

# TECHNOLOGY JOURNAL.

## Smart-Phone Makers Call the Doctor

Apple, Research in Motion See Opportunity in Medical Field as Hospitals Step Up Efficiency Drives

BY NIRAJ SHETH  
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**T**HE MEDICAL waistband is the latest front in the battle among smart-phone makers for the business customer.

Pagers have long reigned in hospitals, where they are prized for their dependability. But with doctors treating more patients and hospitals facing pressure to be more efficient, companies like Apple Inc. and Research In Motion Ltd. see an opportunity to peddle their devices.

Last month, Stanford Hospital & Clinics, in Palo Alto, Calif., started a trial with Apple and Epic Systems Corp., a provider of health-care information systems, to test software that will let medical staff access patient charts on Apple's iPhone.

Stanford is studying ways to use the devices to reduce the risk of error as patient care is increasingly handed off from one doctor to another, says Pravena Nath, chief medical information officer.

Around the same time, the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center handed out RIM's BlackBerry to nurses and doctors at one of its emergency rooms and surgical floors. Instead of paging each other, they will use the devices to communicate. The hospital also plans to add medical applications to the devices.

One such application, from mVisum Inc., of Cedar Brook, N.J., lets ambulances send EKG images and patient data directly to doctors' BlackBerrys. That way, patients suffering heart attacks can get into surgery more quickly, says William Fera, UMPC's vice president of medical technologies.



Among the medical apps available for iPhones and BlackBerrys are tools that give doctors reference guides, lab results and patients' vital signs.

According to market-research firm Manhattan Research LLC, of New York, about 64% of U.S. physicians are using smart phones; up from just 50% two years ago. The firm expects that figure to increase to 81% by 2011, with the majority of physicians owning iPhones or BlackBerrys.

Apple and RIM's gains in medicine are coming mostly at the expense of Windows-based devices as well as Palm Inc., whose older hand-held computing devices are still widely used by doctors. Palm didn't respond to requests for comment.

Apple appears to be making a concerted effort to target the medical community. It often fea-

tures health-care apps at press events and has started taking some of the app developers to meetings with medical institutions, according to one participant. Apple declined to comment.

Among U.S. doctors with smart phones, however, BlackBerry devices still prevail, with a 37% usage rate, compared with 27% for the iPhone, according to Manhattan Research.

Fraser Edward, head of RIM's market development for health care, says he touts the BlackBerry's reputation for security of sensitive information like patient data when he talks to hospital administrators.

It is security—and the rise of smart phones in medicine—that worries Deborah Peel, a physician and founder of the advocacy group Patient Privacy Rights. The more ways doctors can access their patients' records, the greater the threat to confidentiality, Ms. Peel says.

"The vast majority of health information technology has not been designed to ensure that patients control access to that data and use of that data," she says.

Medical-application developers say their programs are compliant with federal law for protecting health information.

The vast majority of medical applications available through

the iPhone App Store are still reference guides from companies like Epocrates Inc. But some allow doctors to remotely access patient data or lab results.

For example, an app called AirStrip OB lets obstetricians access maternal and fetal data remotely on the iPhone through a special server. AirStrip Technologies LLC says more than 100 hospitals use the product, which requires hospitals to subscribe to its software suite.

"It allows us to monitor our patients' labor from wherever we are," says Jay Staub, an obstetrician at Texas Health Resources Presbyterian Hospital in Dallas.

### An LCD Glut Poses Threat To Recovery

BY YUN-HEE KIM

## Microsoft, Google Intensify Mobile Push

BY NICK WINGFIELD  
AND ROGER CHENG

Microsoft Corp. and Google Inc. intensified their efforts to supply the software that pow-



vanced touch controls.

Microsoft has steadily lost ground in recent years in the mobile market to competitors, with Windows Mobile falling to 9% of world-wide handset shipments

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