



Peter Short's story



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As most hospital admissions involve x-rays and other scans, the number of patients benefiting from PACS (Picture Archiving and Communications Systems) is increasing every day.

Unfortunately for Peter Short, a GP from Buxton in Derbyshire, a holiday to France ended with him experiencing PACS at first hand.

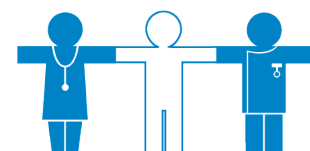
“It was New Year’s Eve and my wife and I took a much anticipated skiing trip to France. It was great to get away after the Christmas festivities, so imagine my annoyance (and pain!) when I fell off my skis and broke my leg in two places. I went to a local hospital in France where I had some x-rays taken the traditional way on hard copy film. Looking at the films on a light box, the doctors confirmed that I had managed to break bones in my lower leg and knee.

“My son took a photo of my x-rays on the light box using a camera phone and sent the picture via mobile message to England.

“It was only a short while later that I discovered he had uploaded the picture on to Facebook – ‘the wonders of digital technology’, I thought to myself. Little did I know there was much more to come?

“I left France with my leg in a cast and my x-rays in an envelope. Once I was home in England, I was admitted to Stockport NHS Foundation Trust for some more x-rays at Stepping Hill hospital – this was so that the consultant could take a better look at my fractures and determine the best course of treatment. My x-ray experience at Stepping Hill was quite different to that in France as Stepping Hill had PACS in place. I had had no personal experience of digital radiology in action before so, as a GP, I was quite excited and interested to see how it worked.

“Having been to the x-ray department, I was sent back up to see the consultant for follow-up, and as I hopped into the room he was already looking at my images on the screen in front of him.



“The consultation was much more interactive compared to my experience in France. The consultant flicked through my images, zooming in and out and rotating the x-rays as he talked me through the breaks and the healing process. In my case, the digital x-ray technology allowed accurate measurement for a titanium rod repair and optimal alignment of my damaged leg bones.

“Overall, it was a much calmer, smoother experience. The consultation felt more controlled which gave me greater confidence as I felt better informed about what was going on and how my x-rays would be used to monitor progress.

“What also struck me was the speed with which the x-ray images were produced and shared, and the confidence the clinicians demonstrated in using the system.

“There were no delays, no carrying around packets of films. The efficiency was impressive and I even have a digital copy of my images as a souvenir!

“Availability of the same images at my local clinic also enabled my physiotherapist to provide the best advice immediately, reducing my recovery time.

“When I think about how it took just a few minutes for my son to upload a digital photo onto the web, it brought home to me that PACS really is appropriate for the digital age.



Peter had a titanium rod inserted into his leg - a process made easier by the use of PACS.

“It’s helping us to take healthcare into the 21st century and, as a clinician, I am excited about using this and other technological developments to improve care and involve patients more.”

Read more about how patients and clinicians are benefitting from PACS at <http://www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk/pacs/casestudies>

