

Mobility Research - Healthcare organisations throwing mobile technology at problems with little consideration of user, business needs (Quocirca)

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Survey reveals detrimental impact on organisational effectiveness and IT expenditure in healthcare across the UK, France, Germany and the US

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Healthcare organisations are throwing mobile technology at problems without fully considering the underlying business processes or the working conditions of the end-user. This is the key finding of a multi-country report across the healthcare sector from industry analysts Quocirca. It was commissioned by Anoto, the inventor of Digital Pen and Paper technology.

Nearly two-thirds of those questioned agreed that technology solutions should be kept simple, but 47% lamented the complexity of the technology they were using. More than 70% were unsure of the ongoing cost of device failures. Yet, the high cost of mobile devices, along with their proneness to theft, loss and damage, were identified as major barriers to their effective use by more than half the respondents.

The report, entitled "Light touch, firm impression" (http://www.quocirca.com/pages/analysis/reports/view/store250/item21778/?link_683=21778), reveals how the use of mobile technologies to automate traditionally paper-based processes can result in unnecessary complexity. Instead of boosting productivity, this frequently leads to increased – unforeseen – costs and can reduce the effectiveness of the organisation.

"As mobile technologies have become cheaper and offer greater functionality, organisations tend to over standardise and adopt products that are too complicated," says Rob Bamforth, Principal Analyst, the author of the study. Mobile technology needs to be simple and fit closely with the business task in hand and the needs of the user. It's people, process and technology – in that order."

The report is based on a survey of 150 respondents – including business and IT managers as well as end users of mobile technology – in healthcare in the UK, Germany, France and the US.

Highlights of the findings include:

- Mobile devices are often not fit for purpose.
60% of those questioned for the study wanted simple solutions, yet 47% of respondents found their devices complicated to use on the job.

Issues cited included being tricky to write on single-handedly or whilst standing up, and being difficult to clean. Mobile devices' vulnerability to theft, loss and breaking also caused problems. Over a quarter (28%) of respondents reported serious faults on a weekly basis and one fifth of equipment needed

to be replaced every 12 months.

The study suggests that for front line staff like doctors, technology is a supporting tool; when it is more complex than necessary, it can get in the way of effective use. Furthermore, complicated technology deployments often fail in challenging environments like healthcare and that poor training can reduce, rather than enhance, productivity.

- Running costs for mobile devices are underestimated.

In spite of the “total cost of ownership” concept, IT decision-making is still dominated by upfront cost issues while the ongoing expenditure for mobile devices is widely under-estimated. More than 70% of respondents were ‘unsure’ or had ‘no idea’ about the ongoing cost of failures, yet the cost of devices was one of the major stumbling blocks to effective use of mobile technology (16%).

- Mobile devices are mainly given to management – not frontline staff.

Only 31% of respondents stated that mobile devices were used by frontline staff, yet this is often where most business efficiencies can be realised. Management and IT are most likely to be given mobile technology, with 98% and 78% of organisations respectively admitting to this. Managers tend to be early adopters, not because the benefits justify the return, but because these are the people who decide on the cost investment/justification.

- Organisations still rely largely on paper.

83% of respondents said that they were still largely using paper-based processes, underscoring the importance of – and trust in – paper in spite of continued calls for the “paperless office”.

Petter Ericsson, Chief Science Officer at Anoto and co-inventor of Digital Pen and Paper technology, said of the findings: “It’s ironic that mobile technologies which are designed to make workers’ lives more productive are, in some cases, having the opposite effect.”

“Organisations often don’t consider that a technology stands and falls with its users. Ideally, the solution they select should not require dramatic changes to existing processes, be intuitive with little or no training needed and capable of truly making staff more efficient.”

Digital Pen and Paper technology automatically captures handwritten information in forms, eliminating the need to type up notes electronically. The digital pen looks like a ballpoint pen. A tiny infrared camera at its tip tracks its movements relative to a grey dot pattern printed on the form, recording and storing what is being written. Stored data is synchronized with backend systems via a USB link or a mobile phone.

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Note to editors:

o Quocirca’s report “Light touch, firm impression” is available for download here (http://www.quocirca.com/pages/analysis/reports/view/store250/item21778/?link_683=21778).

Photography:

- o Rob Bamforth (<http://img207.imageshack.us/my.php?image=robbamforthquocirca.jpg&via=yfrog>)
- o Digital Pen and Paper photography available on request.

Anoto Group AB:

Anoto Group is the company behind and world leading in the unique technology for digital pen and paper, which enables fast and reliable transmission of handwritten text into a digital format. Anoto operates through a global partner network that focuses on user-friendly forms solutions for efficient capture, transmission and storage of data within different business segments, e.g. healthcare, bank and finance, transport and logistics and education. The Anoto Group has around 110 employees, offices in Lund (head office), Boston and Tokyo. The Anoto share is traded on the Small Cap list of the OMX Nordic Exchange in Stockholm under the ticker ANOT. For more information: www.anoto.com.

Quocirca:

Quocirca is a primary research and analysis company specialising in the business impact of information technology and communications (ITC). With world-wide, native language reach, Quocirca provides in-depth insights into the views of buyers and influencers in large, mid-sized and small organisations. Its analyst team is made up of real-world practitioners with firsthand experience of ITC delivery who continuously research and track the industry and its real usage in the markets. Quocirca works with global and local providers of ITC products and services to help them deliver on the promise that ITC holds for business. Quocirca's clients include Oracle, Microsoft, IBM, O2, T-Mobile, HP, Xerox, EMC, Symantec and Cisco, along with other large and medium sized vendors, service providers and more specialist firms.

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