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Honey, I Shrank the JPEG

By Shailaja Neelakantan, September 21, 2005

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If downloading digital photos stalls your PC, spare a thought for the data networks in hospitals. A midsize hospital typically gets 60 requests every hour for MRIs and echocardiograms. At 10 megabytes apiece, the enormous images can quickly cripple a network.

Enter 25-year-old Arvind Thiagarajan, co-founder of Singapore-based startup **MatrixView**, who wants to revolutionize digital imaging. The data-compression algorithm he invented shrinks images into a format called a MatrixView Universal, or MVU, which is 15 to 300 percent smaller than a JPEG. But unlike a JPEG, which omits details, an MVU is as precise as the original. "Data loss is unacceptable in medical diagnosis," Thiagarajan says. That's why the startup is focusing on health care first. A well-known hospital in Bangalore is using the technology, and MatrixView plans to ink deals in the coming year with several Fortune 100 health-care companies in the United States. MatrixView is also targeting other subsets of the \$9 billion U.S. digital-imaging market. Right now it's negotiating with chipmakers to embed the technology in cameras and fit more files on storage cards. MRIs today, vacation snaps tomorrow. ♦

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