

Inside Perspective

Helping you unleash the full power of MEDITECH

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Setting your course for MEDITECH 6.0

As we kick off the New Year and plan for what's ahead, MEDITECH's readiness to launch Client/Server 6.0 in 2008 is at the forefront. The implementation of C/S 6.0 at West Georgia Health System is well underway, and Doylestown Hospital, a stalwart adopter and innovator in the MAGIC community, is well on the road to moving from MAGIC to C/S 6.0. Word out of Canton is that MEDITECH marketing representatives are exclusively demonstrating C/S 6.0 technology to new account prospects now. We recently assisted MEDITECH's Development and Marketing teams in creating an aggressively-virtualized environment for the further development and demonstration of C/S 6.0. With all the excitement, interest, and potential questions about six-dot-oh and what it might mean, we thought it would be useful to summarize some things we know and provide some inputs to your planning processes.

What's all the buzz about? MEDITECH 6.0 features a more graphically rich look and feel and is optimized to take advantage of the latest Advanced Clinical Application feature sets to satisfy the demands of today's patient safety and quality-of-care initiatives in the healthcare community. MEDITECH 6.0 takes full advantage of single sign-on technology to enable users to switch from module to module effortlessly; transaction logging for better data protection and retention; a single portal screen within Advanced Clinicals for ease of use; as well as superior security and data integrity resulting from a new file structure. MEDITECH 6.0 utilizes a new development environment designed for efficiency and reliability. MEDITECH 6.0 also offers advanced security and compliance features including an "append only" file structure in which no part of the file will be deleted. Any changes to the file append to the end. This ensures both the integrity and data of that file, and was added to meet increasingly demanding regulatory and industry accountability measures and legislation.

A deeper dive. Architectural considerations for moving to 6.0 include Active Directory and Transaction Logging. The single sign-on functionality makes use of Active Directory (AD), which now requires it to be considered a mission-critical application within the 6.0 infrastructure. Transaction logging creates an interim step between the client and the MEDITECH File Server. When data is saved by the user, the data is sent to the Transaction Log Server, logged, and then forwarded to the File Server(s). An acknowledgement is sent back to the Transaction Log Server that the changes were successfully appended. In combination with ISB/IDR (Integrated Serverless Backup/Integrated Disaster Recovery), transaction logs enable MEDITECH 6.0 operational recovery down to the last successful transaction before a system crash or user-induced error. Transaction log servers play such an important role in the MEDITECH infrastructure, appropriate systems' redundancy and data protection is strongly recommended. Like today's C/S environments, MEDITECH 6.0 takes advantage of the native file system structure in Windows. For MAGIC customers, this change means that the HCIS can be run in their Windows enterprise environment. Both MAGIC and legacy C/S customers will be attracted to the new features offered by MEDITECH 6.0. The differences include increased availability to mobile users, consistent look and feel between modules, and compatibility with new technologies to lower data center operating costs.

Now what? With the launch of MEDITECH 6.0 in 2008, you may decide that you'd like to consider moving to 6.0 to take advantage of the 6.0 advancements. Now is the time to assess

your current IT organizational stance, take a technology inventory, and develop a strategic plan to outline your short- and long-term goals. A problem we hear over and over from CIOs is that the efficiency of MEDITECH MAGIC and Client/Server to date has ironically made it harder to get additional capital investment for the data center, and yet most hospital IT managers would share their concerns that their current facilities and/or organization will be hard pressed to meet the 24x7 high availability non-stop resource demands of 21st-century, consumer-driven healthcare computing. The consideration of MEDITECH C/S 6.0 is a great opportunity to reset the expectations of your executive management and IT steering committee. For existing C/S customers, your perpetual license with MEDITECH effectively offers you the opportunity to receive what is arguably a multi-million dollar software update for the cost of an implementation and a technology upgrade. When seen in this light, necessary investments to bring your data center into the 21st century are practically being funded by MEDITECH's liberal update policies. A combination of leveraging existing infrastructure and investing in new technologies to support 6.0 is a smart strategy for data center readiness. In addition, assessing users' needs, communicating the benefits, and achieving organizational buy-in are critical success factors.

What we are doing to help. JJWild is co-developing Best Practices with MEDITECH's systems technologists and developers, designing and testing technologies and methodologies to support successful MEDITECH 6.0 implementations. Additionally, a manager from our Consulting Services Team with years of experience helping MEDITECH hospitals implement and optimize their MEDITECH applications is working very closely with MEDITECH to support their application development. We offer services to support your IT strategy development, assess your current MEDITECH application and technology state to assure readiness, and create a plan to phase in technology requirements to align your goals and IT budget. Even if you will not adopt C/S 6.0 for many years, you can make incremental changes now that will ease future advancement to 6.0 as well as improve the efficiency of your existing platforms. We are helping our clients build strategies that often include data center improvements, server and storage virtualization, network and security enhancements, and improved availability and recovery stances. For information on these subjects, please contact us at editor@jjwild.com. And visit us at the HIMSS Conference in February. You'll find us within MEDITECH's booth as well as a small booth of our own very close to MEDITECH's.

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