



Facilitating access to care for patients in hospitals and hundreds of healthcare facilities across Ontario

Challenge

Need for a high-quality mobile visual communications and collaboration solution to support one of the largest telemedicine networks in the world.

Solution

Vidyo™ APIs



The Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN), founded in April 2006, is an independent, not-for-profit organization, funded by the Government of Ontario, Canada. It is one of the largest telemedicine networks in the world, covering the entire province of Ontario; approximately 621,000 square miles and about 13 million people. OTN's reach extends to over 1600 healthcare facilities across the province. The organization estimates that 160 million miles – that's 275 trips to the moon and back - is eliminated as a result of the over 200,000 patient consults per year enabled by their network.

Key Results

Improved quality of care and efficiency for one of the largest telemedicine networks in the world

Ability to leverage PCs, Macs, and mobile devices for visual collaboration throughout network

Ability to access affordable, high-quality visual communications from clinics, hospitals or homes

From its beginnings, OTN has successfully created an infrastructure that allows all health providers and organizations across Ontario to participate in telemedicine. Its operations are based on a governance model that includes technical standards, business process standards, as well as privacy and security requirements. The Network also provides a set of services for healthcare providers, based on what was determined to be the most necessary to support access to care. Services such as tech support, turnkey tech management and scheduling assistance are among the online tools that OTN offers to support its member practitioners.

OTN is continually looking to take advantage of technological advancements in consumer devices and consumer networks, to offer the

most innovative telehealth capabilities as an addition to its established hardware-based systems and private networks. That's where Vidyo plays a key role.

According to Dr. Ed Brown, CEO, Ontario Telemedicine Network, "We are now able to leverage PCs, Macs, and mobile devices in our practices and Vidyo's technology allows us to integrate into that world. This is something that has made telemedicine a lot less expensive and given us many more options. We believe that telemedicine will become much more ubiquitous as a result."

Several years ago, when OTN first embarked on its search for a new video conferencing platform, a primary goal was to find a flexible, mobile solution that would allow clinicians to

access high quality personal video conferencing directly from the clinic or from the hospital or from their homes. OTN practitioners wanted to be able to use every day laptops, Macs, PCs, or their mobile devices for these needs.

"We had 3 main criteria when we were looking for a solution," said Anish Shah, OTN's Product Manager, Personal Video Conferencing. "The first was that the solution needed to work with our legacy H.263 systems; the second was that a user could use the solution over the Internet; and the third was that it needed to be a solution that would integrate with the portal that we were building; --a solution that offered APIs so that we could have complete control the behavior of the software and the solution to make things easy for our users."

"As an organization we just want to make telemedicine simple; we want to make it part of everyday healthcare delivery in Ontario. Vidyo enables us to do that."

Dr. Ed Brown, CEO, Ontario Telemedicine Network

After identifying Vidyo as a possible answer to their needs, OTN put Vidyo technology through a series of pilot tests to make sure that the audio and video were adequate for clinical use, that it was easy for users to set up and self-manage the installation and use; and to determine if OTN clinicians would use it more often than the room systems that were already available to them. According to Shah, "We wanted to make sure that the solution we chose would be used consistently every day, every week. It needed to be something that our users would be very comfortable with, without having to go through any formal training to use. The results of these pilot tests indicate that the Vidyo technology met all of our criteria and gave us exactly what we were looking for."

With Vidyo, OTN providers can interact with and care for patients from the convenience of a desktop computer or mobile device. OTN's Vidyo-supported Personal Videoconferencing is a software-based service that provides a simpler, lower-cost and mobile alternative to traditional room-based videoconferencing. Personal Videoconferencing is the only desktop computer-based videoconferencing tool that enables



providers to access the OTN network via the Internet, increasing the providers' opportunities to expand their care and education conveniently and cost-effectively.

Dr. Ann Toth is a clinical social worker in private practice who has used video consultation and treatment as part of her practice for many years. "When I first started I thought that video could never be as good as 'face-to-face' in-person visits, mainly because the technology at the time was lacking," said Toth. "That has changed. The OTN-Vidyo platform is such excellent platform, the quality of the technology allows me to easily have access as well as good quality and delivery of service that I didn't have before. I can say that the kind of counseling and psychotherapy via OTN that I can provide today is equally as effective as when I meet with someone here in my office."

Dr. Christopher Sankey, Medical Director of the First Step Clinic in Toronto, has been using the OTN system for the past few years, to provide opiate addiction counseling and treatment. He believes that it is extremely effective, especially in settings where patients would otherwise have to travel a long distance to see a doctor. According to Sankey, "In the area of crisis counseling, urgent situations happen pretty often. Maybe it's an addiction crisis or a relapse, or abuse ... situations arise with patients where they need to see me immediately. With OTN's solution, even though they are miles away from me, we can still have a face-to-face exchange and work through whatever issues have occurred."

According to Dr. Brown, "OTN's goal is to improve access to care for patients, to improve quality of care and to improve the efficiency of the healthcare system. As an organization we just want to make telemedicine simple; we want to make it part of everyday healthcare delivery in Ontario. Vidyo enables us to do that."

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