INDUSTRY OVERVIEW:

Wireless Technologies Save Lives and Money for Healthcare Providers

By John Czapko

The 13-year-old boy watched frantically from the bank of the Colorado River as his dad struggled to free himself from the flood-swollen waters. Clutching his cell phone, the boy dialed 9-1-1. When the dispatcher answered, she tried to get him to relay the location of his party on the river. But the boy had no idea. Fortunately, he didn’t have to.

Communications Medic Wendy Hunt was able to determine the location of the cell phone using GPS technology. Within minutes, STAR Flight Medic Rick Rutledge was lowered into the river on the end of a 100-foot rescue cable. Rutledge secured the victim, who was immediately airlifted to the hospital.

The application of wireless technology in the healthcare field can be dramatic. The impact behind the scenes, however, can be just as important. Hospitals, for example, count on a variety of wireless communications technologies to make them more cost efficient.

“The impact of wireless technology extends far beyond its most obvious uses,” said Mike Easley, the CEO of Preferred Hospitals, a highly respected management company that oversees hospitals throughout Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, and Missouri. “Hospitals are increasingly making wireless technology ubiquitous in the workplace, experiencing cost efficiencies in everything from maintaining the buildings and grounds to creating a more secure environment in the parking garage.”

Wireless technology has had a powerful influence with regard to the latter, where system integrator BearCom is introducing solutions that have been enthusiastically embraced in other industries and are highly compatible with hospitals. One example of this is BearCom’s video surveillance solution, which uses wireless technology to help personnel monitor suspicious activity in the parking lot or garage at any hour of the day or night. One of the reasons that BearCom has been successful at deploying the video surveillance solution is that it utilizes the following best-of-breed partners:

• Sony Electronics, a manufacturer of wireless IP video surveillance cameras
• Firetide, a developer of wireless, multi-service mesh networking technologies
• On-Net Surveillance Systems, the leading provider of intelligent IP-based video surveillance software

BearCom also offers wireless call boxes, which can be deployed just about anywhere. One of the attractions of this product is its ease of use. Some models feature “push-to-talk/release-to-listen” buttons on the exterior of the call box, while others are operated by opening the box and speaking into a small telephone handset. Both systems are straightforward and simple to use.

Inside the walls of the hospital, a recent study by the market research firm IDC found that more than 80 percent of 34 healthcare organizations polled said they have deployed wireless LANs or plan to deploy one in the next 12 months. Such deployments are critical when it comes to fostering an environment for applications that allow hospitals to access and update electronic medical records at patients’ bedside and match bar-coded patient wristbands and medication packages to physician-directed orders.

Such applications can ultimately reduce life-threatening mistakes. One expert suggests that, at the same time, hospitals must be careful. “Hospitals and other healthcare entities must comply with HIPAA, or the Health Insurance

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Portability and Accountability Act, “said Fletcher Brown, a partner at the law firm of Davis & Wilkerson, which represents more than 50 hospitals around the country. “Fortunately, high-technology companies are becoming increasingly responsive to this concern.”

As these applications come online, one can expect that doctors and other healthcare executives will be ready. A study conducted by the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society found that 79 percent of 253 healthcare executives responding to an online questionnaire said they plan to use wireless equipment information systems in the coming year.

“Doctors were the first large worker base that started using PDAs on the job,” Ellen Daley, a principal analyst at Forrester Research recently told Computerworld magazine. “Here are a bunch of people who have an appetite for carrying PDAs.”

But doctors are far from the only people to experience the immediate benefits of wireless technology devices. Maintenance workers in the healthcare industry are increasingly turning to their Motorola radios, such as those provided by BearCom, when it comes to communicating work-related information that previously needed to be communicated in person.

There are also the EMTs and those who await the helicopters carrying the critically ill. For them, having the latest headsets, such as those made by Peltor, a world leader in the field of communication equipment and head and face protectors, is a necessity. Peltor’s communication solutions for noisy environments make it possible for users of hearing protectors to communicate effectively in their immediate environment as well as with people farther away.

The bottom line: the use of wireless technology and its incumbent solutions can ultimately lead to cost savings and better healthcare. A recent study published by the California Healthcare Foundation cited one powerful example when it noted, “As wireless devices and networks become more versatile and capable, they offer expanded opportunities to link patients continuously to the healthcare system. Remote monitoring, particularly of patients with chronic conditions and those recovering from major medical procedures, enables providers to rapidly identify signs of abnormal function and provide timely interventions.”

