

## HIMSS Day 1

Posted By [David Brooks](#) On March 2, 2010 @ 7:21 am In [News](#) | [1 Comment](#)

What a day! I was fortunate enough to get on to the floor before it officially opened at 1230pm. What an impressive and odd site. Like a massive – and I mean massive – ballroom before the guests arrive. Companies and union crews scurrying to make last minute preparations. Mostly taping down carpet and steaming wrinkles out of floating overhead signage.

As I made my way around the floor, companies of all sizes were having their final team meetings in preparation for the thousands of soon-to-arrive attendees. It was an odd combination of cheer-leading, marketing message “tune-ups”, and presentation dry-runs. It reminded me a bit of Blade Runner – replicants passionately running through their scripts for imaginary audiences. Allscripts, with its massive booth, has an equally massive army of company representatives – all wearing orange. On the other end of the spectrum, companies with only a handful of representatives were also huddling, organizing and psyching themselves up for what they hoped would be a throng of new leads from the wave of attendees soon crashing the floor.

It’s an amazing spectacle that no picture can possibly capture. The sheer scale of marketing bling under one enormous roof is outlandish. And that’s the thing – it’s not under one roof. After circling the main hall about a dozen times, I realized I couldn’t locate a number of companies, including a number of large ones that would have a more noticeable presence. Finally, I resorted to looking at booth numbers rather than just meandering until I found what I was looking for. Odd, I thought, why does the numbering start at 4000? Ok, so maybe I’m not the sharpest tool.

When I finally made my way over to the C hall, I could not believe it was just as big as the first, or so it seems to me. It’s just crazy. There is no other way to describe it.

I met with a number of companies and saw some pretty cool stuff. Just about everyone I met gave me their press kit that includes their press releases. Furthermore, as I was making my way around the show, press release after press release hit my email in a relentless barrage. I eventually stopped checking. It was simply too much to follow.

The news item I found most interesting and newsworthy – filtered with my own particular biases and the fact that I have about 100 press releases that I still need to go through – Epocrates’s announcement that they will be [offering an EMR](#) <sup>[1]</sup> in the Fall to solo and small offices.

Unlike the thousand other “me too” companies in the space, I think Epocrates has a number of key things going for it that makes its bid serious. First, the company was probably the first to prove that you can build a relatively technology-heavy solution and still gain widespread adoption among clinicians. It is probably the only company in the enterprise space that has a real consumer savvy. After all, just about all other competitors in the EMR market start or end-up in the larger practice segment because it is just plain too hard to reach the massive and highly-fragmented small office market. Epocrates already works with a huge percentage of them, has proven adapt at “reaching” them, and perhaps most important of all, has earned their trust and loyalty. If you then consider their technology, and the fact that they tend to be pretty smart deploying it... They are going to offer a true thin-client, hosted solution that will run on the iPhone, iPad, and any other platform. They’ve got a highly-coveted, special relationship with Apple. I’ve been told they will offer an integrated PM from day one. All in all, I’m very impressed. I think this time next year, everyone will be talking about how rapidly they’ve been able to gain market share. And this year? They’ve got a postage stamp booth with a handful of company representatives. I like it. I like their style.

I had the chance to get a demo of the Wallace Wireless WIC Pager at the AT&T booth. It's just as slick as I imagined – simple, yet powerful. There are some really impressive companies pushing unified communications this year, including Avaya, Philips, Voalte, Vocera and a number of others. Without going into all of the details, there's a great mix of solutions from the simple to the complex.

Over the coming days and weeks, I'll do my best to parse through all of the information and follow-up with a number of the companies and products. Tomorrow, I'll try to give a concise overview of the mobile news.

By the end of the show, my legs and hips aching and suffering a splitting headache, I can honestly say that I was dreading going to the HlStalk After Party – not because I didn't think it would be fun. I was just too battle weary. All I can say is, thank God for the kind lady (I was too delirious to get a name) who gave me some Motrin. It's amazing what a few orange pills, water and some fresh air can do for you. As I stumbled over to Max Lager's I had built enough strength to commit myself to "maybe an hour".

After last-call four hours later, I disbanded with the dozen or so other lingering party goers. Two great surprises kept me energized and engaged well past any logical comprehension – after all, I still had to get back and write my post. The first surprise – and I know it shouldn't be one – the After Party was just plain amazing. Where else can you share drinks and conversation with Ivo Nelso, Jonathan Bush, Judy Faulkner and on and on? And everyone seemed to share just the right amount of cynicism and irreverence to make me think – maybe not everyone takes themselves too seriously. The second surprise? Jonathan Bush, who I've only briefly met once before in the past – someone who I just assumed (how do I say this appropriately?)... that I wouldn't find terribly interesting – he was hysterical announcing the HISSIE Awards. He's obviously a very sharp guy. No doubt someone who likes to talk, but very good at it, very quick on his feet... funny, self-deprecating. Very impressive.

Judy, who we all sort of assumed wouldn't show up, did. She arrived a little after the Awards ceremony. I didn't have a chance to talk with her, which is a bit of shame given that she was among the very last to leave. That fact alone goes a long way towards shattering my image of Epic being aloof and inaccessible.

If you didn't make it this year, all I can say is definitely sign-up next year and you better move fast when Mr. H sounds out the invitation.

Looking forward to tomorrow.

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[1] offering an EMR: <http://www.epocrates.com/company/news/030110.html>