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## How digital are you?

Back in 1994 I was invited by Prof Peter Schärer to lecture about my 5 years of experience with the CEREC system. Prof Schärer asked me, “So, you go into the office in the morning, turn on your machine and let it do all your work until you turn it off in the evening and go back home?”

I answered him that dentistry is all about digital. Digits are numbers, but they are also our fingers. Digital dentistry in the broadest sense then refers to the combination of hand-made (creativity, skills) and computer-made (reliability) elements. We need to bear in mind that, along with the advancement of digital technologies, we also need to improve our skills and knowledge to handle the technology and to get the most out of it.

Over the past decades there has been a growing interest in digital dentistry among the dental community. The term ‘digital dentistry’ refers to a wide range of technologies and devices that incorporate digital or computer-controlled components, in contrast to mechanical or electrical devices. The digital

technologies used most in the dental office include digital photography, CAD/CAM, optical scanners, CBCT, digital radiographs, intraoral and extraoral scanners, and dental lasers.

The advantages of digital dentistry should include improved efficiency (both cost and time), improved accuracy compared with previous methods, and a high level of predictability of outcomes.

After almost 30 years, around 50,000 intraoral scanners have been sold. With an estimated total of around two million dentists worldwide, we are talking about 2% of dentists having this technology in their offices. What remains to be seen is how quickly digital technology will become more affordable, so that it becomes a tool for the majority of dentists and not only for a small group.

No matter how ‘digital’ you are, enjoy reading!

Sincerely yours  
*Alessandro Devigus*