GE HealthCare

Top Hospital Connects Users, Earns Trust, Expands Imaging Access

Consolidating enterprise-wide imaging enables 8,800 Centricity™ Universal Viewer Zero Footprint client users, reviewing 120,000 exams per month

Background

A leading teaching hospital in the Northeast is recognized globally for medical innovation. Known for breakthroughs that have improved lives worldwide, it operates over 100 outpatient practices with 1,000+ physicians, serving patients from New England, across the U.S., and more than 100 countries.

Its radiology department is equally expansive, performing over 800,000 imaging exams annually. The archive holds more than 10 million exams dating back to 1998. With such volume, fast, efficient access is essential for timely care.

To improve image access and interoperability via EPIC EHR, the imaging team aimed to replace their viewer, which required heavy IT support and caused delays. Their goal: a single, real-time viewer for both current and archived images- without moving data.

Instead of transferring data to a central archive- which caused delays and sync issues- they chose to stream it directly from source systems, keeping data in place for better performance.

The solution: GE HealthCare's Centricity™ Universal Viewer Zero Footprint Client (ZFP).



Integrated with the EHR, ZFP provides seamless, real-time access across the enterprise. As a zero-footprint viewer, it requires no downloads, installs, or local provisioning, reducing IT overhead.

Now, over 8,800 users- with proper access- can instantly view patient imaging history from any location. This scalable approach eliminates the inefficiencies of individual provisioning and enables faster, more connected care.

Challenges

Like many healthcare organizations across the country, this teaching hospital faced the dual challenge of improving care quality while meeting the meaningful use goals of the healthcare system. For patient imaging data, that meant providing consistent, anytime access to consolidated images across a multi-site health system.

Access needed to be seamless- from department to office to home- to support collaboration among referring physicians, radiologists, and other members of a patient's care team.

To meet these needs, the enterprise set out to image-enable their EHR with a powerful, unified viewer- one that was feature-rich, easy to deploy, intuitive to use, and simple to manage. The solution had to allow any authorized EHR user to access imaging data without requiring IT provisioning, and it needed to deliver both current and prior images instantly, putting the right information at caregivers' fingertips to support timely, informed decisions.

In addition to clinical goals, the hospital aimed to reduce total cost of ownership, simplify system consolidation, and minimize integration demands on IT. Scalability was also key, as the enterprise prepared to expand while eliminating unnecessary costs.

The Solution

A decade ago, this prominent teaching hospital made the decision to move to an integrated healthcare system, which led to the consolidation of its independent legacy IT systems. These legacy systems had been replicated across multiple hospitals to provide image access, but challenges remained.

"Physicians did not want to look in multiple places for data," explained the vice chair in the department of radiology. He continued, "We needed to improve the effectiveness of care delivery by consolidating image access. This is our biggest issue in healthcare today."To address this, the hospital consolidated on a single PACS—GE HealthCare's Centricity platform—to create a foundation for growth. This enabled the inclusion of imaging from specialties such as cardiology, vascular, intraoperative imaging, and OB/GYN.

As the enterprise expanded, so did its imaging volume. They needed a viewer that could connect both to a centralized archive and to remote archives, freeing IT from the time-intensive tasks of managing data movement and synchronization errors.

The imaging team selected Centricity ZFP to provide universal access across departments. Since the viewer requires no local installation, it broadened access to more clinical users and enhanced visibility into comprehensive patient image histories.

The ZFP solution saw rapid adoption. Now integrated tightly into the EHR, it serves 8,800 users and counting. Designed to work with both Centricity and third-party PACS, the viewer delivers a unified workspace with intelligent tools and 3D visualization- enhancing productivity and workflow efficiency.

Within a few clicks, referring providers can access exams, take measurements, and save them back into the record to support review and collaboration. At this large teaching hospital, flexibility and remote access were essential.

"We deliver data through the same enterprise viewing capability across the system, to everyone and everywhere," the radiology department leader noted. "All of our images are visible to the entire enterprise community through the ZFP solution integrated within our EHR."