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intervention to avoid larger problems. Indeed, wireless applications may be the most cost-effective way to manage millions of chronically ill patients."

These devices also help qualified medical care reach into underserved pockets, helping the poor and indigent.

George Whitesides, a Harvard University chemist who co-authored a paper in the journal *Analytical Chemistry* this spring in which the simple camera phone turns diagnostic tool, told the *Boston Globe* that the cell phone will ultimately have a global impact on the healthcare industry. "The problem—particularly in the developing world and at rural clinics in the United States—is you don’t have enough people; you can’t have a trained doctor travel 200 miles to do a simple test," he said. But the cell phone, he explained, can act as a catalyst, helping bring expert medical opinions and tools usually available only at well-equipped hospitals and doctor’s offices out into the field.

According to a recent report from Insight Research Corporation, the use of telecommunications by healthcare providers will grow at a compounded rate of 8.4 percent, from $7.5 billion this year to $11.3 billion in 2013. “Most of the high costs inherent in the current system are related to the proximity of the patient and provider, as well as to the archaic administrative systems used to manage records and exchange information,” the study said. “Telecommunications can bridge these proximity gaps as well as provide a normalized set of baseline data that can remain secure and yet be shared among healthcare workers."

The use of modern wireless technology and its incumbent solutions can ultimately lead to cost savings and better healthcare. Two examples of this are Bluetooth headsets and mobile broadband cards, both of which help enable healthcare providers to take advantage of today’s wireless capabilities and become more efficient at their jobs.
The new BlackBerry Curve 8330 from Sprint offers a solution to physicians who want one device that offers voice communication, Internet connectivity, and e-mail access wherever they work. Healthcare is a 24x7 profession, and having a communications device that is intelligent and delivers e-mail to you as you are on the move fosters a more efficient and safer environment.

PRODUCT REVIEW:
New BlackBerry Curve 8330 by Sprint Is Tailor Made for Physicians

By Scott Riddle

Long before Dr. William Bria set eyes on the new BlackBerry Curve 8330 by Sprint, he was a huge fan of Research In Motion and its line of smartphones.

“The BlackBerry solution’s forte is the idea of push e-mail,” said Dr. Bria, a physician and Chief Medical Information Officer at Shriners Hospitals for Children. “Before, doctors looked at e-mail when sitting at their desks at 7:00 in the morning and again at 5:30 at night. With BlackBerry smartphones, that entire landscape changed. Healthcare is a 24x7 profession, and having a communications device that is intelligent and delivers e-mail to you as you are on the move, opens up far more choices for physicians.”

“The overall usability of the BlackBerry smartphone interface—with its strong e-mail capabilities and the growing facility, speed, and quality of the Web connectivity—means that more physicians see its value. They want one device that offers voice communication, Internet connectivity, and e-mail access wherever they work.”

Operating across the Sprint Mobile Broadband Network, the BlackBerry Curve 8330 likely will offer physicians a powerful extension of that value proposition. It is the most compact smartphone in the BlackBerry family, yet it offers a full QWERTY keyboard.

Striking an attractive balance among functionality, design, and usability, the 8330 gives users access to phone, personal and corporate e-mail, contacts, calendar, tasks, camera, multimedia content, GPS navigation, enhanced Web browsing, and other capabilities. Among its innovative features are a two megapixel camera with video recording; advanced media player for music, videos, and photos; 3.5mm headphone jack; Bluetooth with support for stereo headsets and car kits; microSD/SDHC card slot for expandable memory; voice-activated dialing; voice notes recorder; and the ability to be used as a modem with a notebook computer.

Customers also can avail themselves of exclusive Sprint services, such as Sprint Navigation. This service delivers voice-guided and on-screen, turn-by-turn, GPS-enabled driving directions; 3-D moving maps similar to an in-car navigation system or personal navigation device; as well as more than 10 million local listings and real-time intelligent traffic alerts with one-click rerouting, anywhere on the Sprint Mobile Broadband Network.

Jerry Denham, President of BearCom, a major business-to-business supplier of wireless devices and solutions, believes that the “powerful core organizational capabilities, sleek and attractive form factors, exclusive multimedia content, flexible international service options, and industry-leading service make Sprint’s offering one of the most attractive BlackBerry smartphone portfolios in the industry.” Denham added that Sprint provides “true value for its BlackBerry customers with several industry differentiating areas.”

“For example, physicians who use BlackBerry smartphones from Sprint...”

