

Embrace an enterprise-wide legacy healthcare data archiving strategy *sooner, rather than later*



Letting go of what was isn't easy.

When a health system transitions to new health information technology, clinicians and staff have a new normal. However, considering your clinicians and staff still need access to the data that used to live in the EMR, ERP or Patient Accounting applications your organization just replaced, letting go becomes downright complicated.

While it's true that vendors do convert legacy system data into the new applications, no more than a few years' worth ports over. It's up to you to figure out how to provide your clinicians and staff access to the legacy data that didn't make it into your new systems.



You've got a few choices for storing and accessing legacy data:

1. Keep your legacy systems running alongside those shiny new ones. However, this option is expensive. It's also difficult to manage and doesn't exactly offer a solid long-term strategy – Continuing to run your legacy applications in parallel with your new ones doesn't really maximize the return on the investments you've just made.
2. Decommission the systems, completely disregard your organization's data retention policies as well as Federal and state medical records regulations and destroy all the data. As you may suspect, your legal counsel and compliance officers strongly advise against this option.
3. Back up all the raw data, print hard copies to store it in binders or electronically as PDFs. With little-to-no search functionality, your clinicians and staff would have to scroll...and scroll...and scroll some more to find what they need. This option works as efficiently as it sounds while creating twice the frustration.
4. Shut down those legacy systems, stop creating workarounds and patches and paying maintenance fees, and move the data to an archive solution. You've got choices here, too.



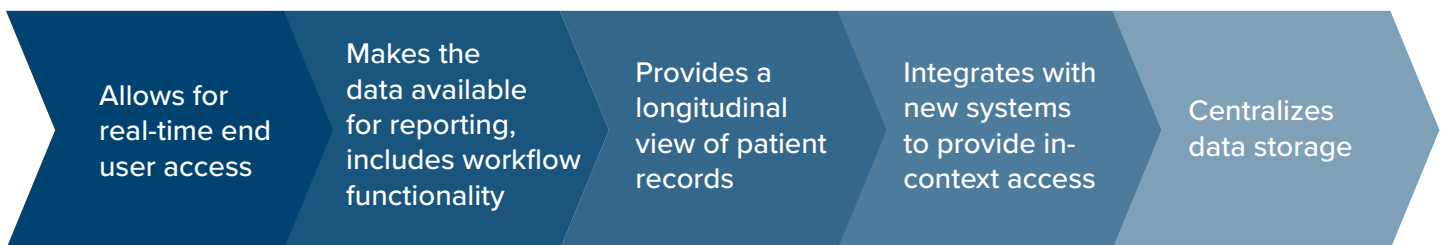
Offline Archives vs. Active, Enterprise Data Archives

The type of information you have, how often your clinicians and staff access it and what they need to be able to do with it will determine whether you opt for an offline archive, an active enterprise archive or a combination of both.

Offline archives work best when:

- Users won't frequently access the information and won't need a graphical user interface
- There is no need for the data to be utilized in reporting or workflows

However, if your billing staff needs to continue working down your accounts receivable, your HIM staff needs to fulfill requests for information, and your HR staff needs to respond to audits or your clinicians need to access the patient histories that were once in your legacy applications, an active enterprise data archive is the way to go. An active enterprise archiving platform:



Evaluating your legacy data and how your clinicians and staff will need to work with it will help you shape your enterprise archiving strategy – but doing so early in the process of evaluating new HIT systems will help set your organization up for a more successful transition.

Talk early, and often, about healthcare legacy data management

There is no question: Healthcare organizations have a number of considerations when introducing new technology. Each is integral to a successful implementation. Ensuring strategic management of your legacy data is one of them. Applying an enterprise archiving strategy ensures you'll continue to provide your clinicians and staff easy access to the legacy information they need, when and how they need it, which in turn, encourages user adoption and maximizes the ROI of the new applications.

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