



Mercy Regional Health Center

Simplifying Healthcare Information Delivery

Mercy Regional Health Center is an acute care facility licensed to operate 150 beds in two facilities. This private, not-for-profit organization was created in 1996 to reflect the combined strength of healthcare of St. Mary's and Memorial Hospital. Mercy is committed to meeting the community's healthcare needs through a quality, compassionate, modernized healthcare delivery system which includes more than 100 physicians and over 700 employees serving the people of Manhattan, Kansas and the surrounding areas with a wide range of quality health and wellness services.

To live up to their mission of delivering quality healthcare services, Mercy Regional's IT staff wanted to enhance their ability to provide healthcare personnel with the critical information they need to deliver patient care. The challenge they faced was to provide this information in the many required formats as efficiently as possible. For the IT staff, extracting data from MEDITECH as simply as possible was a critical requirement. To accomplish this goal, they teamed up with Interbit Data to deliver an efficient, cost effective solution.

The Many Challenges of Information Distribution

The IT services department faced many challenges in delivering the information the physicians and staff needed on a regular basis. Many of the issues could be attributed to the physical aspects of the technology since many of the physician's offices were not equipped with high speed Internet capabilities and therefore they needed to send the information via fax. But using fax as your delivery mechanism has its challenges.

Many faxes fail to reach the doctor's offices due to paper jams, paper running out or the fax machines being turned off at night. These issues result in reports taking a long time to be delivered and modems being tied up trying to resend the documents. Fax reports can be very inflexible since the fax has to be delivered and printed in its entirety, not enabling segmentation and delivery of the information based on who needs it. On top of those issues, fax delivery can have security implications because printing out documents to printers where anyone can view the data is a direct violation of HIPAA regulations.

"Our hospital faxes over 10,000 documents per month, which equates to approximately 40,000 pages per month, with each page usually taking about 35 seconds to send through the traditional fax machine. That is 16.2 days of non-stop faxing," said Ron Olson, Systems Analyst at Mercy Regional Health Center in Manhattan, Kansas. "Add into that equation the failed faxes and we estimate we would spend a total of 24 days of non-stop faxing operation through a traditional fax system."

Interbit Data recommended that Mercy Regional use NetPrint Plus with the Distribution Wizard option to eliminate these challenges and deliver the correct data to the hospital staff in the format they choose. NetPrint Plus allows users to retrieve printed reports from MEDITECH through the Internet. Instead of receiving faxed information, reports are printed on a local server and retrieved via a secure link. The Distribution Wizard option enables reports to be collated and directed to the proper recipients based on user-defined rules using data extracted from the reports.

Providing Relevant Reporting

NetPrint Plus is simple to implement and for Mercy Hospital, enabled them to overcome their challenges within a few days and with very little implementation effort. Mercy Regional Hospital is now has the following capabilities:

- Documents can be sent as files to the doctors' server at their office that can be printed out, stored as a file or uploaded and linked to their office EMR product, if available.
- Inside the hospital, scheduled reports are emailed in PDF format directly to personnel needing the information instead of printing to a printer nearby. This has allowed personnel, especially directors, to receive the reports in a timely manner directly to their e-mail, which can then be viewed from home or via their PDA device. This eliminates having to print large documents only for a subset of the information. PDF reports can be globally searched and using Adobe products, the reports can be segmented, edited or forward to other personnel in need of that information.
- Logic can be applied to the file using information in the report headers or body to direct specific reports to the doctor's computers as a file instead of sending it to the fax machine.
- Scheduled NPR reports are 'printed' to a file folder for either archiving or use by other persons and systems. Some of the processes implemented include:
 - Printing Electronic Medication Administration Reports (eMARs) every 2 hours to a file folder viewable by anyone in case of downtime.

- Printing daily Admissions data to personnel for review. Automatically sending encrypted Press Ganey files via FTP with no human intervention.
- Updating the hospital occupancy status every 30 minutes by integrating and graphically displaying the bed information via the intranet.
- Sending information to the Order Entry system, which does not allow information to be sent via FTP. To automate that function, data is 'printed' to a virtual NetPrint printer, which sends the file to a network folder. Their helpdesk is set up utilizing the OE requisition system.

"Using NetPrint Plus, each document now takes 10 seconds to send regardless of the number of pages. We have cut the time we spend faxing down to 1.1 days," said Ron. "There are no more failed attempts, and faxes are sent in a timely manner. There is no waiting for the job to print or waiting for a fax machine to free up. Long distance faxes are eliminated, reducing phone charges. And the doctors no longer complain of wasted paper since they only print what they need from the files we put on disk."

The Net Results

In the past 3 years, Mercy Regional has delivered over 1.2 million pages, of which 65% are sent through the secure Internet, reducing the call volume by approximately 180,000 calls. With the ability to print reports to PDF and then e-mail them to the appropriate recipients, they have saved countless reams of paper, which ultimately end up needing to be shredded and properly disposed of in order to comply with HIPAA.

"What we can do with Interbit Data's products is really astounding," said Ron. "We have extended our capabilities in ways we never thought possible, far beyond what they were two and a half years ago due to these solutions. I continually find new ways of sending data from the MEDITECH system to many different destinations without having to become an NPR genius. I cannot tell you how much of a superhero this product has made me look to the hospital, not to mention the amount of money and time we have saved overall."

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