

Success Story

Prognosis: Excellent

Enterprise information management solution boosts productivity at Sharp Healthcare

Sharp Healthcare, a major medical network in the San Diego area, is retiring its legacy clinical and financial systems after unplugging its mainframe and implementing an electronic report and output management solution.

Sharp serves more than three million people at five acute care hospitals, a women's healthcare facility, several medical and radiology groups, as well as medical clinics, urgent care centers and nursing facilities. The Sharp network is comprised of about 2,400 physicians and more than 13,000 employees.

The healthcare delivery system implemented Vista Plus Suite, an enterprise information management (EIM) solution from Open Text, that captures and stores critical information from packaged applications like Oracle E-Business Suite, PeopleSoft and mySAP®, as well as custom, mainframe or legacy applications. Vista Plus Suite presents that information in a logical, personalized and secure manner that is easily accessed inside or outside the enterprise via a Web-based interface.

Since deployment of the Open Text solution, "our legacy home health and financial systems have been archived into retirement; our latest conversion was the clinical system used years ago at Coronado Hospital," says Brant Burington, Manager of Computer Operations at Sharp. "They kept this system up for years for reference information, spending about \$20,000 a year to maintain it; now, archived into Vista Plus, the costs are negligible."

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Brant Burington,
Manager, Computer Operations,
Sharp Healthcare

Cascading success effect

Sharp has experienced a remarkable "cascading success effect" down throughout the enterprise, notes Burington, upon retrofitting its primary data center, which sits at the heart of the medical network. Its collection of some 450 servers provide mission-critical applications for Sharp's clinical, financial and administrative systems—such as GE Flowcast suite, GE EMR, Fuji PACS, Cerner Laboratory and Lawson—to approximately 10,000 workstations and 3,500 printers. However, several drawbacks at the data center could no longer be ignored, Burington notes. "The mainframe, its storage array, tape drives, and controllers occupied approximately 15 tiles of space in our data center."

The largest ROI

Sharp had been running Systems Archival and Reporting (SAR) on its extensive mainframe system. Since the switchover to Vista Plus, "the largest ROI has been realized from no longer having to handle the massive investment in maintenance and software licensing fees, system administration, floor space, and an electrical supply to support the mainframe," says Burington. In contrast, the Vista Plus server is an 8U rack mount IBM RS6000, which is "easy for Sharp employees to use," and, just as importantly, "offers the strong security controls to satisfy our auditors."

Industry

Healthcare

Customer

Sharp HealthCare

Business Challenges

- Reduce server maintenance costs and licensing fees
- Meet industry regulations
- Reduce paper use
- Centralize print management
- Automate report distribution

Business Solution

Vista Plus Suite

Business Benefits

- Realized return on investment
- Savings in cost and time fees
- Improved productivity and efficiency
- Support for full document lifecycle management

Labs switch to e-reports

The need for printed documentation is pervasive—and costly—across a large and complex healthcare system. Vista Plus is the required solution for large-scale print distribution. “The most popular content to date has been financial information—whether from our Lawson implementation or from the financial modules of our clinical systems,” says Burington. Now the use of Vista Plus for clinical information is ramping up at Sharp. “The laboratories have seen how we can use notes and indexing to make their reports viable in an electronic format as opposed to hardcopy,” he observes. “This allows about ten different laboratories to print only 10 pages of 2,000 page reports each, while relying on the electronic copy for reference.”

Highly customized solution

Sharp HealthCare turned to Open Text to maximize the efficiency of their mission-critical systems. “We required ASA carriage control conversion on the fly. We had a COBOL to C conversion that was needed for one major daily batch process,” explains Burington. “Within a period of six months, Open Text was able to create and implement a highly customized solution for us.”

While evaluating their existing system, Sharp had discovered several problems associated with the existing print protocol. “We had three laser printers to handle the native data stream, one with click charges, and an additional server to handle the image processing for laser printers that did not support the required format,” says Burington. Vista Plus is now the solution for all large-scale print distribution across the Sharp Healthcare network.

Streamlined business processes

Vista Plus supports many of the business measures, such as “days in Accounts Receivable,” which is a key performance indicator for all managers at Sharp. “The entire process relies heavily on IT to turn billing around as quickly as possible.... The impact of Vista Plus is documented for all to see,” says Burington. “Last fiscal year there were no delays caused by Vista Plus distribution or print issues.” By volume, the Human Resources and Payroll departments within Sharp are the heaviest users of Vista Plus, outside of Information Systems.

Conformance to HIPAA

Sharp has also used Vista Plus to archive its Sharp Coronado Hospital’s legacy clinical system, and to meet the regulations of the Health

Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Those regulations were created to ensure the privacy, security and electronic interchange of health information; all healthcare providers who conduct various electronic financial and administrative transactions are required to comply.

Records management across the enterprise

The Open Text solution allows for full lifecycle document management and records management across the enterprise. All financial information—whether from payroll, billing or HR benefits—is archived and printed using Vista Plus. “We use Vista Plus to supply on demand W2, 1099, paychecks and benefit confirmation statements to all employees, vendors and contractors. We also no longer need many pre-printed forms due to the Vista Plus integration with the Paris PostScript overlay software,” confirms Burington.



Financial windfall

As a result of the Vista Plus implementation, Sharp Healthcare has experienced dramatic increases in efficiency, productivity and compliance—as the electronic storage of clinical data saves great volumes of printing and satisfies medical document regulations. Sharp is now looking at expanding the implementation of Vista Plus to the entire organization. “We’re looking into upgrading our systems so we can run the latest version of Vista Plus,” says Burington. “It has become very apparent to us that the whole deployment was a financial windfall.”



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Sales	Americas	Europe	Asia/Pacific	
www.opentext.com sales@opentext.com North America Sales 1-800-499-6544 International Sales +800 4996 5440	United States 100 Tri-State Int'l Pkwy Lincolnshire IL 60069 Phone: 847-267-9330 Fax: 847-267-9332 Toll Free: 1-800-538-7723	Germany Technopark 2 Werner-von-Siemens-Ring 20 D-85630 Grasbrunn Phone: +49 89 4629 0 Fax: +49 89 4629 1199	United Kingdom Grosvenor House Horseshoe Crescent Beaconsfield Buckinghamshire HP9 1LJ Phone: +44 1494 679700 Fax: +44 1494 679707	Australia Level 12 65 Berry Street North Sydney, NSW 2060 Phone: +61 2 9026 3400 Fax: +61 2 9026 3455