The CFO's Guide to Healthcare IT:

Understanding the Short Term & Long Term ROI of Medical Grade Computers



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Breaking Down the Value of Medical Computers

Choosing technological solutions for a hospital, doctor's office, or entire healthcare group can be one of the most expensive and far-reaching choices a CFO can make.

Any choice or consideration will be met with heavy scrutiny, both from within the organization and from the outside. Change is hard, and expensive change doubly so.

Still, when deciding on a cost/benefit analysis, consider the surprising numbers in this whitepaper that show **how** a durable, high-quality medical grade computer can actually end up being less expensive than the cheaper-to-purchase commercial computer alternative.

We'll start with maintenance savings and then move to the cost of incidentals with commercial computers, costsavings of battery-powered units and non-powered carts, paperless savings with a connected workplace, savings from reduced nosocomial infections in patients and staff, reducing unnecessary visits with telehealth solutions, and finally the financial benefits of choosing a single vendor.

Antimicrobial Housing and Fanless Design

Modern medical computers have two methods of creating an antimicrobial* shield — either a spray-on antimicrobial* coating or by mixing antimicrobial* properties right into the plastic housing of the computer's case. Both work in a similar way, to protect the computer from degradation or deterioration. However, that's where the similarities end.

Spray-on antimicrobial* coatings can be worn away by time and regular cleaning, both of which are in no short supply in a hospital. Modern computers like the CyberMed line feature antimicrobial* plastic to protect the computer from degradation or deterioration that doesn't get worn away by erosion or cleaning solutions.

Fewer bacteria on regularly-used items like touch screen monitors, keyboards, or mice means fewer hospitalacquired infections, fewer sick days, healthier patients, and more money to be spent on upgrading, expansion, and staff.

Better for Anesthesiologists

Anesthesiologists, like surgeons, shoulder a heavy burden every time they step into the operating room: the life of the patient depends on them. They need every available tool at their disposal to provide the best care to their patients.





However, operating rooms are clean rooms. There are strict laws and regulations regarding the kind of electronics allowed inside. Computers that use fans, for instance, are near-universally banned from operating rooms.

Fans may cool the inside of the computer, but they do so by pulling in air from the surrounding environment, blowing it over computer parts of dubious cleanliness, and blasting it back into the room. Standard fan-cooled computers are practically custom-designed to smuggle bacteria into the room and then shoot it all over the place.

Which is why there are hospitals out there where anesthesiologists are either forced to stay outside of the operating room and work from a distance, or end up doing their work on paper during the operation and then transferring it to the computer later on.

Fanless medical computers with antimicrobial* housings to protect the computer from degradation or deterioration and sealed IP65-rated bezels can go into any operating room, do their job, and then be sterilized with cleaning products afterward.

Keep anesthesiologists in the room, on the most modern gear, and ready to help the OR team through any procedure.

Reducing Staff Sickness and Down Days

An article in the <u>International Journal of Infection Control</u> found that **over 60% of hospital outpatient clinics and over 30% of computer keyboards and mice were contaminated with bacteria like Staphylococcus aureus and e. Coli.** Touch screen computer monitors don't fair any better in these studies, either.



Though wiping down screens, keyboards, and mice is a good start, the bacteria that has infiltrated the cracks and crevices can grow unchecked. This bacteria is then transferred right back onto the keyboard or touch surface, which is then spread through the facility to door handles, paperwork, other computers, and of course patients and staff.

Keyboards and mice made with antimicrobial* plastic to protect the itself from degradation or deterioration, the kind that can be installed with medical computers.

When it comes to medical monitors and all-in-one computers with IP65 ratings, dust particles, fecal matter, and other airborne or physically transferred solids simply can't enter the crevices in the devices, which makes surface cleaning far more effective. And, water and liquids from light sprays like sneezes are also prevented from entering the device, doubling down on the protection.

The low-pressure spray protection also means that IP65 devices can be cleaned more thoroughly – they can be sprayed down and sterilized without worry about damaging the components inside the computer with a solid cleaning regimen, these computers can do real damage to any flu or cold epidemic sweeping through the building.

With fewer bacteria crawling over every surface, staff members spend less time at home guzzling Dayquil and more time working. Fewer hours are lost, productivity is increased, morale improves, and fewer illnesses are passed back and forth between patients and staff.

