



Critical Infrastructure for Comprehensive Care



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at Chicago (UIMCC)**

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In 1997, the University of Illinois Medical Center at Chicago (UIMCC) began the transition from paper to an electronic medical record system. Today the clinics operate with most patient information stored and accessed through the medical center's network and centralized data centers. A physician can pull up the results of an MRI within seconds or read notes in a patient's record from the ER and the clinic without having to locate a paper chart.

"When you walk into our nursing units," said Engelhardt, "there isn't an available computer. We have 3,000 Medical Center employees and 7,000 users of clinical systems who need access." To ensure fast access and protect patient information, UIMCC adopted a thin-computing solution. Users log-in to use applications and information based on who they are and their role in the system.

Challenge: Protect Digital Records

As medical records and patient information transition from paper to electronic records, medical organizations like UIMCC confront new challenges and regulations regarding the protection and disposal of information. Even though the IT team used Citrix to deliver applications, manage user access and set automatic log-out times, they still had to manage security and disposal for every desktop PC.



Solution Architecture

- 1600 Wyse thin client devices
- User Applications
 - Cerner clinical applications, Microsoft® Office and more
- Network
 - Citrix® MetaFrame®
 - Microsoft Windows® Terminal Server
 - 1 hospital, 22 clinics, 9 remote clinics

Each PC required anti-virus remediation, patch upgrades, careful monitoring of what information ended up on the hard drive. When PCs became outdated and could no longer be utilized, the IT team had to scrub the hard drive before disposal to ensure that all confidential patient information was permanently removed.

Solution: Wyse Thin Computing

In 2002, with the cost and complexity of PCs mounting, UIMCC decided to leverage their investment in application servers and switch to a Wyse thin computing solution. Since Wyse thin computers have no hard drive and no removable data, they simplify management by connecting to centrally managed servers where all applications are processed and all data is stored.

"The thin clients alleviate potential security concerns," said Engelhardt. "They provide peace of mind. If I had all thin clients, I wouldn't have to worry about disposal issues." Wyse thin devices put the IT focus on powerful servers in the data center rather than on rolling out new desktop computers and upgrading old ones.

Engelhardt estimates that a thin client, including software, costs about half the price of a PC. Because thin computers last longer, use less energy, and require little, if any, hands-on support, the total cost of ownership is considerably less. And when the thin computer is removed from the network, it is ready for disposal without any additional time or resources.

Benefits: Fingertip Access

UIMCC began their roll out in 2002 by placing thin computers in common areas for many users, such as nursing stations. Not only have the thin computers saved time and resources, they have also reduced the potential for virus and data security problems. The thin computers also have a smaller footprint than a PC and take up less space on counters and desktops.

"Everyone has shares of a network drive where they can store their files," says Engelhardt. "It's secure, it's backed up, and it's accessible through Citrix." Once employees log-in and start using the thin computers, the applications run faster and information becomes available more quickly. The older PCs have to be constantly upgraded to keep pace.

Raising the Bar

When professionals from other hospitals come to UIMCC to see technology in action, they find that everyone has the information they need at their fingertips. A physician can see the results of an MRI as soon as it is available rather than waiting days for the films to be delivered.



To keep pace with increasing expectations, UIMCC plans to replace more PCs with thin computers in addition to increasing the total number of access points for wireless use. The Information Services department recently upgraded several hundred older PCs with thin computers, and they used this opportunity to educate individual staff about the benefits that a thin client can bring.

"We are slowly adding more and more," says Engelhardt. "People come in and get online. They are clamoring to use the computers. My advice to others: put in as many thin computing devices as you can afford."

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