



Is digital really better?

Despite massive growth in digital dentistry, not all dentists and dental technicians have made the switch just yet. However, there are many advantages to be gained by fully utilising the latest digital technologies. Phil Reddington – Managing Director and Head Ceramist at Beaver Dental Technology Ltd – has been using digital solutions for the last 10 years. He highlights what he believes are the main benefits available:

“The most exciting and rewarding aspects of digital are what it does for treatment planning and communication. For example, a digital wax-up is quick and cost-effective when planning for implant placement. You can design the wax-up and send it to the dentist, who plans the implant placement. You then make a surgical guide from their digital set-up and they perform the surgery.

“The digital workflow also allows us to plan for potential compromises. With a conventional workflow, a compromised result may only be indicated after several steps. Using digital technologies, this can be established much quicker and with less effort, meaning the patient is informed earlier in the process too. The ability to present simulations of the predicted treatment outcome in a 3D rendering significantly improves patient communication and treatment uptake.

“Further to all this, right now, a digital workflow affords one more massive benefit – digital impressions. These eliminate the cross-contamination risk associated with physical impressions (no patient, dentist or courier has touched it), while reducing the time spent by practice and lab on decontamination. Around 60-70% of the impressions my lab received were already digital and as dentists seem to be more confident taking digital scans since re-opening, I expect this to increase. In fact, for the first time, I honestly believe that all laboratories will need to use at least some digital technology to survive in the future.”

Despite being a keen advocate for digital in the world of dental technology, Phil understands the barriers some labs face.

“A lot of the hesitancy to invest in digital is due to the massive learning curve involved with some of the technology and the initial cost required,” he says. “In addition, software licences can be expensive – we have three at our lab, which each require renewing every year.

“Today, there are many lab-to-lab services that enable those businesses that don’t have the capital or volume of work to justify purchasing their own digital technologies,

ADI Team Congress 2021

"The Great Debate"

6-8 May 2021, Manchester Central

www.adi.org.uk

ADI members can attend the ADI Team Congress for discounted rates. Join today.



Phil Reddingotn

to still benefit. This enables more technicians to utilise the equipment and expertise of those who do use a fully digital workflow, maintaining standards without constantly worrying about their return on investment – which is especially pertinent in such uncertain financial times."

Phil will be discussing the latest challenges and advantages of digital solutions during his session in the Technicians' Programme at the ADI Team Congress 2021. He will be sharing his personal experiences, exploring if, why and when digital really is better than conventional techniques.

"I will take an honest look at how and when we should rely on digital solutions, as well as the benefits of utilising the latest technology," he continues. "I don't think there is any excuse for not using digital in at least 90% of procedures. That said, I will consider when it is appropriate to put down the technology and go back to using our hands.

"Having dealt with digital for at least the last decade, we have seen every possible problem you could imagine. I want to share my day-to-day experiences as a dental technician and lab owner, discussing the solutions we used to overcome the challenges faced. My aim is to keep

the information as relevant and up-to-date as possible. The session will also be sponsor-free so any endorsements or products mentioned will be my personal opinion and not influenced in any other way. Digital is not simple and it can be very frustrating at times, but when it's working well, it is a great thing to work with."

The ADI Team Congress 2021 is entitled "The Great Debate" and will be offering different ideas and perspectives on a range of emerging techniques and concepts in dental implantology for the whole team. Like Phil, many other world-class speakers will be sharing their experiences and expertise to help delegates develop their own protocols and enhance the quality of their work. Phil adds:

"This will be the sixth ADI Team Congress I have attended and the third I have spoken at. Every single time I have learnt so much and the quality of the speakers is about as good as it gets. However, it's not just about the fantastic speakers. The conversations you have at lunch or at the bar afterwards mean you can discuss what was presented on stage in greater detail. You don't get that opportunity at a lot of other events. In addition, the ADI always pulls out all the stops for the social programme, which makes for an outstanding event."