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NEWS

Providence Centralia Uses RTLS to Track Electronic Charts

The hospital is employing a Wi-Fi-based system so it can locate table PCs containing the electronic health records of individual patients.

By Beth Bacheldor

Jan, 23, 2008—[Providence Centralia Hospital](#), a rural hospital servicing Lewis County and surrounding areas in the state of Washington, is using a Wi-Fi-based real-time location system (RTLS) to track the critical tablet PCs its clinicians use to access patient data and associated applications from anywhere on the hospital grounds.

Providence Centralia, part of the 27-hospital [Providence Health & Services](#) (PH&S) system operating in Alaska, Washington, Montana, Oregon and California, is employing an RTLS from [AeroScout](#), based in San Mateo, Calif. The system leverages the hospital's existing IT infrastructure and network investments, including its medical-grade wireless network designed by [Motion Computing](#) and consisting of [Cisco](#) Wi-Fi network access points. [World Wide Technology](#) served as the systems integrator for the initiative, which went live in October 2007.

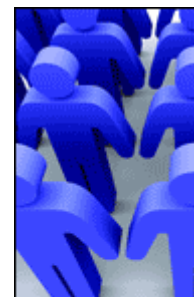
Providence Centralia's RTLS implementation is not currently using AeroScout's active 2.4 GHz [RFID](#) tags or exciters (which activate the tags, causing them to transmit their identification numbers), because the tablet PCs have Wi-Fi network access cards. The AeroScout Engine calculates the devices' locations by processing signals from their Wi-Fi cards. The AeroScout Engine then shares that data with AeroScout's MobileView software, which can portray location information on a map, in a table or in a report.

The hospital decided to implement the RTLS as a security measure, and to make it easier for the hospital staff to locate the PC tablets. "Critical assets such as [these PC tablets] are vulnerable to theft," says Curt Kwak, Providence Centralia's director of IT infrastructure services. "And Providence decided that the internal [encryption](#) policy alone will not protect [the tablets]." Using the RTLS, he says, the hospital can check where the tablets are located at any given time, to help ensure they remain on the premises.

Equally important, Kwak says, the hospital wanted to be able to locate the tablets in real time, and to make it easier for clinicians to track them. Although each PC is assigned to a specific room, where it has its own docking station and is used to record and display the health

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