Benefits of Hot-Swap Batteries

Hot-Swap Technology

In the fast-paced medical world, when it comes to cart computers, it's time to cut the cord.

Medical cart computers powered by hot-swap batteries can run pretty much nonstop. Hot-swappable batteries slot into the battery bays of a compatible computer, monitor, or tablet. These batteries have their own separate charging station where they can charge and wait, ready to be swapped out when the batteries in the unit are draining. And since these battery-powered medical cart computers and tablets have multiple battery bays, it means the depleted batteries can be changed out with fresh ones without turning off the device.

One of the other benefits of a hot-swap cart computer is also its versatility — if battery-swapping and separate charging doesn't fit into the current workflow, the units can be plugged in and charged like any powered cart. When used in this manner, they still provide superior battery life and a much lighter and agile solution than a traditional powered cart.

Comparing Battery Life

With a battery-powered medical panel PC or mounted tablet, it's no longer necessary to use a cart with its own power source.

Powered carts have a number of disadvantages to non-powered carts. First off, they're heavy (roughly 50 pounds heavier than non-powered carts) and hard to maneuver, especially through a crowded hospital environment. Second, they have to be charged, stuck in one place for hours while they do. Third, on average they cost \$3,500 more than their non-powered counterpart. Powered carts are also far more costly to maintain over time.

The runtime of their batteries isn't nearly as impressive in a head-to-head comparison, either. The batteries on a typical powered cart average around 8-10 hours of use. The CyberMed NB All in One Medical PC series, as an example, can run for 21 hours on a single charge. Some battery powered medical computers, like the CyberMed NB series, can even power peripherals like a barcode scanner or a printer.







Breaking Down the Math of Battery Life-Cycles

The savings don't end with the initial investment: the lifecycle of a battery powered computer is superior to the powered cart as well. Lithium Ion batteries begin to degrade after about 300 charge cycles. Basically, each time a battery needs to be recharged, that is considered a charge cycle. Earlier we talked about the battery life of the CyberMed NB series vs. a cart battery. Consider the 16 hour battery life of the NB series vs. 8 for a cart battery. Because the powered cart drains faster, and requires more charges per day, it burns through those recharge cycles at a much higher rate than the NB series.

It gets worse from there. As the battery degrades and the battery life shortens, a powered cart battery needs to be recharged more often. Given 24/7 operation demands of a hospital or long term care facility, it would take a powered cart roughly 125 days to reach 300 charge cycles. It would take another 112 days to reach 600 charge cycles. In less than a year, the battery in a powered cart will have degraded by as much as 30%. At this point, a standard cart battery might last 7 hours, which is just barely more than half of a typical shift.

By comparison, the batteries in the Cybermed NB series will take approximately 200 days before they reach 300 charge cycles. It will take another 180 days to reach 600 cycles. Even at 30% degradation, the NB batteries have more than 11 hours of runtime, which is still nearly an entire shift.

And, finally, the cost to replace the batteries of a CyberMed NB is \$300. The cost to replace the battery on a powered cart, however, **is usually around \$2,000**.

When it comes to ROI, there's no comparison.

The Surprising ROI of Medical Computers and Non-Powered Carts

Let's break down the cost-savings of a battery-powered medical computer versus a powered cart with a standard commercial mini-PC.

We'll use a CyberMed NB as an example unit, and a standard-priced mini-PC and powered cart.

CYBERMED BATTERY POWEREDCOMPUTER



CyberMed NB Battery Powered Computer = \$2,000 Non-Powered Cart = \$1,400

Total = \$3,400

It's true that a specialty medical computer like the CyberMed NB22 is more expensive. However, that money isn't difficult to make back with the kind of non-powered cart you can use with the CyberMed NB22. A non-powered cart costs roughly \$1,400, while a battery-powered cart you'd need to run that mini-PC usually runs around \$5,000.

So, the total cost of a CyberMed NB22 plus a non-powered cart is \$3,400. The cost of a mini-PC and a powered cart, on the other hand, is closer to \$5,800. So, **for a savings of around \$2,400**, **the hospital gets a far superior, more durable purpose-built medical computer**, the ease of hot-swap batteries, medical grade certifications that make the computer safer for near patient use, and a much more agile cart. Essentially they're getting the best of everything for less money.

