

St. James's Hospital enhances patient experience.

St. James's Hospital

Healthcare



St. James's Hospital - Case Study

Company	St. James's Hospital
Founded Location	1971 Dublin, Ireland
Services	Delivery of health treatment, care and diagnosis. Health promotion and preventative services at catchment, regional, super-regional and national levels. Teaching academy.
Website	www.stjames.ie

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Overview

St James's Hospital in Dublin, Ireland, is one of the largest acute teaching hospitals in Europe, employing over 3,500 staff and over 110 consultants across 11 clinical directorates and 10 departments. It houses the busiest Emergency Department (ED) in the Irish capital, which in 2010 alone received 45,230 patient visits.

Working with Canon, St James's brought in a solution to enhance its document management in a number of departments. The software integrated seamlessly with the other existing electronic processing systems already in place, dramatically improving turnaround for transactional processing and file archiving throughout the hospital.

A complicated landscape

St James's became an early adopter of Electronic Document Management (EDM) within the Irish Health Service to tackle the large volume of paperwork generated by its numerous departments. Acting on the recommendation of Canon, it implemented an archiving and retrieval system into its Emergency and Social Work departments in 1998 to organise and streamline the way in which it processed this varied mass of documentation.

Before this archiving system was brought into the ED, document management had been a laborious and onerous task. As Marie Sinnott, IT Operations Manager at St James's explains: “When I worked here back in the early 90s, patients admitted to the ED were given a physical card detailing their information and injury. This was subsequently passed on to the doctor and then handed back. The file was then physically stored in cabinets.” She continues: “Due to the patient file changing hands so frequently, it increased the likelihood

of errors occurring, such as misplacement or loss of a file. This inevitably led to longer waiting, consultation and treatment times.”

In 2004 St James's began extending its EDM portfolio. Pat Bailey, SAP System Support at the hospital, was engaged in concurrently introducing two SAP ERP modules, Materials Management and Financials, for its transactional processing and overall business management. The introduction of these modules in conjunction with the existing national Human Resource and Payroll system meant that they then had the full suite of SAP modules to run the business side of the hospital. It also brought about marked improvement on the hospital's efficiency in those departments, but the lack of an efficient archiving system quickly became evident.

Bailey explains: “We realised that while SAP modules were doing their jobs perfectly for the Finance and HR departments, there was room for improvement in terms of storing, indexing and retrieving files.”

Ongoing partnership continues to pay

Following an extensive market search, the hospital went through a competitive tendering process and, after careful deliberation, chose the Canon solution. Bailey recalls: “Canon pointed us towards its document management solution, and that seemed a natural progression considering how well it was performing elsewhere in the hospital.” The solution extended St James's Hospital's relationship with Canon, with a number of other Canon products already in operation, including a Canon EOS 1Ds Mark III camera in Clinical Photography and two Canon EOS 5D Mark II cameras used by the Video Technician. Additionally there are a number of dependable Canon high speed departmental scanners in situ.

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Pat Bailey, SAP System Support

The scanners combine with the Canon software to record and index the documents with a unique tagging code.

Bailey continues: “The Canon document management solution looked great on paper and appeared to tick all the right boxes, however, I had a technical concern. As good as the solution seemed to be, could it integrate with the SAP modules? The answer was yes, easily.” After its integration, the solution promptly began streamlining the filing systems in the relevant departments and demonstrated the potential of automated processing. This potential was realised, when St James’s upgraded to Canon’s latest and improved document management solution.

Bailey didn’t have to go far to see the enhanced solution in action. The ED upgraded, and as Sinnott explains, the solution was operating seamlessly: “With the new Canon solution, the patient card is only filled in and scanned once. The doctor can then locate and access it digitally through the system at a click of a button, simply by using the patient’s ‘unique episode number’. The retrieval process used to take up to anything from 5 minutes to an hour depending on where it was stored. Now it takes literally a few seconds.”

As well as archiving and quick file search and retrieval, the solution quickly demonstrated that it was capable of much more. Sinnott says: “The solution’s storage capacity is endless. And importantly the solution is versatile. We realised we could use it in our clinical photography department too. In fact, it was becoming apparent that it had the potential to benefit any department’s operation.”

Recently, a satisfied Bailey saw the upgraded solution integrated into the Finance and HR departments. He elaborates: “It enables us to store important, confidential files in one place. An advanced administrative mode ensures access is only granted to the appropriate people. It’s a simple, effective and secure digital filing system that allows the staff in HR and Finance to operate quickly. For instance, wages are paid through the SAP module and then the details of each transaction are stored in the secure archive. If there’s a problem, rather than



having to sometimes spend up to an hour searching in filing cabinets, the authorised personnel can now use the unique tagging system, before identifying the problem and rectifying it accordingly in under a minute.”

Bailey further explains: “The sheer volume of paperwork in the hospital – patient files, invoices, inventories, transactions, etc – was staggering and massively time consuming. We had 18 months of paperwork taking up wall and floor space. That is now all stored digitally, which has created a more safe and pleasant working environment.”

Improved transaction processing is another benefit of the new solution. Bailey continues: “The improved turnaround for transaction processing has eliminated a two day month end document checking process. It has also streamlined the query resolution process, which could take up to five days with documents being moved around the site - now only takes one day on average. Furthermore, the Canon solution has enabled us to store more than 315,000 SAP associated documents so far, saving vast in-house and outsourcing costs on physical storage.”

More time for the patient

For both Sinnott and Bailey, the benefits of the solution aren’t just about the paperless office; the results have also benefited the end-user –

the patient. “Patient records can be accessed centrally allowing the treating clinician to view previous clinical details, thus expediting the patient’s journey,” Sinnott continues. “The Clinical Photography department’s adoption of the solution has undoubtedly improved the patient’s experience too. Images taken on the Canon EOS 1Ds Mark III camera, are now directly saved into the patient’s file straight from input and stored securely to avoid loss or unauthorised access. The logging of the images enables the consultant to monitor recurring problems, such as a skin condition, more efficiently. The solution has also improved the hospital’s research and development. With the patient’s consent, recorded injuries can be used later on for the teaching of correct diagnosis and treatment. It all results in a more focused and professional service for the patient.”

The strongest accolade for the Canon solution is the overall feedback. Bailey comments: “The departments that have already implemented and embraced the solution are looking into ways of maximising its potential. The departments that haven’t are keen to get on board. Working with Canon, we’ve set up workshops about the solution for the heads of the departments to truly demonstrate how it could revolutionise their productivity.” Sinnott concludes: “The results have shown it is an easy and worthwhile transition for any department.”

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