HISS

The impact of innovation in medical and nursing training

A Hospital Information System for Students accessible through mobile devices

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Students oriented

Students of Medicine, Nursing and Dietetics practicing in the wards were trained to use handheld devices connected through a WLAN to record patients’ data

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HISS Goals

Learning and working

- to teach our students the use of new technologies they will encounter in the future while working in hospitals
- to give our students a better tool to learn the medical topics they were dealing in the wards
- to define the user interface for medical applications on handheld computers

We used the students’ feedback to develop new approaches for a real operational Hospital Information System for handheld computers
HISS Goals

Too difficult to achieve

- We were interested in examining whether the students using handheld computers were achieving better results in their examinations.

- We soon realized that this last goal was too complex to accomplish because too many factors are involved in the learning phase.
HISS Phases

One year, four steps

1. Sep-Dec 2003: development of a simulated Hospital Information System restricted to clinical information, leaving aside all the administrative modules and some specialized areas (radiology, laboratory etc.)

2. Jan-Mar 2004: first users’ trial; analysis of the first results and of students’ feedback

3. Apr-May 2004: development of a new version of HISS

4. Jun-Jul 2004: second testing phase and gathering of proposals for the implementation of a Mobile Hospital Information System
HISS Problems

Challenges overcome

- Conversion of written notes into an Electronic Patient Record (EPR) suitable for handheld computers
- Designing of new interfaces for small devices to collect and examine data at the bedside
- Frequent changes in contents due to users’ feedback
Keep the good ones

- We developed the structure and contents of EPR studying some existing models and addressing the specific needs of our Hospital.

- To achieve a higher acceptance degree of both teachers and students we used the existing paper models and added predefined answers to make data entry easier.

- Using a few XML tags we were able to build more than 30 different data entry masks and change rapidly their contents, without rewriting the code.
HISS Solutions

From XML to the device

Figure 1. XML data entry visualized on the palm computer
HISS Solutions

Technicalities & freedom

Since we were not bound to real production and we had no strict deadlines, we were free to try different solutions:

- on-line and off-line
- XML and relational database
- access through WLAN, GPRS, UMTS
- interface adaptation for pocket and desktop PC’s

Actually we based our system on ASP.NET, C#, XML and SQL Server.
HISS Architecture

From data to device

The HISS DB collects basic in-patients data from the actual HIS through a limited read-only access.

- Windows Mobile 2003
- Pocket IE
- integrated WLAN

ACCESS POINT
- 3 for each ward
- WEP 64 bit
- MAC filtering

SERVER
- Windows 2000 Server
- .NET Framework
- IIS 5.0

DATABASE
- SQL Server 2000
Bedside data collection

- anamnesis (family, personal, physiological, pathological)
- general health conditions examination
- request for radiological, chemical and endoscopic examinations
- drugs prescription and administration
- request for surgical intervention
HISS Data

Nursing students collecting records

- entrance evaluation
- medical diagnosis
- collaboration problems
- nursing diagnosis
- calculation of fluid balance
HISS Data

Dietetics students collecting records

- anamnesis
- patient appreciation of hospital food
- daily change of diet for each patient
- monitoring of some gastrointestinal pathologies (Crohn’s disease and chronic ulcerative colitis)
HISS Data

Bioengineering students technical work

- follow courses held in the Information Technology Department of Campus Bio-Medico on software and hardware installation
- set up the hardware devices in the wards
- set up the software prepared by ELIS, main partner in the HISS project
- teach medicine, nursing, dietetics students on the use of HP iPaq and applications
- monitor usage and collect comments, bug notices, proposals and other information from the users
User oriented

- Drop down or check lists
- Multiple sections masks
  - Avoiding long pages
- Frequently used options
  - Easily accessible
- Additional text boxes
  - Three sizes
HISS Access

Many wireless networks

WLAN, GPRS, UMTS, Mobile IPv6

management of mobility at the network layer, allowing network applications to be unaware of changes in the network

easiness of use and configuration and seamless roaming: the user does not need to change anything moving from local to geographic wireless networks
HISS Numbers

Participants & records

- 110 students
  - 495 medical records
  - 243 nursing records
  - 193 dietetic record (plus 919 by tutors)
- 1500 patients
- 30 different tasks
HISS Feedback

Dietetics students positive comments

- speed in finding the answers
- time spared in the transcription of data from paper to PC
- usability

the palm computer does not need a stand and it is not “uncomfortable”
Nursing students accuracy

- The students using handheld devices for data entry in structured masks were more accurate than those writing on a blank piece of paper.

- They noticed more things (having different questions to answer) and were more precise.
HISS Feedback

Medicine students rejection

- First extensive phase
  Rejection by many students because of rejection by their tutors in data entry

- Second intensive phase
  Limited to those departments that showed a positive attitude: cardiology and general surgery
Open issues and future

- Enhancing the hospital level of technology by improving the accessibility to the information system at different levels (students, nurses, physicians) through mobile technologies
- Improve teaching and learning in the wards through a faster access to clinical data
- Designing new interfaces for small devices to collect and examine data at the bedside
- A deeper comprehension of security issues
- Analysis of geographical mobility needs and performance evaluation
We are the champions

- The Dietetics department adopted the interface produced by the students.
- Some physicians started using the palm devices in their daily work.
- The Nursing department started a project for the adoption of a nursing record using mobile devices.
Further information & contacts

http://research.unicampus.it/hiss

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