

Inside Perspective

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Interview with Hoda Sayed-Friel, MEDITECH's Vice President of Marketing

With the advent of MEDITECH's Client/Server 6.0 Release, many hospitals are evaluating their long term strategies - considering a migration from MAGIC to Client/Server or updating to 6.0 from an earlier Client/Server Release. Hoda Sayed-Friel, Vice President of Marketing for MEDITECH, recently sat down with our editors to discuss this.

Q: How important is it for organizations to consider their specific strategic goals before beginning migrations/upgrades?

A: It's very important. Keeping your priorities straight is essential when you consider technology upgrades. You not only have to ask yourself how will this upgrade help me to meet my goals, but also how will upgrading to this new technology affect the timing for meeting my goals. You need to determine which of your goals should be completed before a technology upgrade and, more importantly, how efforts can be coordinated to maximize resources.

Q: What do you want customers (whether MAGIC or Client/Server) to know about their options for upgrading, migrating, or keeping the status quo?

A: The first point I always like to stress is the range of options available to our customers. I make a point of beginning each and every discussion on this topic by reiterating MEDITECH's ongoing commitment to MAGIC. I like to point out that the timing for when customers migrate to new technologies will vary according to each organization's priorities and resources. The second point I like to stress is the need to properly understand the steps and timeframes associated with new technologies. You need to fully understand the sequence and timing involved with the various steps in order to achieve your priorities. My third point is to always keep moving. Even if you aren't ready for a full-throttle upgrade today there are steps you should be taking today to prepare your organization for the future.

Q: What are some key considerations MEDITECH organizations (both MAGIC and Client/Server) should evaluate if they're thinking about upgrading or migrating?

A: Again, this will vary among organizations, but some items I would consider include: how long has it been since the last hardware refresh; what is the status of the key projects you have underway; what level of executive support do you have for moving forward; what are your plans for implementing advanced clinical systems; and what regional or payer issues do you face, such as a mandate to implement advanced clinicals.

Q: What are the benefits in migrating from MAGIC to Client/Server?

A: With Client/Server 6.0, you get a new system designed from the ground up with the clear understanding that clinicians will use it to direct care across a wide range of venues. 6.0 has a more appealing user interface and streamlined workflows, which are being received very positively by customers who see the applications. It offers better scalability, improved access over the Internet, and an infrastructure designed for even higher availability. What is MEDITECH's long-term plan for MAGIC? We intend to continue supporting and enhancing MAGIC for a long time. We anticipate our customers will be attracted to Client/Server 6.0's benefits, and many will gradually migrate to a C/S 6.x platform. We have more than 1,300 MAGIC customers, so we see MAGIC continuing for many years.

Q: When migrating from MAGIC to Client/Server, will any dictionaries convert/map over directly?

A: We plan to convert many dictionaries and will automate the migrations as much as possible. We have our first sites live now, and will add several more live 6.0 sites in the year ahead. Our plans will continue to evolve as we gain experience. What specific applications, if any, should organizations have in place before they either upgrade to 6.0 or migrate from MAGIC to Client/Server? Again, this will vary among customers' individual situations. We do recommend all customers migrating to 6.0 have Data Repository, and Scanning and Archiving in place to ensure access to data and for reporting purposes.

Q: What kind of infrastructure investment is involved in the Client/Server 6.0 upgrade or the MAGIC to Client/Server migration?

A: As you know, 6.0 is designed for high availability. As such, there are some new components to ensure data availability and integrity. These include transaction servers, proxy servers, and storage area networks. This question really merits a more complete discussion than we have space for here, but I do want to note here that MEDITECH and JWild have developed customized infrastructure configurations with “core” and “optional” components.

Q: With what type of services might organizations need assistance when migrating to Client/Server?

A: We encourage customers to maintain strategic plans which they periodically refresh. We like to see customers, MEDITECH, and JWild working together in the 6.0 process to prepare and/or update this strategic plan, assess hardware readiness, plan resources, and determine whether consultants are needed for process redesign.

Q: When will 6.0 be in general release? Are all new accounts going to 6.0?

A: We are demonstrating 6.0 on a regular basis now. We will begin general delivery for new customer implementations in the third quarter of 2008. We also will undertake additional MAGIC conversions in 2008 and begin our first Client/Server update in the first quarter of 2009.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like readers to know about this subject that we haven't discussed yet?

A: Yes. You are going to love 6.0.