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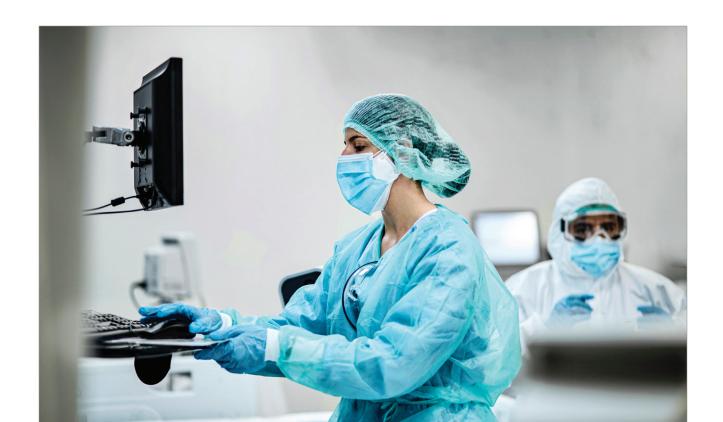
Healthcare Organisation Protects Employee Safety, Security with Washable, RFID-Embedded Keyboard

A major healthcare organisation in Sydney, Australia, needed a keyboard that provided first-rate infection control and fast log on but in a form factor that could fit their needs. Their current keyboard solution was too clunky and cumbersome for their mobile cart and small workstation applications. Wamee™ partnered with rf IDEAS® to create the rapID keyboard: a sleek keyboard that easily integrated into existing operations while providing an embedded RFID chip reader and washable surface to reduce virus transmission, provide secure credentials, and improve overall safety and security.

THE CHALLENGE

For a major healthcare organisation in Sydney, finding a keyboard that could fit their mobile cart and small workstations while providing infection control and secure log on was proving difficult. Their current solution was too clunky and ill-fitting for their current applications. The adhesive hook and loop strip that attached reader to the keyboard created an infection control and cleaning risk.

> Infection control is obviously a big issue in healthcare settings. It was before COVID and it will remain after COVID.

KATHLEEN WATSON/GENERAL MANAGER
HOSPITAL PRODUCT AUSTRALIA

"A keyboard is constantly being touched by many, many people. It could be sitting in a common area or in a hallway where people could touch it. It could have airborne viruses, bacteria, and pathogens on it. Having the ability to clean it quite rigorously by putting it under hot water with soap, alcohol, or bleach is quite important."

The organisation's current solution was cumbersome and difficult to use for the nurses and staff. Using a smaller keyboard with an external reader would still present the same number of surfaces and cleaning risks, potentially leading to more infection transmission. The healthcare organisation needed a keyboard that can be easily cleaned and disinfected and had an embedded RFID reader to reduce equipment count and replacement and to provide secure credentials all while fitting in its current applications.

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THE SOLUTION

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Wamee partnered with rf IDEAS to create a washable keyboard with an embedded RFID reader that has a sleeker form factor than traditional keyboards to better fit in mobile carts and smaller workstations.

"We looked at the design of the actual keyboard compared to existing keyboards that were too deep," Watson said.

❝❝ We designed the rapID keyboard so it sits nicely on a mobile or wall-mounted workstation so it is as aesthetically pleasing as it is functional. ❞❞

Called the rapID, the keyboard can be cleaned under hot water with no impact to the keyboard. The rapID keyboard has a slim design with backlit keys that enhances workflow productivity through a single sign-on security credential.

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THE RESULTS

By replacing two expensive peripherals, the rapID keyboard has provided additional safety and security for the healthcare organisation's employees and patients while freeing an additional USB port for expansion, such as adding a webcam. The contactless authentication coupled with the ability to be washed and sanitised helped the organisation to meet its infection control targets. Overall user acceptance has been high with fewer calls for technical issues and greater adoption among staff.

Streamlined Design, Improved Ergonomics

Having the reader in the keyboard instead of in a separate device provides easier reach and access since it is where the user needs to input information, which helps to improve overall ergonomics and use of the device.

"Having to tap a reader with a card attached to a belt on something above waist level can be challenging," said Watson. "Having the reader on the keyboard where it is easier to get to and tap has been easier. They said it was so simple to set up, just literally plug and play. We're finding it has been quite a positive response."

First-Rate Infection Control

The rapID keyboard enhances infection control by giving users the ability to thoroughly clean the device. The IP68-rated keyboard can be washed under hot water or cleaned with bleach or alcohol. A locking device on the keyboard allows it to be wiped down between uses without registering any keystrokes. It can even go in the dishwasher. A quick disconnect mechanism allows for easy removal and connection for cleaning. Even though the keyboard is washable, it has a membrane switch for quieter, faster key response.

Ultra-Fast, Secure Entry

The embedded WAVE ID® reader in the rapID keyboard saves space and keeps patient records secure at all times and can only be accessed via secure contactless authentication. The rf IDEAS reader also allows the device the capability to read any card or security card solution. The dual-band reader can recognise 125 kHz and 13.56 MHz credentials and is configurable to read four different card configuration types including frequency, card type and data formatting.

The success of the rapID adoption for the healthcare organisation has led Wamee to look at other areas where the security and safety of the keyboard can be used. "Healthcare is our focus, but we are looking at more front-end locations such as hotel reception where multiple people are using the same workstation," Watson said. "We're looking at bringing solutions into more sectors like the hotels, hospitality and even banks."

For more application information, visit **www.hpaust.com**

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