

SAINT LUKE'S-SHAWNEE MISSION HEALTH SYSTEM



Reveal cuts massive healthcare reporting challenge down to size

Challenge

Replacing mainframe-based report distribution with an automated client-server enterprise reporting system that meets a wide variety of user needs with complete security.

Background

A fast growing Midwest healthcare system faced increasingly complex report creation and distribution needs. How complex? Some 1500 users, from nursing stations to the executive suite, needed on-line access to up-to-the-minute reports and reports customized to meet their particular requirements. New users and reporting applications were cropping up constantly. Meanwhile, archiving needs were growing exponentially — faster than tape backup or old-fashioned microfiche could handle or accommodate. There was also the challenge of complying with stringent HIPAA privacy and security regulations.

The Shift from Big Iron

Saint Luke's-Shawnee Mission Health System (SLSMHS) was created when two of Kansas City's (MO) leading hospital systems combined in the mid 1990's. The move created a major healthcare enterprise that has grown to eight hospitals with more than 14 physician and health provider offices. SLSMHS includes the world-renowned Mid-America Heart Institute, the region's premier cardiac center.

Soon after the merger, SLSMHS conducted a comprehensive review of its mainframe-based IT infrastructure and decided to move to a client/server open systems environment. This would require replacing virtually all of its mission-critical applications, including its report creation and distribution system. In this latter category, key requirements included creating on-line access to an ever-expanding user base and finding a solution to continually increasing disk storage requirements. Another need was getting printing and report distribution costs under control. SLSMHS was pleased with its McKesson HBOC application and decided to adopt the client/server versions of the same tools. Soon after implementation started, SLSMHS discovered that the HBOC suite, comprehensive and integrated as it was, didn't meet all of its requirements. "It didn't have a good, clean report distribution method," recalls Carl Sifers, SLSMHS's Director of IT Operations. Not that the solution wasn't best of breed, but SLSMHS had complex report distribution needs that spanned all administrative and clinical departments. One of the key requirements was to deliver a number of critical reports that included graphically rich elements (PCL). Making it even more complex was the fact that nightly mainframe processing for Shawnee Mission, which was contracted out to Shared Medical Systems in Pennsylvania, had to be integrated into a uniformly accessible report distribution system. "We needed a way to store and retrieve data for an indefinite period of time to meet regulatory requirements," says Harold Sirls, SLSMHS IT Operations Manager, "but also a distribution and delivery device that allowed us to set up rules where people could only see what they needed to see. It had to be easy for everyone to use."

Luckily, at the time SLSMHS was working with O'Pin Systems whose solution - REVEAL - included PinPoint Security, which automates secure report bursting and archiving. REVEAL also handles PCL, which was one of SLSMHS's key requirements.

The right choice

REVEAL turned out to be the right choice for several reasons. "By software pricing standards, it was very cost effective to get into REVEAL" recalls Carl Sifers. O'Pin Systems was solidly established in enterprise reporting solutions for large healthcare organizations. That gave it the needed experience to ensure a smooth implementation.

A smooth Installation

O'Pin Systems leveraged its healthcare experience to streamline much of the implementation process. This included developing a script that automated the process of applying new file naming conventions. "Without that we would have had hundreds of people typing in these lines one at a time," says Harold Sirls. "O'Pin was able to automate that process for us — something they still do for us today when we add new modules." Carl Sifers agrees that O'Pin Systems has provided a high level of support. "They go out their way to help us," he says.

Bottom Line

SLSMHS's REVEAL enterprise report distribution has 1500 users accessing REVEAL from standard Windows or NT machines. The reporting needs REVEAL meets are diverse. Patient accounting, nursing administration, departmental budgeting, human resources, payroll, finance — all rely on REVEAL to some extent. Here, REVEAL's strengths in easily integrating reports from multiple applications and platforms save time and money and dramatically increases user productivity.

"It really crosses the spectrum," says Sifers. "The product has an interface that even casual users like myself feel comfortable with. Even our CEO may access it on his PC. It doesn't take a lot of user training, either — a two hour course and you're ready to go." REVEAL also means a lot less printing, since "people feel so comfortable using REVEAL that we don't need to print as much as we used to," says Sirls.

SLSMHS is planning to implement REVEAL's Automated Archive and Retrieval module to replace its older tape archive module. "Tape storage may let you off load and protect this information for maybe 10 years," says Sirls. "But now we can off load that data to optical disks and protect it virtually forever." SLSMHS is exploring REVEAL'S JavaWeb and External Delivery capabilities to deploy the system and securely deliver reports over the Internet. "Everything is driving in that direction," says Sifers. One thing is for sure, says Sifers: "We will be constantly getting more and more people into REVEAL and expanding the user base."

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