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The business of imaging is changing. With reimbursements increasingly tied to outcomes, providers are searching for a more cost-effective way to store, access, and use their vast stockpiles of medical imaging data. Powerful advancements in cloud-native technology are paving the way for better care delivery and improved financial and operational outcomes—at a reduced cost.

Before we go further, let's make sure we understand what is meant by the term enterprise imaging. Enterprise imaging is defined as a system-wide approach to diagnostic and clinical imaging that unifies access to, and analysis of, clinical images and data—across an organization's affiliated care facilities and care departments. Essentially, enterprise imaging is medical image management—enabled by a set of solutions—for the entire organization.

Why is Enterprise Imaging Important?

The purpose of enterprise imaging is to improve an organization's financial, clinical, and operational outcomes by leveraging scale. A unified **medical imaging solution** enables more actionable, insightful uses of data for the entire care team.

Providing direct access to imaging data within an organization's EHR is one way to do this. Incorporating images into your EHR can help improve outcomes, as immediate access improves diagnostic efficiency and helps facilitate better patient care. Importantly, it also reduces your overall IT burden by eliminating unnecessary systems and third-party vendors.

When clinicians must navigate multiple systems and data silos—which are not always in sync—to share and consume medical images, the process can cause critical delays in patient care. A unified solution puts all patient information in the EHR, providing fast access and full transparency.

Enterprise Imaging Challenges

As we look at the medical imaging industry today, healthcare providers are facing three major challenges:

- Imaging system costs
- Complex management of care systems
- Pressures to improve outcomes

In turn, these challenges have led to two key areas of concern for CIOs:

1. How can they best prepare the enterprise for sustainable cost control and future efficiency?
2. What innovative ways can they find to reduce expenses and provide more value?

In the era of value-based care, much of the emphasis is on pushing cost-effective IT advancements, which are intended to create significant new efficiencies that ultimately impact revenue.

In the end, the objective is to redirect investments toward the main goal of improving patient care—not furthering IT complexity. Providers need to seek ways to reduce operating costs while leveraging the valuable data they already have.

Better Outcomes for the Organization as a Whole

The rise in EHR adoption has helped to build a bridge between departmental silos, elevating IT services—including imaging—to the C-suite’s strategic agenda.

Providing medical imaging services at the enterprise level supports improved clinical, financial, and operational outcomes:

- **Clinical:** Supports productivity by using data from multiple sources—as well as **integrated Artificial Intelligence**—to help improve physician satisfaction and reduce clinical variance.
- **Financial:** Supports better return on assets, unlocks value from **intelligent workflows**, and improves ROI for an organization’s EHR.
- **Operational:** Simplifies vendor management, reduces IT complexity, mitigates cybersecurity risk, reduces redundant storage management, and simplifies support.

But Is All This Data a Good Thing?

The accumulation of data at a large scale, over many years, creates what some might think of as a liability. However, in the era of cloud services, vast amounts of data have created an important opportunity. Big data is a key tool for delivering better care.

The real value of data is discovered when analytics unlocks information that can give care providers actionable insights. These data-driven operational improvements can have a direct impact on providing better outcomes.

However, storing massive amounts of data can be a daunting and expensive challenge for IT teams.

A cloud-native enterprise imaging solution excels in this area, as it helps an organization cost-effectively store, manage, and use its imaging data. This kind of solution is significantly more valuable than a simple data repository, a “place” to keep data for future patient reference and regulatory requirements.

A cloud-native application provides the best, most technologically advanced way to use data to help improve clinical outcomes—because the data is designed to be accessible through proper controls.

Legacy IT solutions can have many access points, command-line managed systems, and cumbersome processes to meet requirements.

By contrast, cloud-native solutions generally have many tools available to help control access. Proper security tools allow not only your organization's support team but also customers to access the system—without needing to open support tickets or product-change requests.

Cloud-native solutions are designed with built-in accessibility controls and a security-conscious architecture.

The Impact of Cloud-Native Technology

Cloud-native means a solution that lives in the cloud and is “of the cloud.” This term is not used for an on-premises solution that has been shifted to another private data center (also known as a cloud-hosted solution).

This is an important distinction, because cloud-native applications are always operating on current versions through code automation.

In addition, they are also designed to be ultra-available—a sharp contrast to on-premises applications, which usually require large and intrusive maintenance events for updates. In a world where seconds matter, downtime in the medical industry is unacceptable.

Cloud-native solutions are also designed to be automatically responsive to customer demands on the application. They contain elasticity tools that continuously monitor computer power, storage, and organizational expansion.

As a result, organizations using cloud-native solutions no longer need to plan for massive investments in IT infrastructure to accommodate potential future growth or to meet emergency performance demands. An on-premises, cloud-hosted

solution (also known as a lift-and-shift cloud-hosted solution) simply cannot adjust in the same dynamic way that cloud-native solutions can.

Why Choose a Cloud-Native Managed Service for Your Imaging Data?

The business of supporting IT applications is rapidly changing, especially in medical imaging. More and more service lines are using imaging as a part of their diagnostic procedures. Properly processing these images, as well as sharing and protecting them in a compliant manner, is becoming more complex each year.

A recent Change Healthcare survey of 100 C-level executives revealed that IT leaders are not interested in owning and managing IT complexity over the long term. Respondents cited pressures such as lack of resource talent, especially in cybersecurity, as an important reason for their desire to adopt a cloud-native approach to data management.

Given the industry-wide focus on the move toward value-based care, executives said they prefer to invest in ways that will support their transition strategy.

Many providers are strongly considering switching to a cloud-native managed service, as such solutions support the entire care team without burdening IT or diverting needed resources. Is it time for your organization to do the same?

Discover if a [cloud-native enterprise imaging solution](#) is right for your organization, or read more about our interoperable [Enterprise Imaging solutions](#).

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