

## Laserfiche ECM Blogs

### University of Southern California Radiology Department

Written by Laserfiche Staff

Paper storage was a heavy burden for University of Southern California (USC) Department of Radiology Billing Manager Liz Dubon—literally. Searching through the department’s massive stacks of storage boxes for paper documents was becoming hazardous to her staff’s health. “We used the big, big cardboard boxes, so they were really heavy,” says Dubon. With a volume of over half a million radiological exams a year, the storage space at the Alhambra, California, office—a department of USC’s Keck School of Medicine—was as crammed as each box.

“Within our storage area,” recalls Dubon, “you frequently had to move a lot of boxes out of the way to get the one you wanted. If they were overhead, you had to call someone to help you. With boxes that heavy, it would be really easy for someone to get hurt. It was a worker’s comp claim waiting to happen, which would not only mean injury for an employee, but also an unnecessary expense for the department.”

The department’s storage space filled up quickly, so Dubon was forced to rent off-site storage space, an added expense for the department. “Someone would have to carry boxes out and transport them off-site” says Dubon. “Even if I decided to spare an employee’s effort, I’d have to hire a courier, so that was another expense.”

With the goal of freeing up storage space and protecting her staff’s time and health, Dubon began looking at digital document management solutions. She relied on Systems Analyst Nelson Munguia to do some initial investigation. He looked at four products, with an eye toward reducing necessary storage space, minimizing data latency, providing easy retrieval of information and spending funds wisely. “We were looking for something that we could implement without increasing the staff workload and that would give us easy access to the data,” says Munguia.

“I really needed something that would be HIPAA compliant. That was my number-one priority,” adds Dubon, whose staff is required to protect confidential information contained in billing and Explanation of Benefits (EOB) forms.

With the help of reseller American MicroImaging, Inc. (AMI), Munguia narrowed the choices to two. After a Laserfiche® demonstration, Dubon was sold. “We could see how easy it was to use,” she says. “It’s a very user-friendly system.” Dubon made the decision to outsource the scanning of older documents to keep her staff free for day-forward scanning and locating documents using the new system.

Munguia recalls, “It took about two months to complete the installation of the server and scan six months worth of documents.”

Within a week or two of installation, the Laserfiche system was up and running, solving the problem of searching through boxes in the storage space. Instead of hefting bulky boxes to find documents, staff just calls them up on their desktops. “It took a huge headache away from me and my staff. It’s just easy—you can take something like an EOB and e-mail it to someone, or print it and mail it. We’ve eliminated the lag time for each collector.”

Laserfiche also eliminated misplaced files and batches of files. “Nothing is misfiled anymore,” says Dubon. “If we have an issue with something not being in a batch, which happened before we had everything fine-tuned, we resolve it right away. But now I don’t find that anything’s missing.”

Dubon even finds that Laserfiche can save patients some grief. “If a patient calls with a problem—for example, ‘My secondary insurance hasn’t paid’ or ‘I’ve been billed for charges that aren’t mine’—we don’t have to tell the patient that we’ll call them back the way we used to when it took so long to search for files. We can locate the file right from our computers and see the problem. That saves the patient a lot of worry.”

Locating EOBs quickly, whether there’s a mistake or not, saves Dubon from having to hire additional staff. “If I didn’t have Laserfiche, I would have had to hire someone full time to pull all those EOBs. I don’t have to move to pull files anymore. I just move my fingers to access the system and it takes seconds.”

Because the department uses Laserfiche, charges rarely get posted to the wrong account. “That would happen all the time in the past,” recalls Dubon, “and it was a big effort to correct. Now we’re doing more of an electronic interface for charges, moving more toward being paperless, so that’s happening a lot less—and it takes a lot less time to correct. Before installing Laserfiche, it could take up to two hours just to find the invoice. Now it takes seconds.”

Radiology needs to share patient data with other USC departments that also use Laserfiche, particularly demographic and insurance data, but they also need to protect sensitive information. That’s why HIPAA compliance was so important to Dubon. And Laserfiche security features enable her to control access to confidential data.

“AMI helped get everything up-to-date—I could set the access controls so that only authorized people have access to sensitive information,” says Dubon. While other departments use Laserfiche for many reasons—for example, USC also uses Laserfiche to manage clinical data—staff in those other departments may not have the proper

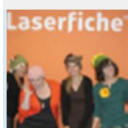
clearance to view confidential information. “When we send out files to other departments,” she continues, “we frequently use redaction to block sensitive information, such as charges or the reason a patient came to see the doctor.”

Munguia appreciates the reduced turnaround time between service and payment, as well as the reliable backup that Laserfiche provides. He sees an added benefit as well, noting that timely document delivery no longer stresses out staff. “I notice it every time we get a subpoena for medical records. Localization of documents is no longer a chore. Staff is smiling and they don’t look menacingly at the process servers anymore.”

Munguia first installed Laserfiche in the billing department. Accounting was so impressed by what the software could do that they soon followed suit. That department is now looking into expanding its use beyond auditing to creating accounting reports. Munguia looks forward to adding the administrative staff to the growing list of Laserfiche users.

There’s no doubt that Laserfiche has smoothed operations at USC Radiology. Dubon notices that in addition to sparing the staff heavy lifting and making their jobs easier, it’s also helped the department respond more quickly to patient requests. The installation is so successful, in fact, that AMI uses it as a demonstration model for potential customers.

Says Dubon, “The system is never down, it doesn’t have glitches and whenever something is not scanned properly, we’re able to flag it right away. I am very, very happy with it. It’s probably the best thing that my boss ever allowed me to do.”



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