



MANAGING MEDICAL IMAGE DATA

Hospital discovers benefits of cloud storage for medical images

THE CHALLENGE:

Growth in medical image data strained the tape archiving system and demanded a more robust disaster recovery solution.

THE SOLUTION:

Rockford Health System deployed Iron Mountain's Digital Record Center® for Medical Images solution.

Partnered with:



THE BENEFITS:

Iron Mountain provides ready access to critical patient data, while safely archiving medical images and protecting them offsite in case of disaster.

“In this economy, we all have to do more with less. Iron Mountain helped me lower costs and get medical image management off my peoples' plates.”

ROCKFORD MEMORIAL HOSPITAL: JOE GRANNEMAN,
CHIEF TECHNOLOGY AND SECURITY OFFICER

THE CUSTOMER

Rockford Memorial Hospital is a 396-licensed-bed healthcare facility located in Rockford, Illinois and is part of the Rockford Health System. Nationally ranked for quality patient care, the hospital is renowned for its solid reputation of superior doctors, leading-edge technology, comprehensive services and outstanding facilities.

After implementing a Picture Archiving and Communications System (PACS), continued growth in medical image data placed an increasing strain on Rockford's tape archiving system. What's more, the tape-based system stored only a single copy of each medical image, escalating concerns about the hospital's ability to recover information in the event of a

disaster. The hospital system needed a solution for storing medical images that could address security, privacy and disaster recovery requirements, while keeping costs manageable and system performance high.

Rockford turned to Iron Mountain's Digital Record Center® for Medical Images. With seamless integration to the McKesson Horizon Medical Imaging™ PACS solution, Iron Mountain was able to provide ready access to critical patient data, while safely archiving medical images and protecting them offsite in case of disaster.

THE CHALLENGE

Transitioning from a tape-based storage and archiving system to an online digital storage solution

The combination of new technologies and the ever-increasing accumulation of patient medical image data meant that archiving and disaster recovery had become a significant concern.

Joe Granneman, chief technology and security officer for Rockford Memorial Hospital, explains, "I really wanted a solution where I could feel comfortable with our backup strategy for images."

The hospital's previous medical image archiving solution was based on a tape drive that had become worn with age. "Originally, the tape library was intended to store less active images," said Granneman. "However, as our volume of storage continued to grow we found ourselves retrieving more and more medical images from tape."

In one instance, a worn tape drive damaged a tape, threatening the hospital's ability to quickly access an image for an urgent request. Fortunately, Granneman was able to recover data from the damaged tape but it made him realize a more robust disaster recovery solution was required.

THE SOLUTION

Iron Mountain's Digital Record Center frees up Rockford's IT staff, and provides a solution that grows with their needs

"Cloud storage really is a good solution," states Granneman. "The images are encrypted so even the Iron Mountain staff doesn't have direct access to the images and since the files are digital, you don't have any issues with physical transfer."

Iron Mountain's Digital Record Center solution presents itself to the onsite McKesson Horizon Medical Imaging PACS as a remote storage archive. An onsite gateway connects to the PACS. The digital medical images are then forwarded from the PACS to the gateway and then transmitted over a secure VPN connection to Iron Mountain's geographically dispersed, underground data centers.

The service is unique in that it provides both disaster recovery and archiving benefits, while reducing overall costs. Archived images are continuously replicated, ensuring redundancy and high availability. With Iron Mountain's Digital Record Center, the hospital has the tools necessary to meet HIPAA compliance requirements.

In addition, the integration with the Horizon Medical Imaging PACS combined with Iron Mountain's relationship with McKesson ensured the the implementation went smoothly. Granneman comments, "The implementation was seamless. It went very well; we had the support of both organizations."

THE RESULTS

Rockford improves disaster recovery, increases access to patient information, and lowers Total Cost of Ownership

The Digital Record Center solution provides Rockford Hospital with a host of benefits. "It's more than just backup," Granneman explains. "It's that intelligence of what to send offsite and what to cache locally, and there's a lot to that."

Deploying Iron Mountain's Digital Record Center solution meant that the hospital could avoid a large capital outlay, reduce their total cost of ownership (TCO) and have immediate access to additional storage capacity. In addition, in the climate of tight resources, Rockford could redeploy resources previously spent on in-house storage to their core mission of patient care.

The hospital is able to quickly access digital medical images from the local cache, but even in cases where the medical images must be pulled from the remote storage archive the VPN provides much faster access than tape. Granneman comments, "I think it is a nice combination of using your local storage for what you need most often, and then accessing images via the cloud when you need it."

Once a skeptic, Granneman is now a convert. "I feel comfortable that both our storage and archiving needs are addressed. With Iron Mountain's cloud storage solution in place, we can now focus on managing our clinical applications."



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