PACS Administrators Report New Digital Dashboard Is a Valuable Tool That Can Reduce Downtime

The new KODAK CARESTREAM Digital Dashboard provides system administrators with a convenient way to monitor equipment performance, storage utilization and volume changes for KODAK CARESTREAM PACS (picture archiving and communications system) and KODAK CARESTREAM Information Management Solutions (IMS).

PACS administrators can use the CARESTREAM Digital Dashboard to verify that devices are operating and communicating on the network—without leaving their desks. A simple red/yellow/green display gives immediate feedback regarding the status of any monitored device. An integrated, product-specific tools menu puts the launching of frequently used tools just a click away. The dashboard also makes it easy to track the number of concurrent users for a device, the number of read and unread imaging studies, as well as other statistics.

In addition to displaying the status of PACS functions, the digital dashboard monitors functions that are part of the CARESTREAM Information Management Solutions portfolio, which includes Enterprise, Regional, and Hosted Information Management. The next version of CARESTREAM Digital Dashboard will support monitoring of KODAK CARESTREAM RIS (radiology information system).

Several facilities tested the Digital Dashboard software prior to its release and evaluated its functionality.

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— David Brown, Imaging Informatics Manager, Cedar-Sinai Medical Center

Cedars-Sinai Medical Center
Los Angeles, California

Imaging Informatics Manager David Brown uses the dashboard to monitor the activities of five PACS and storage archive servers.

"The CARESTREAM Digital Dashboard is a valuable tool because it displays the status of critical processes that operate quietly in the background but can impact the entire institution if things go wrong. I check the dashboard first thing every morning and throughout the day. If I see that a process is in trouble or a directory is almost full, I can take action before any of our users are impacted," Brown said.

He uses the dashboard to monitor system uptime, CPU load averages, disk directory space, database table space and data backup as well as other tasks.

Prior to installing the digital dashboard software, Brown explains that some of this data required access at the UNIX level, which is cumbersome and time-consuming. "I don't know many PACS administrators who have time to go into UNIX and conduct the individual checks that the dashboard does automatically. In addition, it provides access to database information, including database table space that is not available anywhere else."

Brown adds: "It's been said that operating a system without a dashboard is like flying blind. I think it's extremely helpful to have a color-coded dashboard that displays event status."

Kodak
Carestream
Digital Dashboard

St. Vincent Mercy Medical Center
Toledo, Ohio

The digital dashboard has already demonstrated its value by highlighting a glitch that was causing some studies to be missed during the backup process, according to PACS Administrator Leslie Beidleman.

The dashboard identifies how many studies are captured, stored and backed up. "One of the dashboard indicators identified that some of our studies were not being backed up. It did exactly what it is designed to do, which is to highlight areas of malfunction so that they can be corrected," she reports.

Beidleman also appreciates the customizable daily checklists and the metrics produced by the dashboard. "It displays functions that sound mundane but need to be tracked, including the date of the last system reboot. If I see some odd results or codes and notice that the system hasn't been rebooted in three weeks, rebooting the system will be my first step."

She adds that the data tracked by the dashboard can help create documentation that drives decisionmaking. "Having data at my fingertips equips me to chart key parameters such as study volumes by hour. Examining our workflow and finding ways to level out peaks and valleys can help our staff increase efficiency and productivity."

Beidleman uses the dashboard to track PACS and its modalities at an affiliated rural hospital in addition to the main medical center. "The dashboard is a convenient way to determine whether a problem is with the modality or the network. This convenience is even more pronounced when you are dealing with remote facilities."

Good Samaritan Community Healthcare
Puyallup (Tacoma), Wash.

PACS Administrator Eric Bruce uses the digital dashboard to monitor functions associated with the hospital's KODAK PACS and CARESTREAM Information Management Solutions including: imaging studies captured, stored, read and unread; disk space; audit logs; conflicts in patient ID numbers and database table space. He reports the dashboard saved the facility from three hours of system downtime when it alerted him that his CARESTREAM IMS System database table space was 99 percent full.

"Thanks to the dashboard, I was able to immediately identify and expand the table space. This avoided several hours of testing to diagnose the issue and a minimum of three hours of system downtime to fix it. That was a major savings," Bruce notes.

In another case, he was experiencing intermittent problems with a storage management task. Prior to implementing the dashboard, he had to check three different systems to determine if there was a problem. Now the dashboard continuously displays the status.

"The dashboard provides an accurate diagnosis. It identifies a problem so that you can immediately verify it and then resolve it. This is a much more efficient way to administer a system than conducting manual testing," Bruce explains.

More Information

To learn more about the KODAK CARESTREAM Digital Dashboard and the full CARESTREAM Solutions portfolio, contact your Carestream Health representative. Or call 1-877-865-6325, ext. 655.

www.carestreamhealth.com

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