Hermitage Medical Clinic of Dublin
Hermitage deploys INTERFACEWARE's Iguana & Chameleon to integrate GE's RIS/PACS with Meditech.

THE ENVIRONMENT
The Hermitage Medical Clinic in Dublin is one of only four private hospitals to open in Ireland within the past twenty years. As a private facility in Ireland’s otherwise public health care system, it is critical that the roll-out of its major hospital and departmental information systems and interfaces, proceed efficiently and with a minimum of downtime.

Hermitage CIO, Mike Gogola, is well versed in bringing hospitals on-line. An accomplished veteran with 24 Meditech hospital implementations to his credit, Mike has had two of his hospitals honored with Hospitals & Health Networks (H&HN) “100 Most Wired Hospitals” award. Brought in to ensure the effective roll-out of IT systems and services at Hermitage, he faced several daunting challenges, including the lack of trained Meditech personnel and the lack of staff with HL7 expertise.

THE PROBLEM
Mike explains, “...Simply filling beds in a hospital helps one approach break-even. However, as a private facility, it is critical that we get our core diagnostic services, especially diagnostic imaging, up and running quickly and effectively.”

Part of the implementation strategy required the speedy integration of a GE Centricity RIS/PACS with Hermitage’s new Meditech hospital information system. Access to trained integration staff was limited, and it followed that the integration engine to be used needed to be intuitive, accommodate
different dialects of HL7 (GE’s HL7 Version 2.3 and Meditech’s HL7 Version 2.4), and not require extensive training. An initial quotation of approximately £50,000.00 (US $100,000.00) was rejected as being over budget and having too long an implementation cycle. Looking for a better, more cost effective solution, Mike searched on-line and soon started interacting with Alan McLaren, Director of INTERFACEWARE’s European sales.

THE SOLUTION

Following several discussions and an on-line demo, Mike settled on INTERFACEWARE’s Iguana and Chameleon for the integration project. Given the significant distance, time difference and importance of the project, Mike understandably still had some concerns. However, he was impressed by INTERFACEWARE’s commitment “...to make this work.” Notes Eliot Muir, CEO of INTERFACEWARE, “...customers looking for solutions need to feel confident that they are making the right decision. Our confidence in our tools is such that we are able to guarantee a successful outcome for customers like Hermitage.”

Mike appreciated INTERFACEWARE’s willingness to make people available at hours convenient to Hermitage for training and support. This was critical in an environment where trained integration staff were scarce and where training new staff would take time. It was also important that INTERFACEWARE’s Iguana and Chameleon products allowed for quick and non-disruptive adjustments to address the complexities of a multi-system set of interfaces. As Mike noted, “Anytime you have more players, the integration equation becomes more complicated as vendors on either side upgrade and customize systems over time.”

THE IMPLEMENTATION

Brian Nelligan, one of the team of Meditech experts brought in by Mike Gogola, was tasked with implementing the interfaces. He used both Chameleon and Iguana and had this to say about the tools: “I was not an interface Guru. These were the right products and INTERFACEWARE was the right company to help me get the job done.”

It started with the training. To quote Brian, “The training was put together extremely well. I am new to HL7 and how it is implemented. I appreciated that training was segmented in two sections. The first was an HL7 overview and the second entailed more in-depth coverage of the actual interfaces I wished to implement. The combination of remote training and the ability to go back and ‘replay’ my own training videos was extremely useful for reviewing areas I was unclear on. I found it far superior to taking notes in a lecture-type training session. You don’t miss anything and notes are not as accurate, clear or informative when you go back and review them some time later.”

Brian went on to speak about the implementation and noted that, “With INTERFACEWARE’s help, we got this all done in six weeks which is unprecedented. Moreover, because of the hospital’s security infrastructure, at no time did INTERFACEWARE have direct access to the interface server, so it was necessary to work through me to implement any changes at all times. INTERFACEWARE always made themselves available despite the time difference.”

When asked what he liked about the tools he noted: “I loved the fact that I could test out any small change without needing to recompile and reinstall. I did not even have to save the VMD (configuration) file I was working on to test out my changes. I could see the results immediately.” He observed that Iguana’s Error Logs did a good job revealing any issues and that Iguana’s Message Transformation feature was a joy to use. “I was easily able to take Meditech’s version of HL7 and transform it into different versions for input into GE and IMPAC. I also appreciated the fact that I could use the message filters to funnel ADT
to more than one application, saving the hospital significant development time and cost."

THE RESULT

The following interfaces were successfully implemented at Hermitage using INTERFACEWARE’s Iguana and/or Chameleon:

• Meditech to GE Centricity RIS/PACS (ADT)
• Meditech to IMPAC (ADT)
• Meditech to GE Centricity RIS/PACS (ORM)
• GE Centricity RIS/PACS to Meditech (ORM Status)
• GE Centricity RIS/PACS to Meditech Image Therapy Module (ORU Reports)

Physicians and surgeons (now) have on-line access to clinical information and diagnostic images at any hospital workstation, including at the bedside and in operating rooms.¹

Overall, Mike Gogola summed up his relationship with INTERFACEWARE as “…a very positive experience. What was estimated to take four months of implementation time, took six weeks. Because of INTERFACEWARE, a major obstacle became a minor speed bump.”

Mike’s confidence in the tools is such that he is proposing they be used to integrate disperse physicians’ practices with Hermitage. Physicians would register patients into their TM2 practice management software (from Blue-Zinc), and Iguana/Chameleon would be deployed to pass the demographics (as HL7 ADT) to Meditech and receive Lab and radiology results back.

Post Script: Mike Gogola recently added a third ‘Most Wired’ accolade. Hermitage Medical Clinic was awarded H&HN’s 2007 International Citation of Merit.

About INTERFACEWARE

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Founded in 1997, INTERFACEWARE is a leading HL7 solutions provider to the healthcare industry. The company is committed to simplifying the exchange of electronic healthcare data not only through the provision of industry leading technology, support and service, but also by providing well documented processes and guidelines that fully address the data integration problem.

INTERFACEWARE’s industry-leading Iguana and Chameleon products are deployed in over 6000 locations around the globe and are supported by the company’s highly skilled development and services team. The Iguana HL7 Interface Engine enables message routing and transformation between information systems with a minimum of configuration and no programming. It also allows for seamless, bi-directional, HL7 to database communication. The Chameleon HL7 messaging toolkit enables developers to rapidly and graphically add industry-standard messaging capabilities to new or existing healthcare applications using any of the major programming languages.

¹ MEDITECH Hospitals Top H&HN’s "Most Wired" List! (7/27/2007)