

Seattle Radiologists



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— Thuan Nguyen, Director of Information Technology, Seattle Radiologists

CUSTOMER: Seattle Radiologists

BUSINESS: Full-Service Diagnostic Imaging Center

CHALLENGE: Improve Accessibility to Medical Images while Lowering Storage Costs

For more than forty-five years, Seattle Radiologists has provided full-service outpatient diagnostic imaging procedures to the greater Seattle area. The center is committed to delivering the highest quality, state-of-the-art diagnostic and therapeutic radiological services for patients and their healthcare providers and has been ranked in *Medical Imaging’s* top ten list of freestanding imaging centers. To that end, Seattle Radiologists consistently upgrades its systems and equipment, which today include a variety of MRI and CT scanners.

When Seattle Radiologists recently assessed its long-term medical image storage and disaster recovery program, it saw a system that didn’t meet their evolving needs for storage capacity and information protection. As a long-tenured Iron Mountain customer, Seattle Radiologists knew they could turn to Iron Mountain for a simple, cost-effective solution. The Digital Record Center™ for Medical Images was that solution.

THE CHALLENGE: GROWING VOLUME OF MEDICAL IMAGES DEMANDS INCREASED STORAGE SPACE AND A DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN

Like many healthcare providers, Seattle Radiologists must balance the demands of efficient electronic records management, including HIPAA-imposed regulations, with a constant need to drive down excessive costs. They are obligated to securely store a rapidly growing library of thousands of medical images and ensure these images are readily accessible to radiologists. Seattle Radiologists maintains two years

of images online in short-term storage and archives all images to DVD.

Explosive growth in the average size of image sets has strained their on-site storage capacity and their previous method of archiving images on DVDs was inefficient, costly and images would be difficult to recover in the event of disaster. The process of obtaining images from the jukebox and transferring them into the system often took 45 minutes for a single DVD. Even worse, if a physician requested an image that was not pre-fetched, retrieving and viewing it could take hours or even days.

Recognizing the challenges of DVD archiving and storage, Seattle Radiologists knew that an updated system would require less time to retrieve images and result in more time for patient care.

THE SOLUTION: IRON MOUNTAIN’S DIGITAL RECORD CENTER FOR MEDICAL IMAGES IMPROVES WORKFLOW AND PROVIDES PEACE OF MIND

The Seattle Radiologists team wanted a turnkey, hassle-free medical image storage and disaster recovery solution. The company evaluated a number of vendors, including their primary equipment and Picture Archiving and Communications System (PACS) provider. Director of Information Technology, Thuan Nguyen, wanted to upgrade to Iron Mountain’s Digital Record Center for Medical Images, an off-site managed backup and archiving service powered by HP’s proven Medical Archive solution (MAS) technology.

“I’ve worked with Iron Mountain in every job I’ve had and I trust their technology 100% — they know storage better than anyone,” said Thuan Nguyen. “The Digital Record Center for Medical Images is a simple solution that fulfills all of our medical imaging needs for both archival storage and disaster recovery.”

In partnering with two industry leaders, Iron Mountain and HP, Seattle Radiologists was confident in their decision to implement a managed service. The solution delivers the archiving functionality required and is PACS neutral, allowing Seattle Radiologists to seamlessly integrate with most PACS applications. As Seattle Radiologists’ business grows, its Iron Mountain system will grow with it, easily expanding and evolving with their PACS environment. Also, the Digital Record Center for Medical Images is a hosted model, taking Seattle Radiologists entirely out of the costly system upgrade and management cycle and reducing the need for equipment floor space, utilities, staff and hardware maintenance.

Once Seattle Radiologists decided to work with Iron Mountain, getting started with the Digital Record Center for Medical Images was easy. In fact, the project was successfully up and running in a very short timeframe and the implementation process was smooth and seamless to the customer.

THE RESULTS: RESPONSE TIME TO RETRIEVE IMAGES IS IMPROVED BY 90% AND RECORDS ARE PROTECTED FROM DISASTER

“The Digital Record Center for Medical Images is amazing. We now have immediate access to our diagnostic images and are free of the cost and responsibility of storage and system maintenance,”

said Nguyen. “The solution is worry-free and I don’t have to think about our storage capacity and disaster recovery needs for our medical images.”

Iron Mountain’s Digital Record Center for Medical Images, delivered in partnership with HP, allows Seattle Radiologists to handle a greater volume of images and dramatically decrease response time. The time it takes to respond to radiologists’ requests for archived images has decreased by 90%. The big difference is that instead of spending time manually moving and viewing DVDs, the Seattle Radiologists staff can now increase their focus on the critical mission of patient care and ultimately growing their practice.

And the benefits of the system apply to older records as well. The Digital Record Center for Medical Images will allow Seattle Radiologists to convert their entire backfile image archive currently stored on DVDs, eliminating reliance on soon to be end-of-life technology and housing all images in one centralized, online location. Beyond the technology improvements, however, is the significant benefit of having all records safely stored with Iron Mountain. Once and for all, compliance is assured, risk is mitigated and radiologists are more productive.

“Radiologists are like all of us — they want the information they need as quickly as possible. With our previous system we had to pre-fetch an image before the appointment; with the Digital Records Center for Medical Record it’s already there,” said Nguyen. “Now we can access our images as if they were on-site, but without the costs and responsibility of maintaining a secure and scalable storage system.”

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