

Symbio Technologies™ | **CASE STUDY**
Enterprise Thin Client Solutions

The Prairie North Regional Health Authority

Bralin Technology Solutions and Symbio Technologies Transform a Traditional, Paper-based Health Care Provider into a Paperless Agency

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The Prairie North Regional Health Authority

The Prairie North Regional Health Authority is one of Saskatchewan's 13 health authorities and covers a large and diverse area in the northwest part of central Saskatchewan, Canada. Home to two regional hospitals and many other health facilities, Prairie North employs more than 2,600 staff members.

The Challenge

How do you transform a traditional, paper-based health care provider into a twenty-first century paperless agency? This was the challenge facing the Prairie North Regional Health Authority when it built a new facility. It was this challenge that brought them to Bralin Technology Solutions, a value added reseller for Symbio Technologies. Brad Kowerchuk, the company's president, understood immediately that Symbio's thin client technology would provide Prairie North with the solution it needed.

Prairie North faced a number of major issues in realizing its goal of moving away from paper and towards electronic record keeping. First, its new clinic would have no on site IT person, so whatever solution was chosen would have to be intuitive to end users and require very little technical support. Second, its examination rooms would be used by a number of different doctors throughout the day. If doctors had to constantly login and launch their applications, they would have less time available to see patients, which would cut into both profits and the quality of service offered to patients. In addition, leaving patients alone in an examination room with an unattended PC raised many data security issues. Finally, the examination rooms themselves were rather small, so finding room to put electronic equipment was a challenge.

As a government agency run by the province of Saskatchewan, Prairie North had to use three Windows-based software products. The first was Electronic Medical Record (EMR) software created by Nightingale Informatix, one of North America's fastest growing health care application service providers (ASP) for outpatient clinics. The second was a pharmacy application used by the province and the third was a knowledge base to provide medical practitioners with ready reference material.

Whatever solution was installed would need to allow the medical staff to access these programs quickly and securely so that information

could be added and then be instantly available to the next medical practitioner viewing the patient's record.

The Solution

Bralin and Symbio Technologies met with the Prairie North representatives and determined that they could provide the health care facility with a package of products and services that would meet its needs. The IT companies explained to Prairie North that centralizing the applications and data on a terminal server and accessing them with Symbio stateless thin clients would:

- reduce the need for IT support
- allow the system to be managed remotely
- remove the need for doctors to reboot the desktop device every time they entered a new exam room
- eliminate data security issues
- remove concerns about broken workstations
- run silently and not generate any heat
- eliminate the need to replace the workstations every few years
- reduce the total cost of owning and maintaining the network
- take up little more space than a monitor, keyboard, and mouse

Bralin provided Prairie North with an HP terminal server, HP switches, and a Symbiont Boot Appliance with stateless thin clients from Symbio. Bralin also provided swing out-arms to house the monitors for the Symbio thin clients, which are about the size of a paperback book.

Results

Bralin Technology Solutions and Symbio Technologies delivered all that had been promised.

The medical staff began using the solution immediately and had no learning curve or downtime in using the new technology. When asked how she felt about using a Symbio thin client rather than a PC, one staff member responded, "It looks like Windows and it feels like Windows." Other workers were completely unaware of the fact that they were not using a personal computer.

Doctors arrived in the morning, logged on to the system from any available Symbio thin client, loaded their applications and locked their screen. They then entered an examination room and in under 10 seconds were able to unlock their screen and immediately see and access all of their patients' data and any of the applications they needed to use. Before they left the room, they just locked the screen. Entering the next examination room, they simply repeated the unlocking process that took less than 10 seconds, far less time than it would have taken to reboot a PC and relaunch all of the necessary

applications.

Support calls to the Prairie North's IT department across town were practically eliminated.

Doctors were also relieved that they did not have to worry about leaving tech-savvy patients alone in the examination room with an unattended PC vulnerable to having its data stolen from it via a USB stick.

One doctor noted that the day was probably not far off when regulations similar to those of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of the United States would be enacted in Canada. In addition to data security measures, the law also regulates the disposal of biohazards. Therefore, if a patient contaminated a doctor's laptop, for example, and that piece of equipment could not be sterilized, it would have to be thrown away in accordance with the requirements for disposing of hazardous waste materials. Of course, the data stored on it would have to be deleted before the laptop was removed from the office. Needless to say, this entire procedure would be costly and time consuming. Choosing a stateless thin client solution from Symbio, in which all of the data is centralized on a server, over a PC or laptop solution was one way to future-proof the new network and avoid problems of this nature.

One year after the installation, the previously paper-bound health care facility was transformed into a virtually paperless organization that can provide secure, up-to-the-minute medical records. Medical personnel can access this information from any Symbio thin client in the clinic over a secure network that requires minimal management, has almost no down time, and whose cost to maintain over time is far below that of a comparable PC-based system.

By choosing stateless thin client technology from Symbio Technologies, Prairie North had selected a computing solution that enhanced the health of its record keeping system and, by providing secure, accurate records, improved the health of its patients as well.

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For more information about Symbio Technologies, our network of Value Added Resellers, and our industry-leading diskless thin client solutions, please visit: www.symbio-technologies.com

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About Symbio Technologies

Symbio Technologies develops enterprise-class networks with a single goal in mind: Simplicity. A simple network is a manageable one - and that translates into lower costs, increased reliability, tighter security - and peace of mind. Symbio helps organizations break free of the common limitations, costs and headaches of computer networks by simply eliminating the most troublesome part of the network - the personal computer.

Symbio takes PCs off the desktop and replaces them with diskless thin clients - small desktop devices with no moving parts, no internal storage, no embedded operating system and no software. Simply turn them on, connect to the network and your users can access to the most up to date operating systems, applications and data as needed.

Symbio Technologies designs and manufactures hardware, software and services that enable businesses to reduce the time, complexity, and costs associated with deploying and maintaining computer networks.

Symbio's flagship thin client solution consists of a network appliance called The Symbiont Boot Appliance, stateless desktop terminals (diskless thin clients), and value-add subscription services. Our solutions connect users to a variety of environments that utilize the most popular protocols and systems in the industry, including Microsoft Windows Terminal Services (RDP), Citrix (ICA), Linux/Unix (X), NX Server (NX), TN5250/AS400, IBM3270, and virtually any mainframe protocol.

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