

Burlington Ultrasound and Radiography Success Story

Facilities : 2 | Radiologists : 2 | Employees: 38 | Exams: 55,000 / yr

Burlington Ultrasound and Radiography “Powers Up” with RamSoft PowerServer

It’s been nearly two years since Burlington Ultrasound and Radiography in Ontario went power-up with RamSoft’s PowerServer PACS software. The facility, which is now celebrating its 25th Anniversary, performs some 200 studies a day. A staff of 34 technologists, support personnel, and two radiologists handle a workload mix of mammography, breast biopsy and assessment (25%), bone density studies (25%), ultrasound (40%), and walk-in general studies (10%).

According to Donna Duffy, R.T., clinical manager, their new PowerServer PACS System has gone a long way toward improving the throughput and efficiency of the facility. “A major upgrade has been the ability to accommodate an unlimited number of workstations and users,” she says. “Anywhere I have a computer in the facility – and we have many – I have access to PACS images and reports. It’s terrific.”

Burlington is virtually paperless. The only exception is the use of document scanners at each technologist workstation to input patient requisitions and technologists’ notes. “Before PowerServer turned every computer into a workstation, things had to be centralized around a few dedicated stations,” Duffy explains. “This would result in backlogs, or you may have had to compromise the order in which things could be done. Now, anything in hard copy is scanned into a patient’s file and held for 30 days before being discarded.”

Duffy feels that the new PACS system, with the PowerReader® user interface, has also helped the radiologists in terms of faster patient searches and faster access to images for interpretation. “With the new software, we can actually push images to the appropriate radiologist. If we know, for example, that someone is reading mammograms that day, we can push it to their local cache. This is another new feature of the system.”

Another benefit Duffy sees is that information and images can be made available immediately to anyone authorized to access the files. “It’s like real-time, it’s so fast,” she says. This has also resulted in providing more flexibility for the technologists. Previously, if an exam began in one room, the patient and the technologist needed to stay in that room until the procedure was over. With the new PACS system, an exam can be continued from any room giving the staff flexibility and optimizing the use of the equipment.

Image storage and retrieval are also faster. Burlington uses a RAID connected to their server for what they call “local storage” since the images can be retrieved so quickly. They also have long-term



Dr. Louisy

Donna Duffy

Success Snapshot

Challenge:

To improve clinical workflow, increase throughput and study accessibility.

Result:

Today, Burlington is virtually paperless and benefits from immediate access to patient studies for everyone from anywhere.

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- Donna Duffy, Clinical Manager

archives but it is a simple matter to move images back to the RAID if needed.

When it comes to Duffy's own responsibilities, especially those of PACS Administrator, she also benefits from the multiple workstations. "I don't have to work in the server room anymore," she reports. "I can sit in the comfort of my office and conduct the work I need." She is also able to provide assistance to technologists who might need her opinion during an examination. "It doesn't happen that often, but occasionally I'll be asked to take a look at an artifact or help with a day entry question."

Duffy customized the PowerServer PACS system at her facility to accommodate six different user groups. It is possible to define privileges and levels of access. It also helps the facility with HIPAA compliance since the system provides an audit trail that allows one to identify anyone who has viewed an image and when.

Duffy emphasizes that entering into a PACS agreement is not a one-time purchase from which you walk away. It needs to take on the nature of a relationship. "You become partners and there is communication," she says. "They look for ways to improve your workflow and you provide feedback. We depend on them and they depend on us."

"This has been a fabulous transition for us," says Duffy. "While I can't quantify it in terms of dollars and cents, overall it has made us a cleaner operation and more environmentally responsible.

"I would recommend this system in a heartbeat," she concludes. "And I've seen enough PACS systems to know."