

HEALTHCARE FOCUS



Doctors' orders

The change to an effective Electronic Records System is often easily within reach of departments, but often resistance is encountered because it can threaten the usual way of doing things, with which people are familiar and comfortable. Guidance and coaching is often the key to assimilate and nurture these transitions along the way. Douglas Brand of Bosoco Ltd. takes us through some ways that technologies such as those available from Ezescan might alleviate the issues that come across the desk of a typical medical environment each and every day

In our numerous encounters within the public sector we have seen some common issues when it comes to managing records across various departments, both big and small. It is not just by having electronic patient records that simple improvements and efficiencies can be made in the health sector - embracing technology can streamline a whole range of important support activities too.

This paper gives a taste of what improvements can be achieved in front and back office activities with a little thinking and a little application: just what the Doctor ordered!

CONTRACTS

One commissioning group routinely

duplicated hard copy contracts and stored them in different places within the same office so that those who might need access to them could locate them quickly. The same applied to contract variations, which were created as hard copy documents and photocopied so that they could be appended to the original contracts. When this practice was queried the response was "we are not very good at our records management - we are years behind".

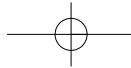
This led to more filing cabinets than necessary, which took up valuable space, and which were filled with duplicated records. The smart alternative? Scan the records and make them electronically available to those entitled to see them via their desktops.

HR RECORDS

Expense claims, receipts and time sheets were routinely copied in order that they could be shared with the appropriate authorising department. This was another manual paper based process. It meant duplication of records across departments as each would hold a copy of every document for its own files. The alternative, as with the contracts example, is to scan instead of faxing and photocopying, and store electronic files centrally.

POST/MAIL

At one location a daily email from the reception staff would declare "the post is ready for collection". As with many other organisations, incoming mail is opened,



STRATEGY: IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS **DM**

HEALTHCARE FOCUS

ABOUT EZESCAN

Ezescan has global experience installing scanning solutions in doctors' practices, clinics, medical labs, hospitals and government medical authorities, linking in with both line of business and various document management systems. EzeScan is integrated with many of the leading enterprise document/records management (EDRM) systems. Each integration provides several levels of connectivity between EzeScan and the EDRMS (e.g. directory import, API integration launching EDRMS profile cards, API integration bypassing EDRMS profile cards, or ODMA launching EDRMS profile cards).

EzeScan is now fully integrated with Alfresco, HP TRIM, Objective ECM, TechnologyOne ECM, Open Text eDOCS, Open Text Content Server, Microsoft SharePoint, infoXpert eDRMS/ECM, Info Router, Interwoven WorkSite NT, Laserfiche, Xerox DocuShare, DocuVantage OnDemand, Autonomy Meridio, DocuWare and ACT! By Sage.

EzeScan's inbuilt ODBC connector allows lookup and validation from any SQL-compliant database (Access, SQL Server, Oracle, DB2 etc). The UPLOAD module can insert metadata, references to documents stored on the filesystem or document images as BLOBS directly into the database. Many clients use these features to image-enable existing systems that are built on SQL databases.

EzeScan lets you scan a document once, index it multiple times and upload it to multiple systems. For example, you could save customer service metadata and images to an EDRM system, and then save financial metadata to an SQL database, all in one scanning transaction.

A free evaluation copy of EzeScan is available from www.ezescan.co.uk

date stamped and sorted before distribution. In this organisation an individual from each team would trek to reception to collect the post and then distribute it. An alternative approach would be to scan actionable post and upload it. It could then either be emailed to a team inbox or held in an electronic document and records management system. This would allow actionable post to be dealt with in fast time and for "advisory" (junk mail) to be collected and handled in slow time.

ELECTRONIC RECORDS:

It is widely accepted that electronic documents can be located more quickly and by more individuals than their paper equivalents. One of the keys to successfully locating documents is to employ an excellent search engine. But even more important, particularly if you are storing large numbers of excel type documents, is that your file naming conventions have to be clear to everyone, not just the creator of the document.

Although the example below may look like a web site address, it is

actually one of many options returned on a title word search. It is the genuine name of a document (although some identifying characters have been changed to protect its creator):

```
L:\Contracting and Finance\Contracting
Analysis\PSCAL\Upload PSCAL\14 - ****
11_12\Plan\Reconciliation base
files\Latest 30_6\Plan\COPY of Trustwide
**** Plan with Pscal Pods BS revised
**** 4.xlsfile:///****
NAS02\NAS\Contracting
%20and%20Finance\Contracting%20A
nalysis\PSCAL\Upload%20PSCAL\14%2
0-
%20****%2011_12\Plan\Reconciliation
%20base%20files\Latest%2030_6\Plan\
Copy%20of%20Trustwide%20****%20
Plan%20with%20Pscal%20Pods%20BS
%20revised%20****%20%204.xls
```

The link was to a spreadsheet containing numeric characters. The result was that content searches would produce too many hits to be of use because the users were unable to distinguish which particular spreadsheet was the one they needed

to access. One way of overcoming this problem is to have a well defined file plan and clear guidance regarding naming conventions. In this case links were routinely emailed to multiple recipients who then had to open and save the spreadsheet in a location from which they could more easily recover it for future use. A clearer file naming protocol can improve the efficiency even when data is already stored electronically.

So, whether the change is from manual to electronic recording, or making existing e-records more accessible, with a little thinking and a little application, huge benefits can be accrued. And one last thing, just like Doctors' orders apply to patients and medical staff, remember that the e solution is but one component of the efficiency and improvement you seek.

The other is consideration for the people that make them work. After all, it is your people who will make the efficiencies happen or not, so spend some time on your people needs to make sure you accrue all the benefits you seek from your e-solutions.

