Expanding Image Access in a Land of Extremes

Remote Reading from 612 km Away in Canada

As a leader in innovative and cutting-edge imaging technologies, Siemens unveiled Symbia.net™, its advanced client-server solution that brings the processing and reading capabilities of conventional workstations to physicians anywhere with Internet access. *Imaging Life* recently talked with William Pavlosky, MD, Director of Nuclear Medicine at Timmins and District Hospital, Timmins, Ontario, about how he uses Symbia.net for remote reading in Canada.

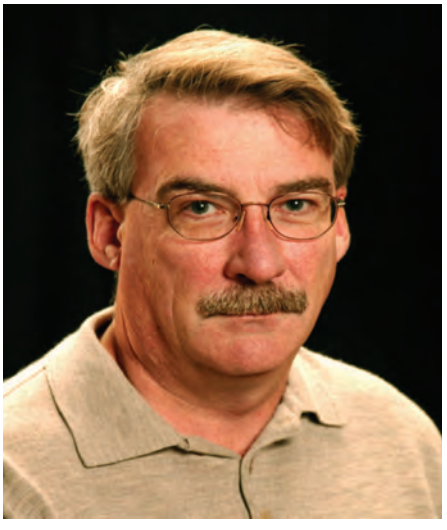
By Clint vanSonnenberg

Dr. Pavlosky, could you describe your imaging needs, geographic challenges and how you use Symbia.net?
Pavlosky: I work half the time at Timmins and District Hospital and the other half from my home office in London, Ontario, 613 km (381 miles) to the south. What is great about Symbia.net is that regardless of where I am, I can log into the nuclear medicine server at Timmins using my laptop and review cases, just as if I were sitting in the department. I use Symbia.net to view and analyze all nuclear medicine imaging, whether I am on-site or working remotely. The workload varies but consists of approximately 10 to 15 cases a day with the department offering a full spectrum of nuclear medicine investigations.

How does installation and access work?
Pavlosky: There is no significant installation at my end at my remote home office in London. Whether I'm reading from there or from the reporting area in Timmins, the look and functionality of the system is identical. I just access the Internet to link into the hospital's server. Essentially, it's as if I am sitting at Timmins, right next to the technologist. I'm linked in and manipulating data and images on the hospital's system, no matter where I am. There is no difference in speed as long as my Internet bandwidth is appropriate. And I can do that anywhere in the world. If I'm travelling with my laptop, all I have to do is just log right into the hospital's server, with full capability.

How was the process of transitioning to Symbia.net?
Pavlosky: In essence, there was no transition. As I mentioned, there was no significant installation required, and otherwise the displays are identical. The biggest difference with Symbia.net is speed. And it's fast because I am manipulating the data on the hospital's computer. I don't have to download any applications or datasets as I did previously, and because of this, my ability to interpret the images and view all of the datasets is vastly improved.
That is really the beauty of the system—as opposed to having to only look at JPEG images or data that I can't manipulate, all the data are manipulated over the hospital server. Before Symbia.net, I was limited to what the technologists gave me. So now, if I'm not happy with the reconstructions or if I want more detail or resolution, I can re-analyze any of the data myself, whether for a complex cardiac study or any other type of study.

What are the principal advantages to Symbia.net?
Pavlosky: The biggest benefits are speed and seamlessness.



William Pavlosky, MD, is Director of Nuclear Medicine at Timmins and District Hospital, Timmins, Ontario, and an Associate Professor in the Department of Medical Imaging at the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario.

Clint vonSonnenberg is a medical and technology journalist based in Rhode Island, USA.