

On Monday, August 15, we started the go-live process of our long-awaited barcoding module for CoPath, which is called SMART. This was in the making for several months. Our primary goal with SMART was to improve patient safety, by reducing the manual entry of accession numbers, and other data, and increasing the number of identifiers on every slide and block, in order to meet best practice standards. While there may be some efficiencies gained by the SMART implementation, they are not immediately apparent, nor were they expected to be. The totally new workflow actually was expected to slow things down, at least for the first few weeks.

This process all began months, and even years, ago. There were many high-level discussions back and forth, regarding what system we should go with for barcoding, and many disappointments before money was actually approved and given to us for this project. The CoPath SMART module was chosen for purchase, soon after funding was received.

Starting in December 2015, and January 2016, most of the equipment was chosen and ordered, and Jami Ritchie, from Sunquest, was on site for a couple of days, in order to access our workflow, and make recommendations on the barcoding implementation.

In early April, Jami returned to OSU to teaching the managers how to “build” smart for each of their areas, and to work with the LIS team regarding changes that they would need to make, and things they would need to know about SMART. We spent 3 days learning about how SMART works, and “doing the build” with Jami.

There was much work still to be done, however. There were still some “builds” to be done, and lots of testing to be done, as soon as the hardware was deployed and connected.

By mid-June, testing was on-going, and each area was asked to take several “dummy cases” from accessioning to the pathologist, on a daily basis.

Training was on-going, and most areas had at least 1-2 “super-users” to assist with the training, and to help troubleshoot, after “go-live”.

By the end of July, all changes in the test system were stopped. Everything had to be ready for the transfer to “live”, but the training and practicing continued.

By August 15, everyone was quite ready, and other than a few minor glitches, and some anticipated slow-downs, “Go-Live” was rather anticlimactic.

There are still two more “phases” that will be instituted a bit later on. One of those includes interfacing the IHC orders directly to the IHC instrumentation, which will avoid double-entry, and clerical errors for the IHC stains, and the other is tracking the “assets”, or blocks and slides, throughout the department. This will require each asset to be scanned every time it is moved from one “SPOT” (Specimen Points of Tracking) to another.

While SMART isn’t perfect, and everyone is still making small improvements, and tweaking the workflow, we are so proud of how well everyone has adapted to the new workflow, and we really appreciate how hard everyone has worked on this project.