

IMAGING AS YOU LIKE IT...Medical Imager Caters to Physician Print Preferences

Paper Output Boosts Productivity While Cutting Costs

At The Cleveland Clinic, you can have it your way — on paper or film, in color or grayscale and in a full range of sizes, from A and A4 to 14" x 17". Images just the way you like them! Choice is a great marketing tool, according to John C. Litchney, MBA, RT, Administrator for The Cleveland Clinic, Department of Regional Radiology.

"Allowing referring physicians to select their preferred image formats and delivering the results quickly and efficiently has helped enhance existing relationships and built new business for our radiology department," said Litchney. "For example,



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we work with a neurology group that was thrilled when they saw how our razor-sharp color studies on paper could be slipped conveniently into patient charts. It literally changed their practice. Other clinicians prefer our high-quality large-format film. After all, radiologists are a service group, and that's service with a smile."

Litchney points out that referring physicians, whether within or outside the health network, overwhelmingly request images as hard copy with a small number preferring CDs. "In addition, when appropriate, patients like to leave with their own packet of images," he noted. "It gives them the feeling they have accomplished something tangible." Delivering a wide range of hard-copy images efficiently and cost-effectively is achieved in large part thanks to the all-in-one Codonics Horizon diagnostic-quality medical imagers. A single, compact and affordable Horizon dry, multi-media imager can output to a full range of media in both sharp, high-resolution grayscale and vibrant color with 16.7 million colors per dot. Horizon relies on advanced direct thermal and dye diffusion technologies.

Horizon film includes blue and clear base media in 8" x 10", 11" x 14" and 14" x 17" sizes, as well as A and A4 color film. Another significant breakthrough is Horizon's economical high-quality, durable DirectVista grayscale reflective media, which is similar to paper. Specially created for medical applications in a variety of sizes, it is ideal for referring physicians, particularly because it can be viewed in room light without a lightbox while offering the detail of film. "Paper-like white film printing is a boon to radiology not only in reducing media price but also by realizing significant savings in workflow and other soft-costs," said Litchney.

Litchney points out that the Horizon's small size enables flexible siting and relocating of the desktop imager. Additionally, the imager's speed, reliability and excellent service and support also benefit The Cleveland Clinic. And, with one imager doing the work of three, it delivers significant capital equipment savings.

Physicians everywhere are delighted with the image quality produced by Horizon on all media types. Around the world at Fukui University Medical Center in Komatsu, Japan, Horizon's DirectVista thermal film and DirectVista paper-like images have proven to be equally diagnostic. Dr. Harumi Ito, director of radiology for Fukui, comments, "The direct thermal film images produced on Horizon are equivalent to our dry laser images, and the clinical content and quality of the room-light read reflective media is easy on the eye. Horizon's image quality is truly impressive with film and media versatility unlike other imagers."

In the U.S., clearly The Cleveland Clinic Department of Regional Radiology has an imager that works as hard as its administrator and sizable radiology team. Complementing the large main-campus radiology department, the regional department comprises 15 sites located throughout the Cleveland suburbs, which delivers diverse radiological services. This includes five hospitals and 10 family health centers. Hospital sizes range from 125 to 450 beds handling 50,000 to 150,000 CT, MRI and general radiology studies through diverse management structures. Thirty-eight radiologists rotate among the hospitals and centers.

Often, referring physicians within the group practice are located in different buildings than radiologists, and the Regional Department also services diverse

physicians in private practice throughout the Cleveland area.

The Cleveland Clinic acquired its first Codonics imager in 2003 bundled with a CT scanner. "At first, I thought it was a fax machine," commented Litchney. "It was that amazingly small and compact." Today, after purchasing over a dozen additional units, The Cleveland Clinic still relies on a Horizon imager to service the original location where it now prints MRI, in addition to CT. "Unlike most printers, there is no limit to the number of modalities that can be connected to Codonics," he explained. "We've been able to leverage that when needed."

Today, both the number of imagers and printing applications in the regional department have dramatically increased. This is despite the fact that most Cleveland sites are connected to an enterprise-wide PACS and all image storage is digital. "Even in today's growing digital environment, there is still a huge need for hard copy images," commented Litchney. "In addition to printing for referring clinicians, we still have sites not yet connected to the PACS where we print directly from the modality for primary reading."

Therefore, not surprisingly, efficient management of printing is key to departmental productivity. Currently, Horizon imagers are enabling distributed workflow, with individual imagers conveniently on hand in individual modality areas. "The price and compact size make this possible. We don't need to hold a five-foot corner space for Horizon. We can just pop them down, like a microwave, where convenient," Litchney commented. "That way, technologists do not have to run back and forth between two locations when printing. And they can produce whatever media the doctor prefers."

"With imagers at various locations and facilities, we can send images electronically to the other facilities to print onsite," he explained. "Gone are the days of patients driving from location to location to pick up films. And if studies are missing, they can easily be resent to the referring physician for printing. Often doctors just prefer hard copy for client consultations."

As one of the innovators of paper printing, Codonics ushers radiology into a new age of cost effectiveness and productivity. Paper-like output offers numerous advantages. Naturally, it is significantly less expensive than film. Photographic quality 14" x 17" paper sells for about 25 to 30 percent less than similar sized film. But, when transitioning from film, a growing number of doctors also are switching form factors to 8.5" x 11" paper size, a format that embraces workflow and costs less than half the price of large-format film.

Paper does not require a lightbox for viewing or special storage to prevent damage. And it can be recycled. "Paper fits conveniently into a chart so that the image can follow the patient and doctors can easily flip to it, like a note or report," said Litchney.

Another advanced Horizon feature that benefits the healthcare enterprise is the convenient, removable smart card, which electronically holds all the imager configuration and feature information — from IP address to film inventory information. If the imager ever requires a service swap, the department snaps the smart card into the replacement unit without missing a beat, eliminating expensive sales service time and creating a huge after-sales service cost advantage for Horizon.

Forget long telephone calls and waiting for service personnel and parts. Codonics service is a big plus and is included with every unit for the first year. Codonics technical support provides tips quickly over the telephone 24/7. "If these don't solve the problem, the company swaps the printer with a new one overnight as part of its Sunrise Express Warranty," explained Litchney. "This revolutionary program provides greater uptime and a total lower cost than traditional on-site service plans. Then you just plug in the smart card and the unit is ready to go."

Horizon imagers are site friendly and not exclusive to radiology departments. Imagers can easily be placed in the offices of referring physicians for local printing of select images to the media of choice, following electronic review.

"With today's rapidly changing technology, I would encourage healthcare professionals to shop around and compare manufacturers when purchasing imagers," said Litchney. Horizon offers a host of unique features, superb service and superior value compared to the competition including the large equipment manufacturers. It is one of the best all-around imagers available today. 