technology. The winner of Anoto's 2006 Golden Pen award for Innovation has an extensive partner network covering most major markets and is able to service clients in a range of business sectors across the world. In addition to a hosted server solution, it also offers an in-house solution where the client can install PaperIQ's award winning digital pen processing platform in its own data centre.

www.paperiq.com

Customer profile:

Established in 1997, Medicals Direct mission is to be the leading provider of outsourced medical services to lawyers, insurance companies and corporations. Medicals Direct Group undertakes screenings for the insurance sector; providing information to underwriters in order that they may make informed decisions on applications for cover.

Screenings are undertaken by a nationwide network of nurses - now the largest force in the United Kingdom. Examinations by doctors are also available at their clinics or through their network of General Practitioners.

The service falls into three broad categories; mobile screenings for insurance underwriters; mobile visits for disability claims assessments and, increasingly, domiciliary visits for independent lifestyle reviews. This is a fast accurate service that is tracked at all times.

Medicals Direct is part of the Hooper Holmes Group that provides outsourced risk assessment services, including underwriting and claims information to the life, health, automobile, and workers' compensation insurance industries. Hooper Holmes is the largest provider of nationwide examination services to the life and health insurance industry with a total revenue of \$293.9 million (2006).

www.medicalsdirect.com

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Anoto Group AB is the inventor of and world leader in the Digital Pen and Paper technology allowing quick and reliable transmission of handwritten text from paper to digital media. Anoto works with a global network of partners focusing on user-friendly forms solutions for efficient capture, transmission and storing of data for a variety of business segments including healthcare, banking and finance, transportation and logistics, government and education. The Anoto Group has around 90 employees, offices in Lund (head office), Boston and Tokyo. Major shareholders are Norden Technology A/S, Logitech International S/A, Robur and DNB. The Anoto share is traded on the Nordic Mid Cap list of the Stockholm Stock Exchange under the ticker ANOT. For more information: www.anoto.com

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