

Metron: Veterinary Imaging and Measurement System

Product Strategy

The traditional market for radiographs is in the first phase of the transition from film-based system to modern digital systems (DR, CR, and CCD). In this first phase, practitioners tend to look for a direct replacement for their film-based system, but with obvious superior features related to image quality, speed of acquisition, and ease of storage and transmission. Most of the activity today involved with selling digital systems just has to do with demonstrating the superior image, speed, and storage.

There is a wide range of image processing techniques that can be used to attempt to get the most out of a digital image. Over the past couple of years, the various digital radiography vendors have been improving their imaging, in some cases leap-frogging each other as all strive to provide the best digital image.

We believe that as this market matures, a second phase of the transition to digital will begin to emerge. In this second phase, the software system associated with the digital device will take on a more important role, and will be asked to do more things. This second phase will hit full stride as we approach a point where *all* the digital systems make beautiful digital images -- at that point, a beautiful digital radiographic image will become something like a commodity, and it will be other value-added features of the software which will be required to make market distinctions among vendors.

We believe that Metron-based systems win in the market place today largely because Metron makes superior images, thanks to our modern wavelet filtering technology. In a large segment of the current market, it is about making the best image. While we feel we are in a position to win in today's marketplace, we also have a system which will be the leader in the second phase of market maturation.

As far as software with value-added features, Metron is today in a superior position in the equine niche, and is moving to secure top position also in companion animal features for both skeletal and dental radiography.

Indeed, this second phase of market development has begun, as the value-added features of Metron are already pulling in sales within certain markets. Metron users get the system with the best images, plus the bonus of value-added features that are in no other software system. Our future plan is to cover more and more of these specialized areas with value-added features. Competing software may or may not make good images, but

they are not able to sell based on a particular specialty because they do not offer features beyond the basics of imaging and storage.

Traditionally veterinarians had to rely solely on their expertise when using radiographs. They simply inspect the image visually and use their experience to make judgments regarding what the image shows. A segment of today's market has no expectation from a radiography system beyond just that, though perhaps they'd like the images to be clearer, and to arrive faster, and to be easier to transmit and store.

We believe that the now-growing and future market will be for systems that start with this core set of functions, but allow the user to do things such as:

- Calibrate the image
- Make accurate measurements in the image
- Do specialized measurements of anatomy for comparison with databases of 'normals'
- Do pre-surgical planning and visualization
- Merge images of different modalities (e.g. overlay radiographs and photographs, or radiographs with MRIs, etc)
- Prepare professional reports
- Show 3-D visualizations to their clients
- Compute bone density measurements
- Compare before and after images in quantitative ways
- And much more...

Most of these features are offered by Metron today, and more will be offered in the future. Metron does, and will do, everything the other systems do, but will add a large set of value added features targeted at various specialty niches.