

Volume 7 - Issue 2, 2007 - Editorial

How PACS has Reinvented Radiology

Dear readers,

Probably the most significant sole factor in the transformation of the way radiology services are provided today was catalysed by the launch of PACS systems across the globe. Aside from glowing references about the technology itself, and how it has revolutionised healthcare services, what has been the practical impact of PACS on the profession of the radiologist? And how are European countries responding to the technology? In this edition of IMAGING Management, we analyse how PACS is absorbed into not only a nation but also within the radiology department and look at the way it has prospectively altered the future of radiology.

The design, construction and operation of a PACS system that services an entire nation, that also takes into account the different needs of each service provider in the network, is a massive undertaking. Our cover story includes accounts of two such national programmes, one in the U under the auspices of the national 'Connecting for Health' programme, the other a national implementation programme in Estonia which overcame significant challenges in financial and integration terms.

The undoubtable benefits for participants in these national programmes are, of course, a massive reduction in the time to diagnose illness and injury, a decrease in film and staff costs, and images such as x-rays and scans can be stored and mailed electronically so that doctors can speed diagnoses. Health professionals across an entire country have access to high quality information at the touch of a button. Most importantly, it plays a strong role in countering a shortage in trained radiologists overall, and a lack of specialised services in certain remote or rural medical imaging centres, that affects health systems in several European countries.

To complement this focus on national PACS programmes, we also include an article on the impact of PACS on a micro-scale – notably the influence of PACS in the department of radiology and how it has transformed the way those in the profession view their changing role. As usual, we welcome your thoughts and comments.

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