

Dental Technophobia

Overcoming the fear of technology in the Dental Office

by David Hawkins

“**Technophobia**” is defined in the dictionary as the fear or dislike of advanced technology or complex devices, especially computers.

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There are a myriad of technological advances that have been introduced to the dental profession during the last decade. Appointment books were “Books”, x-ray films were developed by hand with timers in a “Dark Room” and “Silver fillings” were mixed chair-side.

Although the baby boomer generation learned great techniques using the best products available in their time, technology is changing the way we treat patients and run our businesses.

As we look at our patient base, we should look at their technology use. Social Media sites are the new norm for viewing family photos. Smart phones are being used to the extent of their battery life each day.

So when we look at technology, we should try to embrace the innovations most important to our customers. These are just a few that you should consider:

When your patient watches a YouTube video showing how to make their own Teeth Aligners and ask you about it, be prepared with the capability and technology to provide the professional alternative. Have your patients asked about the “Crown-in-an-hour”? When you need to send an x-ray to a referring specialist, can you email it? Do your patients get a text reminder of their appointment tomorrow?

Consider the increased valuation of your practice after implementing technology and the effects of waiting. The results are opposites.

Place “Charging Stations” strategically throughout your office.

Make your business visible on social media sites and keep them up to date with postings and contests.

On the professional side of business, align your technology with your referring practitioners.

Some of the most productive and efficient innovations for the dental practice include:

Intra-oral cameras (A picture is worth a thousand words).

Digital x-ray sensors eliminate the dark-room and are digitally stored without the need for paper mounts.

CBCT Panoramic style x-rays provide a 3D image of the area of concern and can be invaluable for accurate placement of implants and detecting other abnormalities.

Software programs can automate many functions of your office. Eliminate the paper appointment book, automate your accounts receivable, remind patients with email or text messages before their appointments and have the ability for you to view it from anywhere you are. Implant planning software works with your CBCT to carefully plan implants and appliance design software saves time and gives you the ability to keep some procedures “in-house” just to name a few.

Intra-oral scanners are another way to digitize the impression and eliminate trays and impression materials.

3D printing: Professional Desktop Stereolithography (SLA) printers are now affordable for the dental office and can create an appliance in your office, the same day.

How to implement technology:

Talk with your colleagues about what works for them.

Consult with a Dental Technology Specialist and decide which technology to implement in stages.

Invest in Training: Train yourself and your staff on the best uses and practices for YOUR office.

Plan on future technology and innovations.