

PresGar Companies Success Story

Facilities : 36 | Radiologists : 75 | Employees: 700 | Exams: 350,000/ yr

RamSoft PACS smoothes PresGar transition from film-screen to digital mammography

With the steady growth of digital mammography, few imaging conglomerates are more pleased than PresGar Companies. Not only has PresGar, one of the largest privately-owned medical imaging service companies in the U.S., installed its eighth digital mammography system, but images are displayed and transmitted—often to remote sites—using PowerServer PACS and Gateway Routers provided by RamSoft.

In less than a year that integration has resulted in substantial savings while significantly boosting the efficiency of PresGar's mammographers and technologists. In today's healthcare environment, such improvements are no small achievement. **"It's a home run,"** Dave Kost, Imaging Informatics Manager for PresGar, said of the integration.

Tampa, FL-based PresGar operates 36 imaging centers staffed by more than 75 radiologists and 700 employees. Together, those centers complete an estimated 350,000 exams annually using all modalities, including digital mammography, MRI, CT, ultrasound and x-ray. To facilitate optimal viewing, 10 PowerServer PACS, some serving multiple facilities, have been installed along with three Gateway Routers.

PresGar's move to digital mammography began in October 2007, and between then and May 2008 eight of its imaging centers replaced film screen systems with digital. Kost called the move to digital mammography a natural progression following implementation of the powerful RamSoft PACS. PresGar's goal in combining digital mammography with its existing PACS was straightforward: to enable the capture of superior images that can be enhanced and otherwise manipulated for optimal viewing via the RamSoft mammography module, enabling transmission to remote locations when required.

Offered in several configurations, the PowerServer from longtime innovator RamSoft, of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, provides a reliable, fault-tolerant, web-based approach to PACS, accommodating unlimited users and workstations. Key features include study tracking from start to finish; unmatched real-time worklist flexibility; prefetching of current and prior studies to each site or workstation; flexible viewing protocols specific to modality and body part; a full suite of clinical tools for image optimization; and a digital dictation module.

An important component is RamSoft's mammography module, which automatically sorts left and right digital image series and matches them to any relevant prior films for easy comparison. All popular vertical and horizontal compare modes are supported.

"We didn't select the digital mammography technology specifically with the RamSoft PACS in mind, but we did look at dedicated mammography viewers from major players," Kost reported. **"After comparing their capabilities with those of RamSoft, we decided to do all of our viewing on the RamSoft PACS.**

Success Snapshot



Challenge:

Transition one of the largest privately-owned medical imaging service companies in the U.S. to digital mammography.



Result:

Efficiency increased by 30% to 40% and PresGar is now seeing 100% more patients .



Savings:

Over \$600,000 in up front savings

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That saved us roughly \$75,000 for each of the eight dedicated mammography workstations we might have purchased."

According to Kost, implementation went smoothly. The only aspect was tweaking their system, which is designed to support the computer-aided detection (CAD) program that is used on all PresGar digital mammography units, to send images to PACS rather than to workstations. That was easily accomplished. **"There were really no prob-**

lems integrating the digital systems with the PACS," Kost said.

Clearly, the decision to invest in RamSoft was a correct one. Not only did PresGar save money, but the systems work well together, in part because RamSoft went the extra mile to interview mammographers in an effort to learn what they liked best about dedicated viewers and to shift some of those capabilities to its PACS. As a result, RamSoft modified its hanging protocol and other features to best meet PresGar's needs using PACS, and other improvements are planned—including a hotkey for easy switching between hanging protocols. RamSoft has continued to enhance the product since PresGar began installing its digital systems, with more improvements to come. Clearly, RamSoft is playing an important role as PresGar transitions to digital mammography.

"Our technologists can acquire images much more rapidly—they don't have to wait for image processing," Kost remarked. **"Once the images have been acquired, our radiologists can read them faster than they could before. The improved image quality and the ability to better manipulate images enables them to read with more confidence."**

Reading can now be done from off-site locations as well. In fact, thanks to RamSoft's image push and pre-cache capability—without requiring file compression—PresGar is enabling the mammograms it typically refers to outside readers to be acquired and read more quickly. Physicians throughout the system can even call up images for review on a personal computer.

Numbers confirm that the collaboration makes sense. Rather than the 18 to 20 studies PresGar was doing at each site a year ago, that daily total has increased to between 40 and 50. Perhaps as important is the capability that physicians now have to better manipulate images.

"We're probably 30% to 40% more efficient, and we're seeing 100% more patients. That's significant." There have been other benefits. The use of film for mammography has been eliminated, saving additional money. The increased efficiency of techs and mammographers has resulted in a revenue boost that has helped the company to overcome the traditionally low reimbursement for mammography. And, service and support are consistently fast and thorough, Kost explained.

"Digital mammography combined with RamSoft PACS has saved us tens of thousands of dollars beyond the workstation savings, and that's a big deal," Kost said. **"Imaging centers face a very tough climate these days, and we have to do what we can to be efficient and profitable. RamSoft PACS and its Gateway Routers have gone a long way toward helping us achieve that—and we're just getting started."**