



The Tablet PC in Healthcare – an Ergonomic Solution

Published: September 26th, 2005

by Paul Rhodes, DDS, MSD

Healthcare providers are finding that the capabilities of the Motion Computing [Tablet PC](#) allow them to expand the use of computers in the workplace into their treatment areas. While the Tablet PC might not ever overtake the Laptop computer for business applications, it certainly offers unique features to users who value its portability and ease of data entry.

Healthcare historically lags behind other industries in its implementation of computer information management. The repetitive nature of many administrative tasks has led to adoption of technology in administrative areas of a practice or clinic, but computerization of clinical patient information has been less than modest in most healthcare settings.

One key issue has been the need for mobility as the healthcare provider moves from one patient to another, from the consultation room to the treatment area, from the surgery to the intensive care unit. While a Laptop is somewhat mobile, the user still needs to position the machine, then type and or use a touchpad or mouse substitute. The Tablet PC offers much improved mobility and ease of function--the practitioner uses the Tablet like a clip board. Ease of entering and accessing information is a critical advantage to the healthcare provider on the move.

I am a "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" with two careers in healthcare: I have practiced as a periodontist for over three decades, and I have also developed a computer- based clinical records software system for dental specialists. I have not used paper records in my practice for over ten years. The majority of our company's clients – periodontal and oral maxillofacial surgery practices – have made the transition from paper and film to digital administrative and clinical records.

Only 10-15% of dental practices have implemented the use of digital records in treatment areas for either collecting or using clinical information. Having lectured and consulted with hundreds of dentists about technology in practice, I have heard repeatedly that a significant part of the problem is the ergonomics of conventional computers. The usual dental treatment room has not been designed to provide countertop space for a desktop computer or monitor. Additionally, a conventional computer in a dental treatment room is too stationary. The computer, like any piece of dental equipment, needs to be mobile to accommodate the changing positions of the dentist and assistant around the patient during examination or treatment. Furthermore, infection control in a dental treatment room is difficult to achieve with a conventional computer – wiping a keyboard down with disinfectant risks disabling its circuits. The Motion Computing [Tablet PC](#) because it has no traditional keyboard can be easily disinfected as needed.

More than 90% of dental practices use computers for business tasks. Administrative tasks have been traditionally performed at desks, employees work in fixed locations, and offices require cleaning instead of disinfection, so conventional machines work well.

Now, into the treatment room, "Enter the Motion Computing Tablet PC!" It is light, mobile, wireless, and the functionality of touch pen and voice recognition built into its design make it seem specifically designed for the mobile healthcare provider in mind! Additionally, the finger print reader in the Motion Computing [Tablet PC](#) offers the security of clinical information now required by governmental regulations.



Paul Rhodes, DDS, MSD

Source: [Infocater - The Tablet Experts](#)