

SWGIT DRAFT Considerations for Managers

This document is designed to provide the reader with considerations generated by members of the SWGIT. The migration to new imaging technology may significantly affect current work processes and should be done only after an examination of current operating procedures and a needs assessment is completed. This should involve the participation of your organization's imaging and/or subject matter experts. The examination of current operating procedures is the crucial first step in implementing any new imaging technology.

Consideration 1: Needs Assessment¹

- Prior to selecting digital imaging technology, examine current practices to determine if there is a need to replace or enhance existing technology.
- Consideration should be given to a hybrid imaging system where some or all of the current equipment is utilized in conjunction with a new technology.

Consideration 2: Cost Analysis¹

- Prior to selecting a digital imaging system, conduct a cost benefit analysis to determine the cost justification of a system purchase and to determine the possible advantages and disadvantages to the agency with its implementation.
- Such an analysis would allow a financial comparison between the current and proposed imaging systems to help in making a procurement decision.
- To determine a cost estimate, the following components should be considered: system hardware, system software, application software, communications hardware and software, system maintenance, training, project management, facilities upgrades/site preparation, staffing costs, and other miscellaneous costs.
- A typical cost justification includes the following major areas: a study of current operations, proposed system architecture, equipment pricing, and financial indicators, including payback period.

Consideration 3: Image Resolution¹

- When determining resolution requirements, consider the intended usage, data storage requirements, and the need for accurate reproduction of the image.

Consideration 4: Image Storage²

- Original images **MUST** be preserved on separable media.
- The selection of a storage media may depend on budget considerations for the agency. Each has its own advantages and disadvantages.

¹ See SWGIT Draft Guidelines for Field Applications of Imaging Technologies

² See SWGIT Definitions and Guidelines for the Use of Imaging Technologies in the Criminal Justice System

Consideration 5: Image Compression³

- Compression affects image quality and should be considered carefully.
- Lossy compression, such as JPEG, can result in the loss of critical details. The use of this type of compression may render an image unsuitable for forensic analysis.

Consideration 6: Equipment Evaluation

- Information utilized to evaluate suitability of new imaging technology should include feedback from agencies currently using the equipment in similar applications, product reviews, and vendor specification sheets.
- Prior to making a final selection, require a demonstration of any new imaging technologies utilizing representative samples of casework.
- Do not rely solely upon pre-packaged demonstrations.

Consideration 7: Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

- SOPs must be developed to ensure consistency, quality, integrity and repeatability of the process.
- A staff member should be responsible for the overall project management, system administration, and maintenance of the SOPs.
- It is the responsibility of a staff member, rather than vendors and manufacturers, to maintain written documentation of system procedures, SOPs, including access and security policies and procedures.

Consideration 8: Training⁴

- Initial and continuing training in imaging technology is required.

Consideration 9: Re-occurring Costs

- Administrative managers should be aware of the cost of maintaining and upgrading imaging systems. Unless these costs are factored into the budget, the system is in danger of becoming obsolete. Some organizations annually budget approximately 15% of the original system acquisition cost for upgrades, training, and maintenance.

Consideration 10: Legal Considerations

- Original images should be treated as evidence.
- SOPs should be designed to protect the integrity of the images.
- The user should be familiar with how the rules of evidence apply.

³ See SWGIT Draft Recommendations and Guidelines for the use of Digital Image Processing in the CJS.

⁴ See SWGIT Draft Guidelines and Recommendations for Training in Imaging Technologies in the CJS.