Since ZFP uses server-side rendering, it delivers image data quickly without relying on system-to-system transfers. Further time savings come from not requiring downloads or app installations. And because it's secure and compliant, no data is downloaded or stored on user devices, it allows access via mobile devices such as tablets and phones.[3]

Flexible viewing is supported across PCs, Macs®, iPads®, iPhones®, and some Android™ devices, with interfaces adapting to screen size and browser type. This ensures a consistent user experience and gives clinicians with the proper privileges the ability to educate patients and collaborate with colleagues.

"It is tremendous," the radiology department leader said when asked about ZFP. "Our strategy also has been to deliver the images lossless to the enterprise viewers because the same image quality we deliver to the radiology department we deliver online to our referring providers and physicians."

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Outcomes

The results of Centricity™ ZFP adoption at the teaching hospital have been significant. The enterprise has archived nearly 10 million exams dating back to 1998 and adds more than 800,000 new exams each year.

ZFP connects directly to all image repositories, delivering real-time access (<2 seconds) to live studies and near real-time access (<6 seconds) to archived studies.[2] Since implementation, the hospital has achieved a 90% reduction in time to access long-term storage priors.[2]

Because ZFP requires no local installation, the number of clinical users with image-enabled access in the EPIC EHR has increased by 82% [2]. This broader access helps ensure clinicians can view more complete patient image histories, supporting faster, more informed care decisions.

Operational Benefits

In addition to the speed and access advantages delivered by Centricity Zero Footprint Viewer, the teaching hospital's enterprise team sees clear advantages in IT consolidation and system standardization.

Reductions in cost are real. "From an enterprise perspective, the more we can consolidate, the more effective it is for clinicians and the more effective we are from a cost perspective," stated the enterprise team leader. "From a system maintenance cost in terms of hardware and server costs and staffing, particularly in an environment like ours where we have a zero-downtime expectation, consolidating systems makes sense for the enterprise. In radiology, we have consolidated multiple radiology practices in the same healthcare delivery network, which starts with having one enterprise solution. Supporting many systems is an inefficiency of the past."

Reducing infrastructure costs ultimately benefits patients by lowering the cost of delivering clinical services. The outcomes, physician and caregiver feedback, and increased user adoption show that the ZFP solution has enabled this large enterprise to provide better image-enabled interoperability and access via their EPIC EHR.

Access scales with the organization. Physicians and referrers value the feature-rich zero-foot print universal viewer. The hospital has also reduced IT infrastructure needs and costs. "Installing software and the inefficiencies it brings and time it warrants are memories in the rear view mirror."

Ultimately, the facility is offering better access to more users at the point of care and decision-making—a win-win for patient care and enterprise image management.

The hospital's team leader noted that the simpler and more integrated a solution is the better, and he added that "simple" described GE HealthCare's Centricity Zero Footprint Viewer. Similarly, he said that for both large and small health systems struggling with image and information sharing, the fewer systems the better when it comes to availability, security, regulations, staffing and resources. "Efficiency dictates that we apply our efforts to a smaller number of systems," he said. "We must choose systems carefully and expect systems to perform at a very high level. Centricity ZFP is doing just that."

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—Radiology Department Leader

At a Glance

Challenge

One of the Northeast's leading teaching hospitals needed to ensure fast, seamless image access for more than 1,000 clinicians across its enterprise. The goal was to implement a unified viewer capable of delivering real-time access to both current and archived imaging exams-without delays-across all departments and care settings.

Solution

The hospital selected GE HealthCare's Centricity™ Universal Viewer Zero Footprint (ZFP) to enable direct image access from the EHR across the entire enterprise. Because the viewer requires no code downloads, local installation, or provisioning, the hospital has been able to extend access to a broader range of users-now totaling 8,800.

Outcomes

Centricity™ ZFP integrates directly with all the hospital's image repositories, delivering real-time access (under 2 seconds) to live studies and near real-time access (under 6 seconds) to archived exams.[2] Since deployment, the hospital has seen a 90% reduction in time to retrieve long-term storage priors,[2] and 82% more clinical users now have image-enabled access through the system.

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