

# Document Imaging Report

Business Trends on Converting Paper Processes to Electronic Format

4003 Wood Street ● Erie, PA 16509 ● PH (814) 866-2247 ● FX (800) 507-8981 ● <http://www.documentimagingreport.com>

February 4, 2005

## Helping Physicians Navigate The EMR Landscape

*On-line service matches practices with appropriate software applications.*

Over the past two years, the influence of HIPAA has helped electronic medical records (EMR) become one of the hottest OEM areas for document imaging software. For awhile, it seemed we saw a weekly announcement involving an EMR vendor embracing document imaging. According to orthopedic surgeon and software reseller, Eric Fishman, M.D., there is good reason for this. EMR is a hot market and document imaging is increasingly becoming a must-have component. "The majority of EMR applications now offer document scanning," he told *DIR*. "In the not-so-distant future, no top-tier product will be without it."

It's in Fishman's business interests to keep track of such trends. Last fall, he launched **EMRConsultant** (<http://emrconsultant.com>), an online business for connecting prospective EMR users with vendors. As of last week, EMRConsultant had advised more than 1,100 physicians groups, leveraging a database containing information on more than 200 vendors.

Fishman, who is based in Palm Beach Gardens, FL, came up with the idea for EMRConsultant while driving home from last February's **HIMSS (Healthcare Information Management Systems Society)** show in Orlando. "At the show, I realized there was a tremendous demand for EMR," he related. "So initially I thought about becoming a reseller."

But Fishman, who for 10 years has sold voice recognition technology primarily to physicians for transcription applications, didn't see how he could do EMR users justice. "Throughout the years, I've had access to almost every voice recognition technology that has been available," he told *DIR*. "At various times, I've worked with products from Kurzweil, Philips, Dragon, **ScanSoft**, and a few others that have come and gone. That market has consolidated and ScanSoft's Dragon *NaturallySpeaking* has emerged as the winner. I now recommend it 95% of the time.

"Today's EMR market is much more fragmented. And, because the applications are more complex than voice recognition by an order of magnitude, it would be impossible to become an expert on more than one or two. The requirements of physicians' offices are too diverse for that model. Take two doctors who went to the same med school and did their residencies together. If you put them in practice, six months later, they might have completely different types of EMR requirements based on variables like the size of their practice and the types of records they are working with."

To provide physicians with a full perspective of EMR vendors and technology, EMRConsultant maintains a database of information on available applications. "Most of our information comes from

questions that EMR vendors respond to," said Fishman. "We also require demos. Currently, we are in correspondence with approximately 100 vendors whose products we will recommend depending on the situation. We are always looking for new vendors as well."

In addition to document imaging, key EMR functionality includes test and lab results management, order entry, decision support, electronic communication and connectivity, compatibility with speech recognition, patient support, and administrative support. On the physicians' side, EMRConsultant takes into account the number of physicians in a practice, the practice specialty areas, and technology and applications already in use.

According to Fishman, EMRConsultant deals with a wide range of physicians groups. "The largest number of requests comes from groups of one to three physicians," Fishman told *DIR*. "However, the largest group we've dealt with has 4,400 physicians. This morning I received a request from a group of 40 physicians."

After submitting their information, physicians groups typically receive a response within 24 hours. "One of our employees compares our service to [the dating match site] **eHarmony.com**," joked Fishman. "Vendor names are automatically chosen based on the information in our database. Then we have a person check the recommendations

to make sure they're on target. Typically, we'll recommend three to five vendors, although for very unique cases, there might only be one. In some cases, if a user's expectations and pricepoint are unrealistic, there might be none.

"We'll never recommend more than six, because part of our job is to help physicians narrow their choices. They can find a complete list of EMR vendors through their own searches. After we provide our recommendations, we will stay in touch and often provide additional vendors based on feedback. A user might choose one vendor from our list and ask for names of other similar vendors."



**"If someone comes in who's been shot, you treat them no matter what. Sometimes you get paid, sometimes you don't, but at the end of the day, you are profitable."**

**- Dr. Eric Fishman**

EMRConsultant does not charge physicians. It earns revenue through deals to collect a percentage of software sales from the vendors it recommends. "That does not mean we only recommend software vendors that have referral agreements with us," stressed Fishman. "Our credibility is too important. I look at it like being a surgeon in the emergency room. If someone comes in who's been shot, you treat them no matter what. Sometimes you get paid, sometimes you don't, but at the end of the day, you are profitable."

When we spoke with Fishman, EMRConsultant had yet to reach that "end of the day." "We have made a good number of recommendations to people who have not bought applications yet," he said. "When these purchases are made, we expect to realize some significant revenue."

According to Fishman, reliable sources he's seen rate EMR adoption anywhere between 5% and 18%. His personal experience is that general and family practitioners are leading the way. Fishman was not comfortable predicting the rate at which adoption will increase. He did say, however, he expects government and insurance companies to step up their encouragement of physicians to transition to electronic records.

"Practices can receive some direct benefits from EMR by using it to automate processes like records retrieval, scheduling, and re-filling prescriptions," said Fishman. "It also helps them meet HIPAA requirements. However, the big savings are potentially realized by the payers. They benefit because a good EMR system helps eliminate errors and duplication of services. For example, if you have an electronic record of a blood test that can be accessed online,

## Document Imaging Report

Business Trends On Converting Paper Processes To Electronic Format

*DIR* is the leading executive report on managing documents for e-business.

Areas we cover include:

1. Scanning
2. Forms Processing/OCR/ICR
3. Integrated Document Management
4. Content Management/XML
5. Document Output
6. Storage
7. E-Commerce

*DIR* brings you the inside story behind the deals and decisions that affect your business.

### Vol. 15, No. 3

**Editor:** Ralph Gammon  
4003 Wood Street  
Erie, PA 16509  
PH (814) 866-2247  
FX (800) 507-8981  
ralphg@documentimagingreport.com



### Managing Editor:

Rick Morgan  
PH (814) 866-1146  
rickm@scandcr.com

### Publisher and Circulation Manager

Larry Roberts  
RMG Enterprises, Inc.  
5905 Beacon Hill Lane  
Erie, PA 16509  
PH (412) 480-5116  
FX (412) 291-1352  
larry@rmgenterprises.com

there is no need to repeat the test at each specialist a patient visits."

Fishman said various government organizations are currently offering financial incentives for physicians who can prove they provide a high quality of care. "The caveat is that to show this proof, they typically need a good EMR system," he said. "I eventually expect insurance companies to start offering higher rates to physicians who can provide similar proof of high-quality care."

For more information: **EMR Consultant**, Palm Beach Gardens, FL,  
PH (888) 519-3100,  
FX (561) 630-0375.