Going Paperless

Reduce the Strain of Inputting Medical Records

Right now, in doctor's offices and hospitals around the world, patients are filling out registration forms. They're answering medical questionnaires. They're writing a sentence about their father's history of heart disease.

Multiply that by a few million patients, take the forms, and hand them to the nurse. Now a few million nurses get to input that exact same information into their computer. The average 1,500 bed hospital spends \$3.8 million on paper annually.

Going paperless is great for the environment and for the

POWERED CART w/ MINI PC + MONITOR

24" Monitor = \$150 Mini PC = \$700 Powered Cart = \$5,000

Total = \$5,850

bottom line, certainly, but it's even better for productivity. With a customer-facing medical computer, medical monitor, or medical tablet, patients can input all of their information directly into a simplified, user-friendly version of the form that, when submitted, will transfer directly into the EMR system.

Automating paper processes saves paper, saves money, and saves a nurse or admin hours of paperwork per day.

Green Benefits of Going Paperless

Did you know that, according to an <u>analysis by</u> <u>Cynergistek</u>, the average hospital prints over 8 million pages every month?

Of course, there's also the environmental perspective. If there are over 6,000 hospitals in the United States, and each of them is printing 8 million pages every month, that adds up to around 576 billion pieces of paper being used every year, just by hospitals.

With a rough estimate of <u>15,000 pages</u> from a single tree, hospital paperwork in just the US is responsible for the death of about **38.4 million trees every year**.

To make that easier to picture, imagine Rhode Island. Rhode Island is around 900,000 acres in size. If a healthy forest contains from 40-60 trees per acre, and 38.4 million trees are being used to print hospital documentation every year, that comes to around 768,000 acres of trees being cut down.

That means that a forest nearly the size of Rhode Island is cut down every year just for hospital printing paper. And if we spread the cost of that to all hospitals in the U.S., that's 22.8 billion dollars a year for the entire industry.

With enough medical tablets and medical computers to input data, we can help reduce the need for paper. Automated fax solutions and eSignature apps for consent forms can help to eliminate the bulk of the waste. Save a lot of money, and quite a few trees, by embracing medical computers and digital paperwork.

Increase Billing Efficiency and Revenue-Generating Staff Hours

It is estimated that doctors and hospitals are leaving as much as \$125 billion on the table annually due to medical billing errors. Going paperless, and eliminating tedious tasks like double-entry, can reduce errors and put receptionists, nurses, and doctors to far better use.

The speed of registration increases, as does billing efficiency. Errors are reduced when you remove the game of "telephone" doctors and nurses are playing when recording information from one medium to another.

Clinicians have faster turn around, and more patients are seen, helped, and billed every day. Instead of lamenting the Central Island Healthcare, a nursing facility in New York, piles of paperwork, staff can be happy to help more people, in less time, and generate the revenue that can keep their hospital, office, or practice up and running.

How Telehealth Reduces Costs

Save Time with Customer Portals

It's clear that healthcare has a problem with rising costs, patient wait times, and clinician burnout. Luckily, cuttingedge telehealth technology like camera-equipped medical tablets and medical computers, along with telehealth training, could take a massive load off of overworked healthcare professionals.

Right now, only 15% of physician practices are using telemedicine. Any new technology takes time to proliferate, but with telehealth showing huge leaps in cost savings, patient health, and reduced hospital visits, it's a technology that simply can't be ignored. And, best of all, can be used with any existing modern medical computers and tablets that have already been deployed in the hospital. is that, if the patient doesn't have to physically go into the

Customer portals allow patients to connect with their doctor like never before. Patients can send simple

questions over a customer messaging system rather than having to fill an appointment slot. Instead of an estimated \$200+ cost to the insurance (assuming a basic check-up with zero tests), the patient gets their question answered and the doctor saves 20 minutes to an hour on face-to-face time.



Reducing In-Person Visits

had telemedicine experts train their nurses. These nurses were then able to use medical tablets and medical grade PCs to give their nursing home residents long-distance doctor visits without leaving their rooms.

