

A Bridge to DR

ABSTRACT:

DR imaging technology has emerged as the leading solution for workflow, productivity and X-ray image quality. However, as facilities plan their migration to DR, there are valuable bridge solutions well able to meet their imaging need today as well as providing a cost-effective path to DR in the future.

Article

X-ray technology has long been the go-to diagnostic tool for many medical procedures and exams. Ongoing advances and improvements within the technology indicate that X-ray imaging will remain a key resource for years to come in medical facilities around the world.

In today's healthcare arena, economic pressures are forcing many imaging facilities to accomplish more in the face of reduced funding—at the same time, most refuse to allow compromise of image quality or patient care. Therefore, when investing in an X-ray system it is important to avoid paying high costs for capabilities not needed today... while ensuring that the new system can be cost-effectively upgraded with features that may become crucial tomorrow.

The trend in the market for some time now has been the movement away from film-based and Computed Radiography (CR) toward Digital Radiography (DR) systems. The reason? Computed Radiography (in which the image is captured on a phosphor screen and then scanned, effectively digitizing the image) and DR (which utilizes direct digital capture and processing of the image) both offer robust digital imaging and advanced image processing. However, DR technology stands alone with advantages such lower dose requirements, elevated productivity, gains in overall workflow and faster time to diagnosis.

Be that as it may, there are still high-performing alternatives to the cost of a new DR suite. Facilities lacking the budget or the patient volume to make productivity an overriding concern may still find that a traditional analog x-ray system with a CR capture and digitizing option to be their best solution while planning a DR migration. Making the right choices

within the CR context are also key: choices to be made include single cassette or multi-cassette systems, tabletop or floor stand models, and relative cassette processing speeds—all with their distinct advantages and associated price tags.

Selecting a vendor offering a broad range of analog x-ray, CR and DR solutions helps facilities begin with the optimal system, then easily bridge the gap when the time is right to retrofit the existing analog room with a wireless DR detector. This strategy delivers all the benefits of DR imaging, along with the patient positioning flexibility of a cassette-size detector, *without* the large capital investment in an entirely new, integrated DR room.

Lastly, by purchasing all of the above-mentioned x-ray equipment from the same vendor, facilities can then utilize the same detector from system to system, room to room, and even in mobile x-ray systems. This keeps that detector providing a high return on investment on a 24/7 basis.

By considering all of these issues while determining a 5-year plan— and, by partnering with an x-ray imaging vendor who provides a broad set of options and trustworthy guidance— facilities can select both an optimum solution for today...as well as a cost-effective path for DR migration in the future.