



Charing Cross Hospital


Taking interactive whiteboard technology to heart

Charing Cross Hospital is a specialist hospital in West London, acting as a 'trauma centre' for the area. Established in 1823, it was originally located in Villiers Street, near Charing Cross. It is now located several miles to the west of the city centre, in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.

It is one of the Imperial College School of Medicine's teaching hospitals and part of the Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust.

"The most satisfying part of the project is the response by staff. Although they are keen to try out any solution that makes it easier for them to provide a better level of care, the integration of a new technology solution isn't always accepted by all staff-members."

*Henry Dowlen, A&E Doctor,
Charing Cross Hospital.*

Imperial College Healthcare 

The Challenge

Technology is now widely considered to be a vital part of any healthcare service, from local GPs right through to hospitals. Although funding is becoming increasingly available, choosing the right tools and software to support doctors and nurses is a serious business, especially when lives are at risk.

Prior to this year, the Accident and Emergency (A&E) department at Charing Cross Hospital encountered a number of problems when recording patient data. The problem wasn't clinical, but administrative. Nurses were inputting and displaying patient information in two separate places - on a 'pen and ink' manual whiteboard that was regularly updated throughout the course of a shift, and digitally via a central PC.

At the time, the A&E department had recently purchased a software package called 'Symphony' from Ascribe - one of the world's leading Emergency Department software packages - to provide a structured display of the location and status of current patients.

Information was being entered into the Symphony solution via a PC, but the manual 'pen and ink' whiteboard was still being used as the main administrative tool by the Charge nurses. As a result, information was being fed into both, inconsistencies were a regular occurrence and records were often out of date or contained conflicting information.

Henry Dowlen, a doctor working in the A&E department at Charing Cross, identified the possibility of using interactive whiteboards to combat these problems and combine both methods into one.

The pilot

Following the decision to trial an interactive whiteboard, Dowlen contacted Steljes, as the exclusive UK representative for SMART Technologies. Steljes then worked with its trade partner, Leapfrog, to conduct a pilot project in January 2007, consisting of one board being installed in the A&E department.

As all staff had already been trained to use the Symphony product, no further training was required. Charge nurses were asked if they would be prepared to take part in the trial, and then shown the SMART Board™ interactive whiteboard as a group to ensure they all supported the idea.

The trial was initially meant to be one month long, but after much collaboration between Charing Cross, Ascribe and Leapfrog, it was extended to two months after a larger SMART Board was deemed more appropriate for the amount of information that needed to be viewed simultaneously. A larger board allowed an electronic notepad to be shown side by side with the Symphony solution, to record more specific information or extended patient data.

Delivering results

At the end of the two month pilot, the hospital conducted a short retrospective questionnaire with staff to help make its purchasing decision.

"After I presented the hospital with an in-depth analysis of the pilot, the resounding response from doctors and nurses was that they loved the technology. The easy-to-use boards helped increase staff morale, as updating patient information became more fun and interactive," Henry Dowlan commented.

In May 2007, Charing Cross decided to buy a SMART Board interactive whiteboard due to overwhelming demand. Centralising all records created a time saving of up to 20 minutes per patient in busy shifts. Not only were patients happier with a faster treatment time, but staff were also able to provide a higher quality, more precise level of patient care due to easier sharing of information.

However, following the pilot period, all staff readily accepted and began to rely on the interactive whiteboards; "when the pilot finished, the nurses were up in arms at the thought of returning to a manual whiteboard - even those who were less accepting to start off with," said Dowlan.

Some of the factors that impressed the Charge nurses included more legible and movable information; creating more time to spend on clinical instead of administrative duties; and that the board has been particularly useful for the regular handover meetings held within the A&E department.

Summary

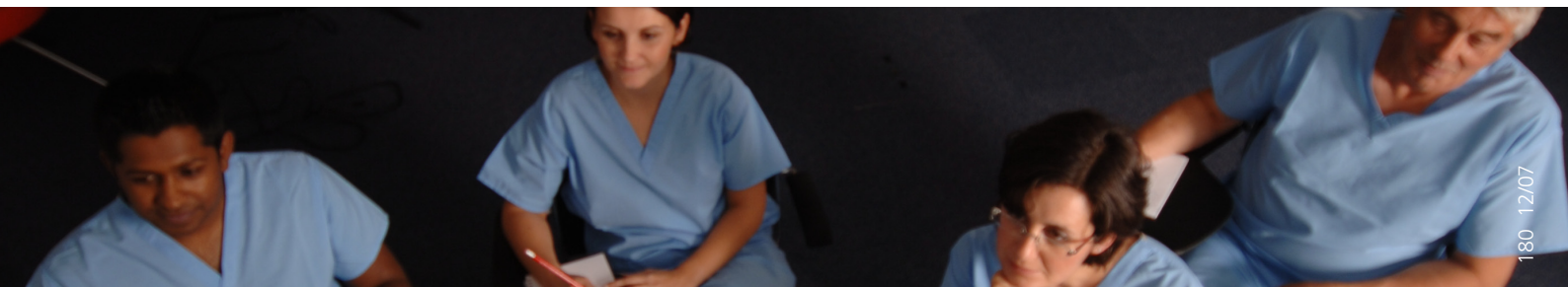
Steljes has provided an easy to use SMART Board interactive whiteboard solution for Charing Cross hospital, which has played a part in improving staff morale, as well making administrative tasks more fun and interactive.

The board, with its visible extra information, has created a time saving of up to 20 minutes per patient during busy shifts. In fact, as part of the survey with staff following the pilot, one of the nurses commented; "I find I have much more time to carry out clinical duties than I did before we started. It's improved communications between people in the department, as messages are clearly read, instead of just left unnoticed."

The relationship between Steljes and Charing Cross has been positive, contributing to an additional pilot on the ninth floor of the hospital. Charing Cross is currently trialling another SMART Board interactive whiteboard as a bed management system. If successful, it is considering rolling them out across all patient wards.

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*A&E Nurse,
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