



# Merge Case Study

North Texas Medical Center

**MERGE**  
An IBM Company

# Advanced Imaging Technology Removes Obstacles, Improves Communication

New enterprise-wide imaging solutions help North Texas Medical Center spend more time caring for patients, less time diagnosing error messages

North Texas Medical Center | Gainesville, Texas

## CUSTOMER PROFILE

Sixty-bed, acute-care hospital serving the Gainesville, Texas region

## CUSTOMER CHALLENGES

To effectively replace an aging PACS nearing the end of its useful life; an offsite image-storage and disaster-recovery system with workflow and retrieval issues; and a temperamental, web-based image-viewing system that returned more errors than images

## SUCCESS WITH MERGE

- Trustworthy image-archiving system that works in the background
- Easy, reliable access to images for internal and referring physicians
- Fast, dependable on-demand communication tools like instant messaging

## MERGE SOLUTIONS

- Merge PACS™
- iConnect® Cloud Archive
- iConnect® Access

Like many of its peers throughout the United States, North Texas Medical Center in recent years has had to wrestle with keeping up with the growing demand for larger, faster and more efficient medical image storage and sharing capabilities. As volume-based healthcare models give way to value-based care, the ability of hospitals and other imaging providers to quickly provide referring physicians with easy access to images and reports has become a key to the success of both sides.

## A need to replace an old PACS — and, while we're at it ...

North Texas Medical Center — a 60-bed, acute-care facility serving the Gainesville region — was capably served for many years by Fusion PACS, the picture archiving and communication system (PACS) previously offered by Merge and purchased in 2004. However, by 2011, the system had become outdated and cumbersome, and James Hennigan, Director of Medical Imaging, at North Texas Medical Center, began to explore the idea of replacing the solution.

During the process, Hennigan and his team, including the director of IT and one of the staff radiologists, decided the time was also right to upgrade the hospital's offsite image-storage and disaster-recovery system, as well as the facility's image viewing capabilities.

"The offsite image-storage system, operated by a third-party vendor, did not permit easy or timely image archiving, and our staff also found it difficult to retrieve images from the system," Hennigan said. The hospital's image viewing capabilities, meanwhile, relied on a 10-year-old system requiring referring physicians to download software in order to view patients' images, which increasingly denied access or returned a number of different error messages.

"My staff and I put a lot of man-hours in trying to get it to work for people," Hennigan said.

## Success with Merge

Hennigan and his team reviewed the product offerings of three other vendors, and ultimately chose to stick with Merge, upgrading its system to Merge PACS™. While they were at it, they also decided to invest in iConnect® Cloud Archive for offsite storage and disaster recovery as well as iConnect® Access for image viewing and sharing. While North Texas' existing partnership with Merge was a factor in choosing their

solutions, the most significant reason was that Merge was the only solution that could deliver all the features and functionality on their list of “must haves,” including a comprehensive suite of communication, image viewing and image sharing tools.

Merge PACS is a Meaningful Use Stage 2, 2014 edition modularly-certified PACS where images are easily stored, viewed and shared through the web. This system is designed to support the needs of enterprise organizations, like North Texas Medical Center, whose imaging requirements are growing.

In addition to PACS, North Texas leverages iConnect Access’s robust viewing solution, enabling their providers to easily view images anywhere and at any time from a web-based viewer and iConnect Cloud Archive for offsite storage in the event of a disaster, which also provides easy access viewing for remote users.

“iConnect Access’ zero-download viewer was a big thing for us,” Hennigan said. He also noted that iConnect Cloud Archive is “simple to operate and run. It works in the background, and if I need to retrieve an exam, it makes it really easy to access.”

“One of the biggest pluses of the system [Merge PACS] is the communication tools that came with it,” Hennigan added. “Whether it’s between the technologists and the radiologists, or between radiologists and other radiologists or other physicians in the ED, everybody has the same access to images and different ways to communicate with each other, including instant messaging.”

It’s been a year since Merge PACS, iConnect Access and iConnect Cloud Archive went live, and Hennigan says, “Image management and sharing is better than ever, with turnaround times getting faster even in the midst of growing volume. In the emergency department, the results of STAT imaging exams are often available before physicians even have time to look for them.” This is a big plus at North Texas Medical Center, where ED imaging volume has grown since implementation.

“The entire system has made a big impact on all our physicians, the radiologists and our referring physicians,” Hennigan concluded. “You wouldn’t believe how many phone calls I do NOT get anymore.”

### About Merge

Merge is a leading provider of innovative enterprise imaging, interoperability and clinical systems that seek to advance healthcare. Merge’s enterprise and cloud-based technologies for image intensive specialties provide access to any image, anywhere, any time. Merge also provides clinical trials software with end-to-end study support in a single platform and other intelligent health data and analytics solutions. With solutions that have been used by providers for more than 25 years, Merge is helping to reduce costs, improve efficiencies and enhance the quality of healthcare worldwide. For more information, visit [merge.com](http://merge.com) and follow us @MergeHealthcare.

*These Merge solutions are not FDA cleared for diagnostic use on mobile devices.*

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