



Application Story

St. Rita's Medical Center & Cushing Hospital

WiredRed's e/pop Increases Communication Efficiency at Two Healthcare Organizations

Enterprise Instant Messaging (EIM), a component of Real-Time Communications, increases business efficiency by eliminating common communications delays. Nowhere are these delays more critical than in a healthcare environment. Increasingly, more healthcare organizations are realizing that EIM can benefit the fast pace of the healthcare industry, and through accelerated interaction provided by EIM, it can indirectly increase the quality of patient care. St. Rita's Medical Center, an acute care hospital in Lima, Ohio, initially sought a secure instant messaging solution for use in the IT department.

According to Network Analyst Jason Glorioso, several EIM products were evaluated with the goal of purchasing and deploying one that would provide a fast communication system between 26 staff members in the IT department.

"We tried Lotus Sametime but found that it had limited functionality in terms of saving and printing instant messages," explained Glorioso. "e/pop works much like email in terms of having an inbox to save messages and sending them to print as needed."

After the product evaluation phase, St. Rita's chose WiredRed's e/pop® to replace public and legacy IM systems because it offered end-to-end encryption and is highly compatible with its Novell Netware and Windows NT network.

The IT department was the first to test and use e/pop on a daily basis. It is configured so that those using it can page an IT staff person directly from the e/pop application. This enabled faster help desk problem resolution for medical center staff and saved time for IT personnel who are away from their desks much of the time. The large campus-style medical center proved to be a challenging

Problem:

- IT department needed a fast and simple method to communicate with end users
- HIPAA requires that any oral, written or electronic communications be securely captured and stored

Solution:

- e/pop Professional, a secure instant messaging, presence and real time communications software for business

Business & IT Benefits

- IT staff able to resolve help desk issues faster
- End-to-end encryption and log and store functionality meets HIPAA regulations
- Better intra-departmental communications speeds the patient admission process

communication environment for the 26 IT staff tasked with servicing hospital computer networks and desktops throughout eight buildings and several off-site outpatient clinics.

Although e/pop does not replace email, it is used instead of the telephone in many instances. To date, the human resources department and outpatient registration and hospital admissions are using e/pop. Prior to installing e/pop, outpatient registration emailed admissions to let them know a patient had arrived and was ready to be admitted. In some cases it took up to an hour for admissions to retrieve the patient. Now that e/pop is deployed, it is used instead of email to notify admissions, and text messages are sent with embedded sound alarms. It now takes just minutes to admit waiting patients. Human resources' personnel use it to communicate within their department and to notify co-workers that applicants or hospital personnel have arrived for appointments.

The IT department plans to roll e/pop out to other departments, such as hospital administration, in the near future.

Like St. Rita's, Cushing Hospital, a community hospital founded in 1894 providing not-for-profit health care to the citizens of Leavenworth, Kansas, had concerns about whether e/pop would meet stringent standards set by the bipartisan U.S. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996. The first of four phases of HIPAA's execution went into effect on April 14, 2003. HIPAA requires that any oral, written or electronic communications be captured and stored – this includes email, and of course instant messaging. Ron Winn, Cushing's Information Services Technician, decided to purchase and deploy e/pop in order for him to better manage IT operations at Cushing. As the only IT person servicing the three-building hospital complex, Winn determined that secure instant messaging was the best method of communicating with the rest of the hospital about IT-related issues.

“Many of our client desktops are not Internet-ready and therefore don't have an email application,” explained Winn. “The only way to efficiently communicate with hospital staff, most of which have e/pop on their desktops, is to use IM. I can immediately let everyone know that I'm shutting down the server and notify them of other potential computer network issues.”

According to Winn, the encryption offered in e/pop is one of the main reasons he chose it over similar enterprise instant messaging software solutions.

“The ability to log and store e/pop instant messages, as well as the security it offers, reassures me that e/pop meets HIPAA regulations and will survive any forthcoming IT audits,” he adds. “There is no doubt that purchasing e/pop was money well spent. Not only does it help hospital employees work better together, it is a critical communication system that saves me time and enables me to spend more working hours on the important tasks – keeping the hospital network and applications up and running.”

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