Getting with the digital times

Digital dental impressions are definitely here to stay. If you’re not already using an intraoral scanner, make sure you don’t get left behind! Carestream Dental answers your questions...

By Carestream Dental

Digital impressioning is on its way to being the next big thing in dentistry, offering a myriad of benefits to both the practice and the patient. The intraoral scanners on the market today utilise sophisticated technology to offer cutting-edge capabilities with straightforward user interactions. They facilitate a smoother and simpler workflow for the professional team and more accurate diagnostics and treatment planning. For the patient, they afford a more comfortable experience in the practice and often significantly greater patient satisfaction, which in turn boosts word-of-mouth recommendations and enhances the reputation of the practice for future growth and long-term success.

However, there are still many practices that are not yet reaping the most of the advantages available to them through intraoral scanning. The perceived barriers that prevent some from taking up digital impressions can vary, but often are not as great as you might initially think.

The key to confidence with these innovative solutions is having all the facts and knowing exactly what they can and can’t do for you and your patients. Carestream Dental understands this and is working with the profession to help provide the information and support needed to introduce intraoral scanning and all its advantages to the dental practice.

We’d like to share with you some of the questions we are most frequently asked so that we may help you to fill in the gaps.

Are they easy to use? As with many things, they are very easy to use once you know how. Just as when trying anything for the first time, there is a learning curve when initially getting to grips with an intraoral scanner, but it is not excessive. All you need is the right training and support from a team of professionals who can help you avoid any potential pitfalls and overcome any challenges with ease. We would suggest that it takes about 15 minutes for the initial training and then the first five cases to become familiar and quite comfortable with the technology.

Will it save me time? Consider polyester impression materials with an average working/setting time of six minutes. With the CS 3600 intraoral scanner, upper, lower and occlusal scans can be completed in the same time – so yes, the scanners will save you time as well. Further to this, Carestream Dental offers solutions to make your life even easier, allowing your scans to be sent to your laboratory in about two to three minutes. This provides an opportunity to engage with the technician in real-time, confirming that they have all the information they need to proceed with fabrication of the required restoration or appliance, while the patient is still in the chair.

Is an intraoral scanner as accurate as a traditional impression? Absolutely. There are various studies to show that digital impressions are more accurate than traditional alternatives. What’s more, with several intraoral scanners available on the market modern, there has been research into which products are the most accurate, with the CS 3500 coming out on top for trueness and precision in a study conducted by Mangano et al. The CS 3500 is the latest model built upon the successes of the CS 3500, so you can have complete confidence in the accuracy of your scans.

Can I try before I buy? Of course. You need to make sure that intraoral scanning is right for you, and that you have chosen the right product for you. Our sales team will carry intraoral scanners for demonstrations, so get in touch if you’d like to try one for yourself.

Is it compatible with short-term orthodontic appliances? Another benefit of our scanners is that our software is totally compatible with OrthoTrac for a seamless workflow – other scanners require the purchase of additional programmes in order to interact with the system, which increases costs and hassle. Further still, the CS 3500 and CS 3600 are both compatible with ArchFormByte – the company behind C-Thru Clear Aligners. To find out more about which orthodontic systems our scanners can work with, just give us a call.

Is it worth the investment? As with any new technology, an initial investment is required to purchase and set up an intraoral scanner but this can be undertaken via lease finance to help spread the cost. As to whether it’s worth it in the long-run, consider a return on investment calculation. For example, an orthodontic practice might be taking ten new patients that require an alignment every five years. The lab bills for one week of gypsum study models will pay for the monthly repayments of the scanner. So the other three weeks are pure profit. Not to mention the physical space saved through not having to store all those gypsum models.

Which labs can I work with? If the intraoral scanner produces open STL or files, then you can continue working with your current lab without any problems at all as long as they have ‘open’ CAD systems. With the CS 3500 and CS 3600, you can simply send the open files to your chosen lab, who can view and manipulate the images using their CAD software without ever needing to purchase new software or upgrade their existing systems. We’re all about making life easy for everyone involved.

References

For more information please contact Carestream Dental

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