



Into the future with VAIO at St Peter's Hospital

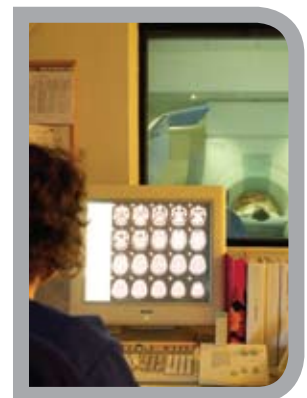
In the medical world, digital technology has an especially important role to play.

Faster access to data and improved communication between doctors can speed up diagnosis and treatment, enhance patient care and improve the overall efficiency of staff.

At St Peter's Hospital in Chertsey, Surrey, the radiology team is taking a leading role with new technology. Already using the revolutionary Picture Archive and Communications System (PACS) to store and view X-rays online over a worldwide network, radiologists are now able to access information from anywhere in the hospital or even out of it courtesy of the latest Sony VAIO notebooks.

A New Era in Radiology

Historically, radiology has been time-consuming and expensive. X-ray films had to be viewed on lightboxes in special offices, transported to other locations by courier and stored on site in vast libraries – the one at St Peter's is over an acre in size! Even finding the correct films for a consultation was a daunting prospect. All that changed with the introduction of the PACS system. Images are now stored digitally and can be viewed on a network, giving doctors instant access to data and easy distribution of scans and X-rays within the hospital and beyond. Time and cost savings are enormous and with multiple viewing possible, consultant radiologists in different locations or even countries can get together to discuss patient results.



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Time to Get Mobile!

Now the radiology team at St Peter's Hospital have taken the PACS system one stage further by investing in powerful VAIO notebooks. Viewing scans and X-Rays on an office desktop PC is fine but restrictive. Doctors are busy and often want to look at data on the move, while at conferences or even at home. After discussion, the team decided to replace its office desktops with lightweight notebooks and implement a 'hot desk' system. Radiologists can now plug in and plug out of the hospital network at will, retrieving data whenever and wherever they want. As well as working at hot desks in the radiology department, doctors can in effect 'take the network home' in a briefcase and discuss images with colleagues electronically from their living room and manage on-call from their lounge. This freedom to work anywhere at anytime radically improves efficiency.

VAIO SZ Series... Fast, Powerful and Portable!

In choosing a suitable IT partner to fulfil their vision, consultant radiologists at St Peter's looked for a notebook solution that combined power and portability with a long battery life and high resolution screen. Having such a solution would enable the team to view scans and X-rays on the move in crystal clear quality

and allow them to make critical decisions with confidence. After much evaluation of a range of brands, consultants decided to go with the Sony VAIO SZ Series. Weighing in at under two kilos, this lightweight notebook would easily fit into a briefcase while offering all the speed and power required to provide first class performance on the move. Featuring the efficient Intel® Core Duo processor, latest generation X-black screen for clear images and minimal reflections plus full connectivity including W-LAN a/b/g and Bluetooth®, the SZ Series had everything the team were looking for. Fifteen radiologists have now been kitted out with the notebooks and are already seeing the fruits of their investment in the form of enhanced efficiency and patient care.

"The PACS system has changed the way we work," says Consultant Radiologist and Clinical Director of Radiology Dr Michael Creagh. "Now with the VAIO laptops, we are able to fully realise the benefits of this fundamental change and work effectively wherever we choose, whenever we choose. We have taken advantage of the wireless capabilities of the VAIO SZ Series by creating a wireless network in our department with the original system used as a back-up. Initial results show the notebooks working very well within our wireless hospital network..."

Saving Lives through New Technology

The move to digital images and the use of VAIO laptops has enhanced the speed of patient diagnosis and treatment. Dr Creagh recalls saving a life after he was able to access medical images while on call at home early one morning. He diagnosed a brain haemorrhage immediately, alerted clinical teams and arranged for an emergency life-saving operation. "I can now react instantly to latest scan results and take necessary action. My office is my VAIO. Wherever I am – at home on call, at a conference with colleagues, on a business trip – my office is by my side, enabling me to keep in touch with the progress of my patients."

As well as improving patient care and helping consultants manage their busy schedules, the new technology also enables the hospital to dramatically reduce costs. It is this unique combination of benefits that makes mobile digital technology such an essential part of medical care in the twenty-first century. "In future, there's no reason why GPs cannot access the digital images," says Dr Creagh. "Making a much more efficient and comprehensive healthcare system."

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