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Sprint provides the largest voice calling area, reaching more than 299 million people in the U.S., Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam. Pairing that far-reaching network with a state-of-the-art smartphone, such as the RIM BlackBerry Curve 8330, offers a win-win scenario for healthcare professionals, who are increasingly being stretched thin by the demands of their jobs. With smartphones like the Curve, doctors and other medical personnel finally have a device that rivals the many other advancements that have occurred in healthcare in the last decade. Wireless technology is part of the prescription for solving some of the system’s current ailments. It’s about not only delivering better information to patients and clinicians, but also driving new healthcare services, and most importantly, saving lives.

and subscribe to national calling plans can make voice calls (with no additional roaming charges) from more places. Sprint provides the largest voice calling area, reaching more than 299 million people in the U.S., Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam. These same customers receive tremendous value for data services as well. The Sprint Mobile Broadband Network (inclusive of data roaming) reaches more than 234 million people, and it covers 13,453 cities and 1,321 airports."

“Also, regardless of whether Sprint customers are using their BlackBerry smartphones with a BlackBerry Enterprise Server or with BlackBerry Internet Service, they can receive great value with Sprint’s new Simply Everything pricing plan. For a flat rate of $99.99 per month, the Simply Everything plan offers BlackBerry Internet Service customers unlimited voice and data. Pricing complexity and concerns about overage charges are virtually eliminated, letting customers think more about how they can use their wireless devices for work and play and less about their bills. BlackBerry Enterprise Server users can subscribe to the same plan and receive access to their corporate e-mail, calendar, contacts, and firewall protection for a small additional charge of $20 per month.”

A number of independent reviewers have agreed with Denham, including CNET technology reviewer Bonnie Cha, who recently wrote that “the RIM BlackBerry Curve 8330 for Sprint is a great messaging device with the bonus of EV-DO and integrated GPS. Plus, it offers more services than the Verizon BlackBerry Curve.” She then added, “Sprint’s version of the Curve (the new 8330) offers support for the carrier’s multimedia services and more instant-messaging clients.”

Given features like those described above and the subsequent positive reviews, it is not surprising that Dr. Bria sees unlimited potential in how the BlackBerry Curve 8330 from Sprint can positively influence how doctors do their job as well as reshape the healthcare industry. “We have definitely grown in our understanding of what to do with portable devices,” he said. “Today, a doctor can be reached by different people in different ways. His trusted colleagues might call him, nurses who need an answer might send an e-mail, and the lab might alert him about test results. If the physician has a way of getting those requests and triaging them when it’s a convenient moment, it’s very helpful,” Dr. Bria added.

“Using wireless devices is a real thing in healthcare. The idea of convergence in these forms of communications makes a tremendous amount of sense; convergence in the home, convergence in patient monitoring systems, and convergence in the continuous infusion of medicines for a number of different chronic conditions. It’s all happening, and that’s a very positive trend for the healthcare industry.”

Scott Riddle is Digital Sales Supervisor for BearCom.

For more information about the wireless products discussed in this article, please contact BearCom at TodaysWirelessWorld@BearCom.com.
ONLY MOTOROLA BATTERIES ARE PROVEN TOUGH. BECAUSE “AS GOOD AS” NEVER IS.

When staying productive means staying in touch, you need batteries you can depend on day in and day out. Fortunately, Motorola Two-Way Radio Batteries are proven to be twice as tough as other brands when dropped — and that’s just for starters. Whether they’re zapped, shaken, frozen, or exposed to heat, you can trust Motorola Two-Way Radio Batteries to work better and last longer than ordinary replacement batteries — increasing your productivity and keeping your people in touch. It’s rugged, reliable proof that you get what you pay for. And it’s just another way Motorola puts Seamless Mobility in the palm of your hand. HELLOMOTO™

To learn more about how Motorola batteries can help keep your healthcare staff productive, call BearCom at 800.527.1670 or visit www.BearCom.com/products.
Meg A. Hertz, the Chief Technology Officer for BearCom, provides innovative wireless solutions to BearCom customers every day. But when a communications problem requires superhuman powers, Meg becomes Wireless Woman—and always saves the day!

Q&As: Radio/Pager Hybrid Devices and Universal Chargers

By Wireless Woman

Question: A growing percentage of our employees would benefit from having both a pager and a two-way radio. But the cost to outfit them with both is too expensive. Do you know of a solution?

Answer: Icom, which combines both a two-way radio and a pager into one “hybrid” device, offers an attractive solution called the IC-F50V. It is the wave of the future in many respects.