Instead of constantly shuttling nursing home residents to and from hospitals, the nurses were able to help the patients get diagnosed and even prescribed medication over a video chat with a doctor.

This reduced hospital visits of nursing home residents from 25 a month to 14. Doctors, over medical computers, were able to see the patients and help them, but without all of the attendant hassle for both parties.

And while any camera-equipped computer and device can function for telehealth, medical-grade computers can serve a dual purpose, reducing the amount of overall equipment necessary while still helping patients who are present and those who are not.

Reduces Risk of HAIs

One of the simplest but important benefits of telemedicine hospital or office, it's literally impossible for them to catch a nosocomial (hospital-acquired) infection. And while that may seem like a minor thing, as we discussed earlier,

HAI's are still a serious problem for hospitals and patients everywhere.

According to the CDC, on any given day, 1 in 3 patients (31%) have at least one healthcare-associated infection.

And considering that both the young and the elderly are at the greatest risk from HAIs — and tend to visit medical facilities more often than other age groups — the benefits of telehealth for these demographics, in particular, become clear.

Telemonitoring Helps Sufferers of Chronic Illness

Close to 60% of all healthcare visits are with patients suffering from chronic illnesses, totalling up to around \$8.3 billion in spending according to the recent <u>"Ready, Risk, Reward" report</u> from Premier. They're also the cause of 70% of the deaths in the United States.

A study of 521 patients using the ValCronic telemonitoring program for patients with chronic illness showed a marked reduction in the need for hospital visits and an overall increase in health outcomes. Blood pressure and weight both decreased to healthier levels due to telemonitoring and preintervention, while the need for emergency services dropped to half the previous amount. Finally, the need for hospital readmission also dropped from 20% to 13%, while worsening of the chronic illness dropped a solid 2 percentage points.

The monitoring involves things like using wearables and bedside equipment to record heart rate, blood pressure, blood sugar, and activity levels. The patients also used long-distance doctor visits over video chat to receive updates, perform check-ups, and generally stay abreast of their condition with medical assistance.



A separate study of veterans with chronic illnesses found a 19% reduction in hospital admissions and a 25% reduction in the number of bed days. They also found that the telehealth treatment cost less, and produced excellent satisfaction scores from the veterans who used it.

Why Use Medical Computers for Telehealth?

It's true that any device equipped with a camera and decent specs can serve as a telehealth terminal — including even a doctor's mobile phone. And while this ubiquity is convenient, there are a few reasons medical computers have the edge when it comes to telehealth.

Redundancy: Medical computers already save money over the long term when it comes to ROI, both from longer mean time between failures, higher grade parts, fanless design, and battery life (for battery equipped models). When the telehealth wave comes, you'll already be equipped with better, longer-lasting computers than handle both EMR and online video and audio streaming over a greater period of time.

Integrated Camera: All-in-one medical computers come with cameras — most desktop computers don't. A consumer model monitor mounted on a swing arm doesn't have a native camera installed either. Third-party web cams can be adopted, but they're just another thing to buy, another point of failure, and another peripheral with another cable to wrestle with and keep track of.

Security: Telehealth means more patient data is available online. The readings from their monitoring devices, the charts and EMR a clinician needs to administer long distance care, prescriptions, everything. A medical computer with integrated RFID, fingerprint, or Smartcard scanner allows for two-factor authentication before diving into patient information, answering patient messages, or connecting with patients via telehealth video streaming apps.

Durability and Maintenance Cost Savings

24/7 Operation and Reliability

Computers aren't generally meant to operate constantly and without failure or heavy degradation. Processors run hot, as do many other components, and can be easily damaged without cooldown time.

Some of the moving parts of the computer, those most likely to break because of constant use, are also some of the most important. The processor and case fans run constantly, and a hard drive with an actual platter has a motor that spins anytime information is read.

However, computers being used in a hospital environment don't have the luxury of cooldown periods. They have to be on all the time, available for use, and responsive at any time. Plus, depending on the use for the computer, a breakdown at an inopportune time could be catastrophic.

Purpose-built medical computers, on the other hand, are designed from the ground-up to run 24/7. Industrial-grade parts, fanless design, hot-swap batteries, and lower power consuming components all contribute to a medical computer or medical tablet that can run non-stop without a hiccup.

