

Should you Consider an iPad2 for your Practice?

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MacPractice iPad Interface

With the release of the new thinner, faster, sexier iPad 2 many physicians are reconsidering their need for an iPad and whether or not it can bring value to their practice.

Of course “need” can be hard to quantify. For physicians that are technology lovers the need for an iPad is easy to justify. But, what if you’re one of those physicians who are less cutting edge with technology choices? Is an iPad something that you should consider for your practice?

As you’ve probably read the iPad is much more useful when consuming data than it is when used for creating data. The screen size makes it a wonderful tool for looking at images, reading documents or web pages and viewing media. However, you wouldn’t want to try to write that novel you’re planning with an iPad.

Well – how does all of this relate to Health Care? To learn a bit more I spoke with Mark Hollis, the president of [Mac Practice](#). They provide the premier Practice Management, Clinical and EMR software solutions for the Mac and have been developing software for the Apple platform longer than anyone else in the Health Care space.



Mark Hollis

According to Mark physicians should consider specific tasks before determining whether a computer or an iPad is the best solution. “Who the doctor is, what their specialty is and what they want to accomplish determines whether or not the iPad is suitable for specific tasks”, said Mark. “If a doctor primarily used an iPad to view data and most of their use was in looking at information that is already in the system the iPad is a great device for doing that. A great example is an orthopedic surgeon who had his x-rays stored in a system like Mac Practice or another application that was on his desktop. Pulling up that x-ray image to view and share with his patient is a fantastic use for the iPad.”

Mark continues by saying that “If that same doctor was going to manually type in his narrative notes – that’s not a great solution for the iPad. Clearly, you wouldn’t give someone who knows how to type a keyboard where they can only type with two fingers.”

Mark feels that the physicians who will be most successful in using the iPad will be those who are entering minimal data, and primarily using it to view and share patient information, perhaps even while walking around the hospital. Under those circumstances the iPad is an excellent way of accessing existing information.

Mark shared several other instances where the iPad can be extremely valuable to a physician while out of the office including when you need to quickly view patient data while on vacation, at the golf course or out to dinner with your family.

Of course all of this depends upon the technology your practice is currently using. If you are already running an EHR system that provides iPad access through either a native iPad app or through a web app that can be accessed through your iPad’s web browser you may be able to add an iPad to your technology tool-kit very quickly. However, if your system is a closed, client-server type application it may be more difficult to get a great deal of use out of an iPad unless your vendor can provide you with an iPad app.