

Document Manager provides archiving solution for Bristol Royal Infirmary

United Bristol Healthcare NHS

British Royal Infirmary

Country: UK

Industry: Public Sector

Profile: One of the UK's leading teaching hospitals – linked to a university and responsible for supporting many other medical institutions in its region.

Key drivers: High volumes of documents for scanning and archiving.

One of the UK's leading teaching hospitals – linked to a university and responsible for supporting many other medical institutions in its region. These include Bristol Children's Hospital, St. Michael's Hospital, the Dental Hospital and the Bristol Eye Hospital, for whom the Royal Infirmary provides a scanning bureau service in respect of imaging and archiving medical records.

Past records caused huge backlogs

A key issue is the archiving and storage of very high volumes for itself and a number of local hospitals. Many of these records go back for decades and in addressing the backlog, archiving involves processing up to 25,000 documents a day.

With hundreds of thousands of patients being treated at these institutions every year, the volume of medical records being created and needing to be stored is enormous. Individual patients often have courses of treatment that last for years, and doctors need to be able to access treatment records that may go back over a long period. The traditional solution had been to store the hardcopy paper files in equally traditional filing cabinets, resulting in the need for huge amounts of space and considerable resource to manage and access the information.

More recently, the decision was taken to archive these records electronically. This provides the opportunity to reduce the space taken for storage – as well as the prospect of improving access to the records and case notes. For some time Bristol Royal Infirmary had been providing a bureau scanning and imaging service for the local health care trust – using an established document management system.

"Unfortunately, the original system developer pulled out of the market sector, and the reseller from whom we bought the system decided that in the circumstances they were unable to continue supporting the system," says Assistant Health Records Manager Mark Savage.

"We took a systematic approach to replacing the system and explored a number of different options. Document Manager was chosen as the software solution through a comprehensive procurement exercise covering product quality, past history with current users, user recommendations, etc," says Savage.

CASE STUDY - Document Manager - Bristol Royal Infirmary



“A lot of the prospective suppliers we considered just wanted to provide straight document management – we were focused on very large volume archiving and we wanted a supplier that would be a partner with us rather than just a vendor”

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Benefits of Document Manager

- Backlogs are able to be managed
- Secure retrieval of information from remote locations
- Enquiries can be dealt with more quickly
- Central management and storage of documents
- High levels of security
- Reduction of storage space needed (i.e. filing cabinets)
- Better access to information

The Document Manager solution

Document Manager is a powerful and comprehensive archiving and document solution that goes far beyond the conventional capture and storage of documents. It centrally manages the flow of documents through a user's organisation, maintaining constant document and user security by controlling who can have access to which documents and files. It provides tight control of file and document editing – yet immediate on-line access to those who are authorised – all under a highly disciplined central control regime.

“The application was very challenging. Currently we are archiving around 25,000 pages of medical records a day, and as a teaching hospital we have to ensure that stored records are easily accessible for research as well as good clinical practice. The space saving issue is often mentioned as a reason for electronic archiving and in our case it was a major one, with records being stored at several sites. So we wanted a solution provider that would provide continuing support and be there for us when we needed help”.

“Implementation went smoothly and to plan, with few surprises. A key issue that had to be addressed was the need to migrate over previously archived material – literally hundreds of gigabytes. Document 1 came up with a solution to re-index the material – and we moved from writing to optical disc to writing directly to SAN with data warehouse capabilities, although backup is still to optical disc,” says Savage.

Now up and running, the system is providing cost savings of around 25 per cent. “We have saved acres of hardcopy filing space,” says Savage, “and with the kind of overhead such space involves, the cost reduction has been dramatic. We also have faster access to records, and more importantly, multiple access that allows several users to examine a particular file at the same time. Medical records and case notes are more easily and readily available, and the cost savings in paper have been enormous. Significantly, the system really does eliminate paper unlike some solutions where users find themselves having to hardcopy viewed files”.

The result is a rugged, resilient and reliable archiving system that accommodates very high document volume archiving. On the foundation of the initial implementation success, the hospital and Document 1, the Document Manager Partner, are now pressing forward with plans to develop the UK's most sophisticated medical archive accessing application. When completed, it will enable doctors, consultants and other medical practitioners to look at all relevant historical records – immediately and at just a few keystrokes.