PACS Delivers Clinical Enhancements While Reducing Need for IT Support

CARESTREAM Virtual Desktop Boasts Added Flexibility, Lower Costs

Holy Cross Hospital
Silver Spring, Maryland

The KODAK CARESTREAMS PACS delivers productivity-enhancing tools for radiologists while trimming the need for IT resources. But it doesn't stop there. The platform's new user-based licensing structure also reduces expenses and provides greater flexibility.

This desirable combination of benefits attracted the attention of managers at Holy Cross Hospital, of Silver Spring, Md.

"It's pretty rare to find an information management solution with advantages for both clinical users and the IT staff charged with supporting it," said Jim Travitz, PACS Administrator for Holy Cross Hospital. "As the healthcare industry embraces more sophisticated technology, there is an urgent need to make sure that all the bells and whistles don't create the need for greater overhead in terms of IT personnel and equipment resources. The CARESTREAM PACS is the first one we found that minimizes the need for IT support while providing innovative enhancements for radiology users."

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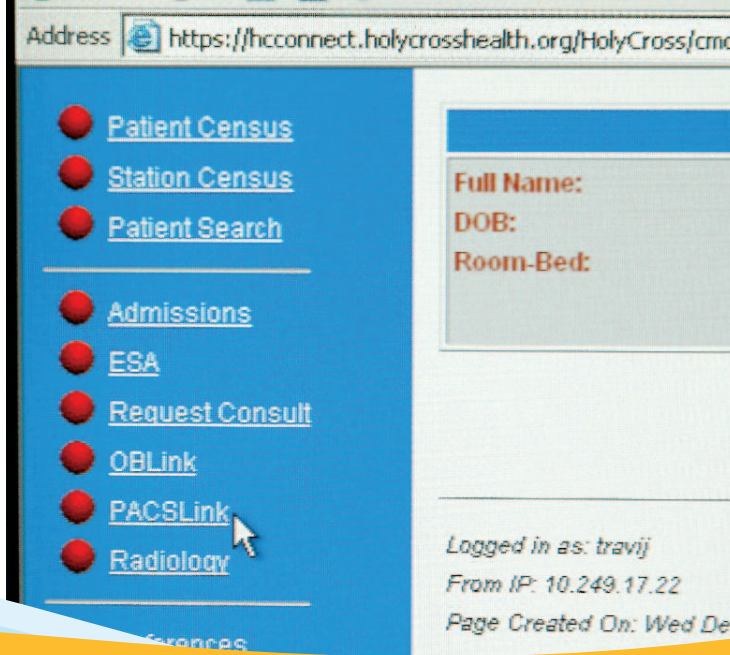## Compelling Benefits for Radiologists

According to Travitz, the CARESTREAM PACS platform offers the following benefits for radiologists and referring physicians:

- Integrated advanced visualization tools such as 3D, MPR, and other tools are available on any licensed workstation, not just designated diagnostic workstations;
- Faster workstation speeds;
- Flexible hanging protocols; and
- Easy image access through the hospital's primary Web portal.

"The CARESTREAM PACS platform integrates 3D, MPR, volume rendering and other functions into the display protocol so that the user doesn't have to launch a new application. That's a huge advantage in terms of convenience and ease of use," Travitz explains.

The CARESTREAM PACS' unique floating license structure creates a virtual desktop that allows the use of these advanced tools on any workstation, according to Travitz. "We pay for a certain number of concurrent users, not for the use of a feature on a specific workstation. This licensing method makes it easy to use any advanced tool for conferences or educational sessions throughout the facility."

The latest CARESTREAM PACS platform enables faster workstation speeds, which is an advantage appreciated by hospital physicians using Holy Cross' gigabyte connection as well as referring physicians that are linked into the system with a 100 megabit connection.

The system's flexible hanging protocols are praised by both on-site radiologists and remote specialists. "The CARESTREAM PACS allows clinical users to view images in an asymmetric layout, in other words 1:1 on one monitor and 2:1 or 4:1 on another monitor," he says. He adds that using a central viewbox to control all the monitors increases productivity, as does the ability to sort images by image type, patient name or other descriptors from a pull down menu.

Referring physicians can also view imaging studies by clicking on a "PACSLink" icon from the primary network portal. This process delivers access to images and other patient records with a single system log-on.

Since patients and physicians have an impressive list of leading healthcare providers in the greater Washington, D.C., area, it's important for Holy Cross to be equipped with fully-featured systems that are easy to use. "Referring physicians like the convenience of a single

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network sign-on to view patient records. They also tell us that being able to use the hanging protocol preferences and other tools from a remote workstation, just like they would at a hospital workstation, is a huge advantage. As more physicians access our system from homes or offices, this advantage becomes even more influential."

Licensing Structure Cuts Costs, Easier to Support

Matching licenses to the number of concurrent users, not workstations, creates advantages for IT staff while trimming expenses. "The new licensing structure cuts our cost for advanced licensing in half. In addition, it's also easier to support because you don't have to add or move licenses to different addresses when you want to provide access in a different place, or you are replacing an older workstation with a new one," explains Travitz.

He adds that since the CARESTREAM virtual desktop adopts a thin-client approach, software updates are greatly simplified. "Our IT staff can now update software in the central database, then push the update out to each user the next time he or she logs onto the system. This eliminates the cumbersome, time-consuming task of updating each individual workstation. As a result, our users begin to benefit from each upgrade immediately, instead of having to wait for IT personnel to download these upgrades to each workstation."

Helen Schneider, MD, examines images from a thoracic procedure using an asymmetric layout on the dual-screen CARESTREAM PACS workstation.

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PACS administrators also gain tools that make their jobs a little easier. For example, administrators can now view and update studies, correct assession numbers, delete studies and make other changes from the database instead of each application. That's a tremendous time saver, according to Travitz, who is still working with a 10-year-old RIS. Since the hospital's RIS doesn't have worklist management, Holy Cross is using worklist functionality offered by its PACS to expedite entry of patient and image information.

Travitz reports that clinical users and IT personnel at Holy Cross are extremely pleased with the performance of the hospital's new PACS. "With this platform, we are able to realize greater productivity for all users, from physicians and IT professionals to radiologists. As a result, the CARESTREAM PACS will assist us in dealing with staffing shortages throughout the facility, not just in the radiology reading room."

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