In the past, many employees in the healthcare industry have relied on one of two different wireless devices to facilitate communication—the pager or the radio. In an attempt to put this dilemma to rest, Icom recently created the IC-F50V to help hospitals and other healthcare entities operate more efficiently. The IC-F50V, which is priced very reasonably, combines the best of a pager and a two-way radio into one package. For example, the IC-F50V offers the vibration alert feature and voice storage capability of a pager as well as a full suite of radio features. This makes it possible for hospitals to purchase one device, yet have the functionality of two.

Equally important is the fact that the IC-F50V, like many other Icom devices, is rugged and reliable. This device meets military standards for durability and is fully submersible. At the same time, it draws from one of the most sophisticated battery technologies in the industry, which delivers up to 190 hours of battery life.

If you don’t need all the functionality that is inherent in this hybrid device, I’d recommend the IC-F50 or the IC-F60. Like the IC-F50V, these are compact, lightweight, easy-to-use portable radios that offer just about everything the IC-F50V provides, except the dual functionality. The IC-F50 is the more basic model, while the IC-F60 adds the waterproof feature.

Let’s not forget Icom’s IC-F70/F80 radios. Each of these devices also has waterproof construction that is sealed with waterproof gaskets, able to withstand a depth of one meter for up to 30 minutes. In addition, its built-in CTCSS, DTCS, two-tone, five-tone, Q&As: Radio/Pager Hybrid Devices and Universal Chargers

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and BIIS capability allows the user to set up his or her own talk groups, while providing for quiet standby when others are talking. You can also set up selective calls to individuals or control a repeater. Users get up to 10 two-tone codes that can be decoded on a single memory channel, which is perfect for healthcare professionals who require multiple district paging on one channel. When a matched tone is received, a number of items are programmable for each code.

The IC-F70/F80 covers a wide frequency range in one version. The large capacity of 256 memory channels with 32 memory banks allows the user to divide and store a variety of channels from local to wide area network channels. Both wide and narrow (25/12.5kHz) channel bandwidth is programmable to each channel.

Lastly, programming for digital or analog modes can be selected on a per-channel basis, another example of how Icom meets the needs of the industry.

Question:
If you look behind the counter at the communications station at our hospital, you would be aghast at all the wires. Every radio has its own individual charger. Is there a better, neater way to keep our radios charged up?

Answer:
Absolutely. IMPACT Radio Accessories, a world leader in the design and manufacture of quality chargers for the healthcare industry, offers the IMPACT Universal charger line.

Since its introduction in 2006 at the International Wireless Communications Expo (IWCE), these chargers have been enthusiastically embraced by hospitals across America. IMPACT President Keith Kostek told me recently that the primary driver for the growth was word of mouth, advertising, and repeat purchases. “The AC/DC-6 in particular has been an incredible seller. There is simply no other six-bank unit on the market like it,” Kostek said.

Healthcare executives that we spoke with concurred, noting that the chargers introduced an element of organization and efficiency to what can be a chaotic environment. And BearCom, which is a reseller of IMPACT products, has witnessed firsthand the demand for the products by the healthcare industry.

The bottom line is that IMPACT has literally had a huge impact on the wireless technology industry by introducing innovative and reliable products that facilitate better use of wireless devices, creating overall efficiencies for many different industries.

What’s more, the company’s products also are very user friendly and affordably priced to meet even the most stringent budgetary requirements.

Among the many factors that have influenced the market’s acceptance are IMPACT’s two-year, no-hassle warranty on all of its products, full-time quality control inspectors, the use of high-grade components and materials, no minimum order, and the fact that 95 percent of all orders are shipped within 24 hours.

Healthcare professionals need as many tools as possible that create an environment that promotes safety and efficiency. IMPACT’s universal charger line offers the perfect example of a tool that can promote these benefits and indirectly create a better environment for employees and patients alike in a hospital setting.

Wireless Woman, a.k.a. Meg A. Hertz, is Chief Technology Officer for BearCom.

For more information about the wireless products and solutions discussed in this article, please contact BearCom at TodaysWirelessWorld@BearCom.com.
IT’S A PAGER.
IT’S A RADIO.
IT’S BOTH.

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Icom’s fused pager functionality with a modern VHF public safety radio. The result: one small, super-durable package called Icom’s new F50V. Now carry one device instead of two, all for about the same price as for just one of the others.

Vibrate Only or Page Text Message Setting.
Sh-h-h-h-h! Perfect for when you’re in a restaurant, theater, court of law, office, library, or any location where silence is needed.

Submersible.
Built to IP-67 standards, the F50V is not just waterproof, it’s submersible. MIL-STD rugged construction for long life and to meet those tough bid specs, too.

