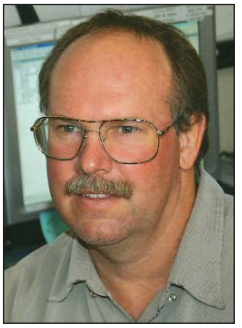
Working For You

Making MIRC Work

This month *RSNA News* begins profiling real-world users of RSNA's Medical Imaging Resource Center (MIRC). Kicking things off is **Mike Haman, R.T.(R)(CV)(CT),** Radiology Information Systems/Picture Archiving and Communication Systems (RIS/PACS) Coordinator at Loma Linda University Medical Center in California. Haman talked about how MIRC helped him solve the age-old dilemma of achieving more without spending more.

Making **MIRC** *Work*
RSNA'S FREE ONLINE RESEARCH AND EDUCATION TOOLS

IN THE radiology department at Loma Linda University Medical Center, 30 attending radiologists and 35 residents and fellows perform about 265,000 procedures a year. Aiming to create two teaching file cases per resident rotation on each service, but dissatisfied with the module offered on their PACS, the physicians looked to Haman for a solution.


Mike Haman, R.T.(R)(CV)(CT)

Just one RSNA 2005 hands-on class, along with a poster session led by a physician using the same kind of PACS as Loma Linda, was all Haman needed to give MIRC a try. "I promptly put a test MIRC site on my PC and was successfully sending images from PACS to MIRC in the space of an hour," he said.

Haman said he changed just one MIRC default setting, so that it captures and displays PACS comments when receiving a file. Assigning each file a specific user—rather than the file coming anonymously from the PACS—enables easier searchability later, he said.

MIRC provides complete flexibility in defining teaching file templates, and Haman said he's still trying to get consensus on his department's preference. He said he's also learned to work with extensible markup language (XML) to make refinements to MIRC documents.

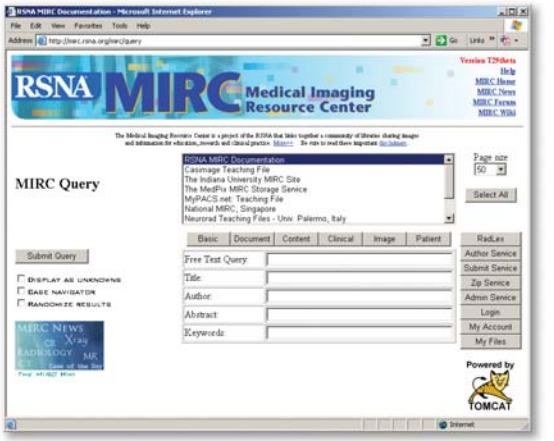
Running a production MIRC site has required adequate infrastructure—Haman said he is fortunate the Radiology Library Committee funded a 3-terabyte server to devote to MIRC, which he backs up regularly.

"MIRC is in our data center and should be treated like any other hospital application," Haman said. "Could you imagine losing many hundreds of hours of work if it went down?"

Radiologists are starting to use MIRC for more and more types of files, Haman said. His institution's diagnostic ultrasound program is interested in using it for both lecturing and testing.

Haman said he's confident that with feedback from users like him, MIRC's usefulness will grow. He said he would like to see certain fields automatically populated with standard language and codes, and users given the ability to create their own dropdown menus.

"I have not found another way we could do this as cheaply," he said. "Companies doing this are beyond my price range, and though I could have done this with one of my old servers, I wouldn't have felt comfortable with it long term. The old teaching file system lasted 50 years—now that I have started MIRC, it will not be replaced any time soon."



Available free of charge to the medical imaging community, RSNA MIRC software can be used to create a teaching file system for public or private use. The software can also be used by clinical trials sites to manage and exchange images.

The Half Dozen

MIRC quick tips from user Mike Haman, Loma Linda University Medical Center:

1. Document a backup strategy.
2. Designate a MIRC server and treat it just like another hospital application.
3. Establish a standard template of searchable fields.
4. Prevent MIRC from becoming littered with anonymous documents.
5. Use a test system.
6. Access the MIRC User Forums to troubleshoot problems.