The computer itself lasts longer, which means fewer overall repairs and fewer replacements compared to an off-the-shelf consumer or business model PC. It also means fewer errors, faster turnaround time, and lower patient wait times.

Greater Mean Time Between Failures (MTBF)

"MTBF" means "mean time between failures," and is a common measurement of a computer's reliability.

Medical computers with industrial-quality parts, fanless design, and low-power elements have a greater average time between unplanned instances of downtime. These unplanned instances refer to any kind of error, glitch, or crash related to the device's hardware.



All computers have occasional crashes and failures — they're complicated, delicate machines. But, medical computers designed to monitor patients all night, or ensure nurse's have record access 24/7, have less moving parts. Fewer fans mean less friction, a solid-state drives means no hardware platter to fail, and fanless cooling prevents those broken fans from causing other parts to heat up and fail as well.

Cybernet devices average 50,000 hours between failures, while most high-quality consumer models average anywhere from 20,000 to 30,000 hours under the best of circumstances. Now factor in a 24/7 operating cycle, and it becomes apparent how much more often a commercial grade computer needs to be replaced.

Industrial grade components and smart design skyrocket the MTBF on these medical computers, providing medical staff with trustworthy, reliable workstations for any application for a much longer period of time.

Why Use Fanless Design?

Fanless medical computers offer financial advantages simply not provided by standard consumer or business-level PCs.

Fewer moving parts means fewer points of failure. It means fewer replacement parts, less opening the computer up, less downtime, and less frustration. But the benefits of fanless design promise more than just convenience.

Fans clog, and fans wear down over time, and sometimes a motor goes bad and the fan dies completely. Unfortunately, the loss of one of these tiny plastic fans can have dire repercussions. Without a fan, the processor overheats and eventually fails. Not only is the processor generally the most expensive component in the system, it's the most important element.

Fanless design also offers an additional benefit for medical facilities — the computers aren't pulling in infected air and shooting it around the room. **Instead, the unit is self-contained and sealed.** This allows fanless medical computers to go places other PCs might not be able, like clean rooms, laboratories, and even operating rooms.



The Durability Advantage of Solid-State Drives

The hard drive or "permanent memory" of a computer stores all long-term files, settings, and installed programs. Traditional hard drives are similar to CD-Roms - information is physically stored on a large disc called a "platter," which is then spun and read to retrieve information.

This platter is thicker than a CD-Rom and contains far more information. However, to read the information, the hard drive has to spin the platter while a moving head reads the surface.

As you can see, a regular hard drive has a lot of moving

parts. Which is why it's usually one of the first components in any given system to fail, right up there with system fans, CD-ROM drives, and power supplies.

Cybernet medical computers all come with "SSD," or "solid state drives." Instead of the platter-and-head method (basically a high-tech version of a record player), SSDs use flash technology to store information digitally. This flash memory works just like a USB thumb drive, quickly storing information in a non-volatile state that can survive a loss of power.

The information is retrieved more quickly — with less slowdown and lag — and is less susceptible to physical jolts and drops that might scratch the platter or break the motor on a standard hard drive. Computers equipped with SSDs start up faster, load programs and files faster, weigh less, and are generally superior in almost every way.

The Importance of an IP65 Rating

IP65 is a rating for computers and equipment, grading how well they can repel both solid and liquid intrusion. Solid intrusion covers things like dust and other fine particles, while liquid intrusion is primarily water and other fluids.

In "IP65," the first number (6) marks how well solids are prevented from penetrating the computer case. In the case of a "6," the computer is rated for "protection from total dust ingress," the highest IP rating for protection from solids.

The second number describes how well it can resist water. A rating of "5" means the computer casing is **protected from low-pressure water jets**, with "limited ingress protection." This is one of the higher ratings, just below "total immersion in water" and "high-pressure water jets."

Not only are these ratings useful for preventing hospital-acquired infections, allowing units to be regularly disinfected, but they also increase the computer's overall lifespan. Dust inside of a computer can cause elements to clog, slow down, and even short out over time. Water inside of a computer can, of course, lead to severe damage. With the likelihood of both decreasing down to practically nothing, that's two common points of failure eliminated.

