



Infirmiry Health System

Taking care of multiple processes with one solution



Since it began serving the needs of Alabama residents in 1910, Mobile Infirmiry Medical Center has delivered value and quality healthcare to the community. That mission has evolved into Infirmiry Health System and has grown to include six hospitals, numerous physician clinics, hospice care, and therapy services. The combination of caring, highly trained professionals, state-of-the-art equipment, and technology makes Infirmiry Health System the regional healthcare leader.

Challenge: Manage faxing from a single point and replace pre-printed forms

In July 1994 Infirmiry Health System, then Mobile Infirmiry Medical Center, began using Faxgate software to save time by enabling users to fax directly from their desks rather than having to walk printed documents to a fax machine. They used forms merge features to overlay text data from its mainframe with a pre-printed form for faxing documents such as face sheets to physicians' offices. They were also able to fax diagnostic reports and medical record information directly from the mainframe system.

Mergers with other hospitals changed the IT landscape from purely mainframe-based to mainframe and enterprise-based with multiple servers, Windows PCs and third-party applications. "It became apparent that we needed more than just a mainframe faxing solution," said Dennis Gough, Team Leader for Applications in Information Systems. "Data was coming in from PC-based servers, from the mainframe, from different locations, and we needed to tie everything together with a single source for faxing and routing to printers and imaging."

Another challenge was pre-printed forms, which were going to impact printers driven from the mainframe. "When a form changed, we would have to get a new batch printed and discard the old ones," said Gough. "One of our biggest challenges was to be able to print documents on a professional-looking form, not only on one side but duplex. And because physicians and medical departments relied on specific colored forms in the patient folder, we had to be able to tell the printers which tray to pull the paper from."

The next challenge was to take raw data, create forms and store them in an imaging system. "We were using IBM Content Manager and we did not want to get away from that system," said Gough. "We also wanted to avoid the manual process of scanning-in hardcopy documents. We had some large XML, text-based and PDF documents coming from vendors where we needed to extract data and place on forms for storing and easy lookup."

Solution: Esker DeliveryWare

The evolution of Infirmiry Health System's environment coincided with the introduction of the Esker document process automation platform. Infirmiry Health System moved from its OS/2 faxing solution to the more versatile Windows-based platform and increased outbound fax lines to a total of 4. They also rolled out the Esker LanFax client to users who needed to fax from PC-based applications. Also with the new platform, Infirmiry Health System began exploring the use of Esker DeliveryWare Rules for document processing. At this point fax volume was around 1000 per day.

Infirmiry Health System eventually transformed its Esker DeliveryWare server into a print server for over 100 printers throughout the hospital. A second Esker DeliveryWare server then became an inbound document processing engine, a development server for Infirmiry Health System's fax and print solutions, and a backup server in the event the mission-critical print server failed. Esker DeliveryWare takes raw data, builds PDF forms and creates the appropriate indexing files, and submits to the IBM Content Manager system for imaging the documents and retrieval by employees. Infirmiry Health System can build forms dynamically and submit the data from the mainframe or a third-party system, and then route to a printer. On its third Esker DeliveryWare server, Infirmiry Health System is developing rules for routing of inbound faxes.

Daily document processing volume steadily increased to around 2,500 faxed, 2,500+ printed, and 3,000–10,000 processed for imaging.

“Esker DeliveryWare crosses many boundaries and allows for single-point inbound and outbound document processing for many different platforms.”

Dennis Gough ■ Team Leader for Applications
■ Infirmiry Health System



Savings with Esker DeliveryWare have affected many departments across different areas, from pharmacy to admissions to medical records. It's a situation where you show you can do one thing, and suddenly you're doing it everywhere. That's what we're here for — to make everyone's job easier and save time as well as money.

Dennis Gough ■ Team Leader for Applications ■ Infirmiry Health System

Benefits

Time and cost savings

With its Esker DeliveryWare solution, Infirmiry Health System can:

- Manage faxing from mainframe and PC-based applications
- Manage document formatting and distributed print with multiple document types and several locations
- Create and change forms dynamically
- Reduce pre-printed form costs
- Feed more types of documents into its IBM Content Manager system automatically

"Esker DeliveryWare has given us a single-point server to manage, maintain and track our outbound faxing — not only on the mainframe but from PC-based applications," said Gough. "It has also allowed us to save money in the cost of pre-printed forms. Now we have dynamic forms that can be changed at any time, and it has allowed us dynamic printing from anywhere in the hospital to any printer in any department in the hospital."

Distributed forms output

"Many of our pre-printed forms for nursing stations and admissions were eliminated through the use of Esker DeliveryWare Rules," said Gough. "Inside the rules engine we can do database queries and pull data to add whatever information we might need on the forms that we're building. With these rules we can create a form dynamically with patient information and barcodes and tell Esker DeliveryWare to pull from specific paper trays with a certain color of paper for insertion into patient files. This not only saved us money on the printing of the forms but increased productivity and helped to improve our patient care by expediting forms printing and processing."

For example, adding barcodes to forms with Esker DeliveryWare expedites orders through Infirmiry Health System's pharmacy department. "They can run forms straight through their machine, which has removed some of the manual processing," said Gough.

Auto-archiving

Esker DeliveryWare has enabled processing of documents through Infirmiry Health System's imaging system that would otherwise not be possible without manual scanning. "We can route text-based XML and PDF documents through Esker DeliveryWare and prep them so that they can be stored in the IBM Content Manager system," said Gough. "I might have a text document come in that is without the background image. I'll just apply the overlay and split that one document into maybe 10,000 smaller documents because it may contain 10,000 patient billing process records. So I'll split it and route each of the 10,000 documents to the IBM Content Manager system for storage and indexing."

Infirmiry Health System is also using Esker DeliveryWare to take PDF reports from a McKesson billing system and split them, based on facility codes, into multiple documents and set security based on who needs to see the documents, then submit to IBM Content Manager.

About his experience working with Esker over the years, Gough commented, "I really do believe that they have one of the most top-notch support groups I've ever dealt with. Anytime I call for support or questions I get quick response from somebody who's really knowledgeable, and they will make every effort to bend over backwards to resolve the issue or find a solution."

Future plans

In response to requests from several departments for fax routing to specific locations, which could be an FTP folder, email or a LanFax user, Infirmiry Health Systems has begun development of processing rules that will take inbound faxes and route them to the appropriate departments. "We hope to replace many legacy departmental scanners used for inbound faxes, which will increase user productivity. This will also reduce the potential for lost faxes and the costs associated with using a physical fax machine."

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