



Case Study

Seeking Real Value in PACS Displays

“Planar does an outstanding job of addressing and resolving all of our little issues that don’t fit into any specific category. The equipment itself is extremely reliable and over the past five years and 23+ diagnostic radiology workstations, we have required minimal service support. With Right Light and CXtra, about all we have to do is keep the panels clean!”

Courtney Allen
PACS Administrator
Virginia Mason Medical Center

Virginia Mason Medical Center in Seattle is an acute-care teaching hospital with a staff of more than 5,000, a multi-specialty group practice of 480 physicians, and a network of clinics and other out-patient facilities.

The medical center has successfully implemented its second PACS and currently has 23 workstations spread across the hospital and satellite clinics in neighboring towns. With plenty of experience in purchasing and managing PACS displays, they have at this point developed a solid sense of what constitutes real value for their needs.

A few years ago Virginia Mason standardized on Planar for their PACS displays. A typical workstation has two diagnostic-grade displays and two administrative displays (one for the worklist and one for voice recognition/dictation software). Their selection currently includes Planar Dome™ E3c color displays as well as Dome C3 and C3i displays. They are currently deploying more PX series monitors in ultrasound and plan to add 5 MP displays for digital mammography at some point in the future.

Why did they choose to standardize on Planar?

“We like Planar’s wide selection of displays, but it’s more than that. It’s about the value,” says Michelle Ranous, Virginia Mason PACS Administrator. Ranous says that to her co-workers, value isn’t just the purchase cost, it’s a combination of cost, having a wide range of high quality displays to choose from, added elements such as software and, very importantly, service. For them, value is a matter of overall cost, of what they get when they add in things like automatic calibration and support that reduces their own maintenance time.

Calibration Software

Planar’s built-in Dome CXtra calibration software has made a job-changing difference for Ranous.

Included at no extra charge with every Dome EX display, CXtra is a universal QA software for DICOM calibration or correction of grayscale and color Dome displays. Dome CXtra offers

a variety of test patterns that can be used to check display quality and consistency. It also comes with tools to validate the performance of the display against a variety of standards. The software employs a common, intuitive environment for the simple management of Dome displays.

Ranous says that CXtra makes Planar displays so easy to manage that she now has a new job. "I was originally hired to be a QA display technician, but my job has evolved to include other responsibilities because our Planar displays are so self-maintainable," she says.

Another feature of Planar displays that will become more and more important is Dome Dashboard, a console application that allows Planar displays to be managed from one central location. Dome Dashboard increases productivity, reduces downtime and ensures consistent image quality by providing alerts if a display is down, calibration is off or the white level has dropped out of tolerance.

"It has a lot of value for me," says Ranous. "I can get data to back up my monitor calibrations, and before our radiologists report that a display is not in calibration, I get notified and can check their settings from my own office. Potentially, it's a big timesaver."

Planar Service

Another part of Planar's value for Virginia Mason is service, both during implementation and for ongoing maintenance. Attention, expertise and flexibility are all important facets of Planar's service picture.

Examples:

- Before implementation, Planar worked with Virginia Mason to provide a warranty that was tailored to fit the medical center's particular needs.
- During implementation, there was a small issue with calibrating the new displays. "Planar sent in their upper-level engineers," says Ranous. "Planar kept on top of it and resolved it quickly."
- After implementation, Ranous says she really likes the fact that Planar doesn't outsource its tech support. "I like knowing that I'm talking to real Planar expert when I call or email," she says.
- Also, speed matters. "When I have questions, I need answers quickly," Ranous says. "Planar gets back to me fast. To get a reply back as fast as they do is really almost shocking," she says. "I often can't get replies from my other vendors or even my co-workers that fast."

Value Makes All the Difference

The PACS team at Virginia Mason demands value from its vendors and knows it when they see it. For them, Planar's value--the displays, the extras and the service--add up to a complete package.



Planar Dome E3c

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