Benefits of One Vendor

IT Convenience

Traditionally, a hospital or clinic's computer technology could come from a dozen different sources.

The mini-PCs are one brand, the powered carts that run them are purchased somewhere else. The monitor might be another manufacturer, as are the assorted peripherals like barcode scanners and biometric USB dongles. The full computers installed in permanent locations like the nurse's station or a back office might be yet another make and model.

For IT, managing compatibility, warranties, and vendor help from across multiple platforms can be difficult. This time-consuming juggling of multiple brands can bog IT down, giving them less time to work on other tech issues, reducing efficacy and value across the board.

Interchangeability and Standardization

When all of the medical computers in a facility come from the same vendor, they can be swapped around and interchanged without effort. They can be moved from one cart to another, or one wall to another, without worrying about changing the mounting hardware.

Standardization across the line makes it easier to deal with support issues, manage security protocols, and even install monitoring software that allows IT departments to be proactive instead of reactive to IT hardware issues.

The Magic of Software and Hardware Compatibility

If you've ever had to wrangle an IT environment that had Windows desktops and Apple iPads and Samsung phones, you know that lack of system compatibility can grind operations to a halt. This constant finagling between operating systems kills productivity, frustrates the entire team, and ensures that the organization isn't getting the best out of its technology.

Instead, with medical tablets and computers from one vendor, each system image and OS is essentially the same. Instead of IT having to keep multiple images on hand for crashes and reinstalls, they can all use the same version and the same bootable USB drive.

Again, it's a question of efficiency and productivity. When IT hears of an important security update, they know every device needs a reboot and an install. Trying to keep track of the update schedules of 15 different platforms running multiple OSes is less-than-efficient use of time and energy.

It also reduces the time spent on user education — once the staff learns one workflow, they're done. They're not pulling constant mental gear shifts to remind themselves how this particular medical tablet or medical cart computer is supposed to work.

Order Units, Schedule Repairs, and Ask Questions in One Location

When the Dell PCs break down or need upgrades, it's time to call Dell — they might be able to ship something to you on time. But if the iPad breaks, does it go to the Apple store? What about the proprietary panel PC that's connected to the physical therapy machine or the imaging device?

One of the benefits of a one-stop-shop vendor is that all contact information for IT technology now goes through one representative instead of eight. Ordering? Talk to the rep. Looking to upgrade? Talk to the rep. Something break down? Confused about how to use something? Looking for hands-on computer training for the staff? You guessed it: talk to the rep.

This saves time for everyone involved, from buyers to IT to staff members.



Breaking Down the Savings

In short, the financial benefits from purpose-built medical computers are easy to see.

Long-Term ROI of Medical Cart Computers. When it comes to medical cart computers, you get tougher, safer, and cleaner computers that are far superior to a consumer PC, but still end up being cheaper to buy because of the cost of powered carts.

Computers That Can Go Anywhere. You get tablets and computers that can safely and legally operate in a clean room or surgical environment, reducing the risk of errors and the ensuing lawsuits that tend to spring up in the wake of errors.

Lowers the Cost of Maintenance. The fanless design and industrial parts mean the computers last longer, require fewer repairs, and inflict fewer productivity drops on the staff who use them.

Benefits of a Near-Paperless Hospital. Embracing medical tablets and customer-facing (or customer-accessible) medical touchscreens reduce paper use, which costs not only the environment but a good deal of money as well.

Reducing Sick Days and Hospital-Acquired Infections. The high price of nosocomial infections is also reduced, thanks to the IP65 rating that makes the computers easier to clean, and the telehealth benefits of keeping a perceo begin with. These same innovations also lower staff sick days, increasing productive and billable hours across the board.

Save Money, Bed Space, and Clinician Time with Telehealth. Telehealth reduces unnecessary hospital visits, which saves resources for when and where they're needed most.

Increasing IT Efficiency. And, finally, standardization across the line increases IT efficacy and efficiency, saving them from the "break/fix" cycle and allowing them to work on optimizing systems rather than just keeping them running.

<u>Contact Cybernet today</u> to learn more about medical computers, how they've been implemented in other clinics, and to receive a quote or consultation today.

^{*}These products do not protect users or others against bacteria, viruses, germs or other disease organisms. Always clean these products thoroughly after each use.