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Q&A: Bill Lacy on Fujifilm's new AI-enabled enterprise PACS

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FUJIFILM Medical Systems U.S.A., Inc. Vice President of Medical Informatics Bill Lacy spoke with Radiology Business about what's next in server-side technology and enterprise viewing, and what Fujifilm's introduction of Synapse 7x at RSNA 2019 means for imaging informatics professionals across the healthcare enterprise. Read below for the full conversation:

Bill Lacy

Tell us about Synapse 7X.

Synapse 7X is a convergence of our server-side technology that now covers many different areas of diagnostic visualization and enterprise viewing. We wanted to provide the market with a single server-side zero viewer solution that could extend to radiology, cardiology, diagnostic mammography, and so on, using a single AI-enabled platform. We initiated this process a few years ago with our server-side technology, and we're excited to introduce that full convergence at RSNA 2019.

Fujifilm first introduced its Synapse 5 PACS in 2016. How did that help lead to the development of the Synapse 7X platform?

Synapse 5 first took us into server-side imaging and zero viewer capabilities— this was big for consistent health system performance with large datasets and also an incredibly important step from an IT perspective. A viewer that does not require client management on the desktop, and extends across all imaging areas, is true next-generation enterprise imaging. We started this revolution in 2016 with radiology and have had a phased approach since then, knowing that not all customer IT environments were prepared for zero viewing. So we've introduced this technology to various customer types in the last few years while also adding tools that help Synapse 5 work in areas that may not fully support zero viewing and server-side rendering. And now, with the tools necessary for our technology to work in every environment, we're ready to extend Synapse across the enterprise, and put radiology and cardiology together on one platform.

What are the benefits to using a single viewer platform like Synapse 7X?

There are countless benefits on the IT and clinical

sides. Synapse 7X provides improved interoperability between systems, with a shared data model, which leads to faster and more informed results. And by eliminating departmental and imaging silos, it'll be easier to manage your health system's solutions. IT can scale and manage growth in the data center without the headache of desktop client management and managing multiple vendor imaging solutions. Synapse 7X is the perfect viewer technology to attach to VNA and your enterprise imaging strategy.

Using a single viewer platform also helps physicians share information—cardiologists and radiologists may not always have the same tools in their PACS, or the same access to patient information, but when they're using a single viewer, it helps everyone see the exact same things and communicate with less confusion.

What makes Synapse 7X unique in today's market, and how will Synapse 7X work with Fujifilm's REiLI AI Initiative?

We're bringing diagnostic mammography, radiology and cardiology together through a single platform. Providing zero viewer capabilities—which means there's no viewer client—to those specialties is really unique. Our technology allows for immediate interaction with images regardless of dataset size, which is a game changer in all of these imaging areas. We've also brought 3D natively into the viewer extending the same advanced visualization across radiology and cardiology and eliminating the need for third-party mammography workstations by bringing mammography into the equation. And all of these features, this entire viewer platform, is all enabled for AI. We knew we'd want to introduce our REiLI AI Initiative into the mix, so we designed Synapse 7X to be able to take full advantage of our open AI platform and use AI results natively within user workflows.

We're not just delivering server-side visualization—we're covering all imaging areas, we're bringing 3D natively into the platform and we're making it all AI-enabled.

We want to use AI to empower physicians to provide better, faster results. AI needs to operate on the server side to meet user performance expectations and not hinder workflow, and that's something that will be happening with Synapse 7X across all imaging areas.

What's next for Fujifilm and the Synapse platform?

We're going to keep expanding this platform to more and more areas—we're focused on radiology, cardiology and mammography, but we also want to adapt to other imaging service lines throughout every health system. As enterprise imaging grows and VNAs become the primary centralized storage solution for providers, we're going to keep expanding our viewing capabilities for non-DICOM objects. Now that we have this single viewer solution, we want to work to expand its capabilities as much as possible and continuously explore ways to take advantage of AI in the future.

We also want to bring data analytics into the viewer and continue to make sure this is the richest possible visualization layer for enterprise imaging. Bringing radiology and cardiology together like we have with Synapse 7X is a big step forward as we work toward that goal.