Compact Size.
Compact and lightweight, with a 10-hour*1700 mAh Li-ion battery. Go all day without a recharge!

Why Carry Two When One Will Do?

MDC 1200 Compatible.
Blend the F50V right in with your existing MDC fleet! Get the following selective calling and ANI features:

- PTT ID
- Radio check
- Caller ID
- Call alert
- SelCall
- Emergency, emergency mic monitoring
- 500 Aliases
- Status/message
- Radio stun/revive

Auto-Incoming Call Recording & On-Demand Voice Record.
As long as the F50V is within system range, you won’t miss any calls – even when you’re away from the radio. When a pre-programmed 2-tone or 5-tone code or a SelCall (MDC mode only) is received, the incoming call voice recorder automatically starts recording. Your messages will be waiting for you! Additionally, up to 8 minutes of manual voice recording is also available.

Lone Worker Setting.
Stay safe when working alone! Set the F50V so if the emergency button is not pushed within a pre-programmed time, an emergency signal automatically transmits back to base.

Loud, Crisp Audio.
A “BTL” amplifier provides clear, low noise communications that’ll cut through most any in-the-field noise.

NEW IC-F50V
A Smart Fusion of Radio & Paging

Try an F50V and see for yourself.
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SUCCESS STORY:  
VISON 16 & 21
By Kristin Kirkham

The Customer
VISON 16 and VISON 21 are only two of 21 Veterans Integrated Service Networks, which are part of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Veterans Health Administration (VHA). Together, VISON 16 and 21 serve nearly two million veterans. VISON 16 covers 170,000 square miles from southern Missouri through Oklahoma, Texas, and all the way to Florida. VISON 21 serves parts of Nevada, California, and Hawaii, as well as across the Pacific Ocean through the Pacific Islands (including Guam and American Samoa) and the Philippines.

The Challenge
VISON 16 and 21 were faced with the difficult task of migrating their two-way radio systems to the congressionally mandated 12.5 kHz bandwidth (wide-band to narrow-band). After a competitive bidding process, David Chagnon, Chief Technical Officer for VISON 16, awarded the sole-source procurement contract to Trans-Tel. Chagnon also contracted with Trott Communications for help with systems design and engineering specifications. In addition, he asked Zetron to provide the radio console. And finally, Chagnon approached BearCom to act as the overall systems integrator and installer.

The Solution
BearCom shouldered most of the responsibility by taking charge of the equipment staging, installation, project management, system implementation, testing, and employee training. The wide-band to narrow-band transition included more than 70 transmitters and 8,000 pagers, 30 consoles, 30 mobile two-way radios, and almost 1,250 portable two-way radios. During the configuration and installation process, BearCom was able to solve a major problem when the VA’s outpatient clinic needed to be connected to the main VA hospital facilities. BearCom’s solution involved utilizing IP connectivity for radio communications.

The Results
BearCom and its project partners were able to help the VA meet the criteria for the narrow-band operation on time and on budget. Today, both VISON 16 and VISON 21 are P25 compliant and fully operational. Within the next fiscal year, the VA plans to install its tenth radio paging system and continue its expansion to the P25 multicast and high-frequency two-way network, using BearCom as one of its preferred vendors. Chagnon stated, “BearCom is staffed with many dedicated, creative, hard-working professionals. They were a joy to work with.

David Chagnon
Chief Technology Officer
VISON 16

Although VISON 16 and 21 cover different geographical areas, they both have the same vision: to improve the health and functional status of veterans and be widely recognized for excellence in patient care and a high level of customer satisfaction.

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Chief Technology Officer
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Kristin Kirkham is Marketing & Technical Writer for BearCom.

For more information about the wireless products and solutions discussed in this article, please contact BearCom at TodaysWirelessWorld@BearCom.com.
Throughout the healthcare industry, BearCom has always had a strong reputation. We've been going strong for more than 27 years, but now we're sending an even stronger signal than before.

BearCom is committed to strong customer service, has stronger relationships with the leading manufacturers of wireless equipment, and has the strongest wireless product line in the world. If that weren't enough, we also have some of the strongest minds in the business, and our wireless experts number more than 400 strong. Simply put, we're strong medicine for all your wireless communications needs.

We think we've made a compelling, strong statement with this ad, but if you're still not convinced, contact BearCom today. We'll show you firsthand how we can help you build a stronger foundation for your wireless communications system. And we promise not to mention the word strong when you call.

Warning: This Ad Contains Strong Language.