



"PAPERLESS" is NOT the New Black

by Krista Houstoun, Associate Editor, *Dentaltown Magazine*

There is a sea of software programs designed to help dentists better operate varying degrees of “paperless” – or “chartless” – practices. *Dentaltown Magazine* reached out to leading dental practice management software companies to discuss why transitioning to a paperless practice isn’t a trend – it’s vital.

What are the advantages for dentists transitioning to a paperless practice?

Andy Jensen, CMO, Curve Dental: The practice with less paper realizes better organization and security of patient information.

Jason McKnight, Coaching Manager, Dentrix: The efficiencies gained by having all the information stored within a single software solution are tremendous. A big fear of having a paperless office is “what if my computers crash?” This is a non-issue when an office follows the recommend back-up protocols of having multiple backups and storing them offsite. Literally, with a laptop and access to the offsite backup, the dentist can be up and running instantly. The bigger fear should be for those offices that have not transitioned to being paperless. What if there were a fire or flood? If you are relying on paper charts to store all clinical information, or worse yet, business information, what would you do then? If you didn’t have the information stored digitally, the information is gone.

David Arnett, Co-founder, DentiMax: There are so many benefits to be gained from going paperless that it really is hard to list them all. For example, sending claims electronically is going to result in much faster insurance payments, using digital X-rays to educate patients will result in higher patient compliance with treatment plans, texting appointment reminders to patients will dramatically reduce the no shows, electronically sending prescriptions is faster and reduces the chances for drug and allergy interaction issues, etc.

Allen S. Jorgensen, Co-founder, Lighthouse 360: Katrina? Sandy? A “digital office,” having all digital charts, X-rays, etc., is a protected office. This office can be “inconvenienced” by even the most major tragedy (we had an office burn down the other week – and saw the next day’s scheduled patient on time thanks to being all digital!) but will not have any records lost. Now, if we turn that question around and ask about the advantage of keeping a wall of charts: How often is that entire wall “backed up and replicated” to be taken somewhere else and re-created “just in case”? Why is it that with a wall of charts – hundreds or thousands of them sitting there looking at you – that the *one* that you really want is the one that cannot be found? When a chart is “digital” it is always locatable and the entire office can (and should) be duplicated every night.

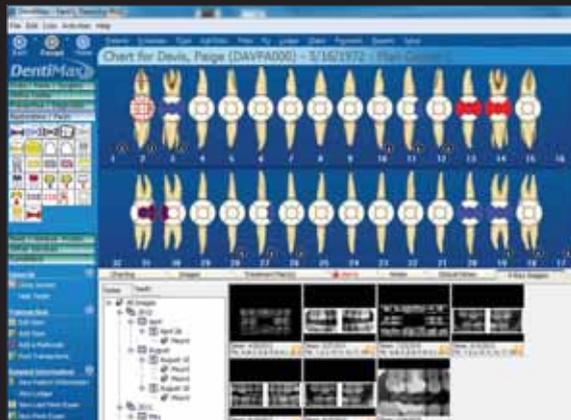
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Paperless Practice Products



Curve Dental

Curve Dental provides a bright, innovative solution to managing your practice. It's cloud-based software sports a super-clean look and a refreshing amount of flexibility. With eight years of cloud-development experience, it delivers a comprehensive solution that includes native digital imaging, sexy charting, powerful scheduling, super-tight accounts receivable and more. More than 1,000 dental professionals rave about Curve Dental's responsive customer service. Customers enjoy continuous, no-hassle upgrades, worry-free and secure data backup and access-from-anywhere convenience. Call 888-910-4376 or visit www.curvedental.com for more information.



DentiMax

DentiMax is a technology leader with the knack of making software that is extremely easy to use. The software tightly integrates with digital X-rays, allowing you to easily view X-rays and treatment plans from the same screen. And DentiMax flows just like your dental office. From checking in a new patient, to electronically prescribing medication, to scheduling additional patient visits, DentiMax mirrors your practice's actual workflow. These easy-to-use but powerful features make DentiMax an easy choice. For more information, call 800-704-8494 or visit www.dentimax.com.

Jana Berghoff, Technology Marketing Manager, Patterson Dental (Eaglesoft): The biggest advantage is that it's easier to communicate about patients. In the past, there was a separation and lack of information sharing between the front desk and the clinical group. But with a digital patient record, what the clinical staff knows is right there for the front desk to use anytime the patient calls, without having to go pull that patient's paper chart. Now we truly can better serve our patients because their information is right there on the monitor.

Jordan Sparks, CEO, Open Dental: It can save a tremendous amount of time not having to hunt down misplaced charts. That alone is a good enough reason to go chartless.

Andre Montgomery, Vice President, XLDent: If it's done right, the advantages include improved productivity and workflows, better job satisfaction, better data accuracy, improved patient outcomes and improved patient experiences. In addition to all of these things, there is a big cost savings. Some experts have stated \$25,000+ savings per year depending on the size of the office.

Can you offer some tips for dentists who are attempting to transition to paperless dentistry?

Dentrix: Invest in the right equipment the first time, and then re-invest as time moves forward. Skimping on scanners, operatory equipment, computers and networking will cause frustrations and decrease the options you may have for going paperless. The paperless office is only more efficient when the right equipment is involved.

DentiMax: I have much different advice depending on whether or not you are starting a new office or already have an established practice. For the new office just opening its doors, I recommend going as paperless as you possibly can from the very start. You've got a clean slate and a real opportunity to establish habits and systems for your staff that may be hard to unlearn later on – better to do it right from the get go.

For the existing office that is crazy busy with patients, my advice is don't do it all at once but rather take it one step at a time. If you just have a front desk computer, you might consider adding computers to your operatories so that you can electronically create treatment plans chairside. But if you are already treatment planning with software, then look at adding digital sensors and auto clinical notes to your workflow. If you are already doing that, then look at adding digital document software.

Lighthouse 360: Take your staff on field trips – go visit someone that is "living the life" you are trying to imagine or explain. When you spend a day in the life of a

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Paperless Practice Products



Dentrix G5

Dentrix G5 provides the foundation for the digital dental office. Featuring a new SQL-compliant database, software integration tools and encryption technology, it's a secure, expandable platform that is designed to integrate more deeply with eServices and third-party products. Combined with the industry's most complete set of electronic services and offering the richest selection of third-party solutions, Dentrix G5 has both the scope and the flexibility to meet the unique needs of any dental practice.



Lighthouse 360

Lighthouse 360 is the most automated, most comprehensive patient communications system in dentistry. It is the only system that can reach 100 percent of your patients with e-mail, text messages, automated phone calls, postcards and letters. It reminds patients when they need an appointment, confirm existing appointments and ask patients to post online reviews – all automatically. Your team's efficiency goes up, broken appointments go down and patient satisfaction soars. Call 888-427-5454 or visit www.LH360.com for more information.

digital office *then* you can begin the mental preparation and acceptance. The transition is not and should not be expected to be instantaneous. To do it properly, it needs to be planned, mapped out and phased in. The wall of charts did not appear one morning – nor should you try to make it disappear in a day.

Eaglesoft: Dentists should first stop and assess if the practice management system they have is going to take them where they want to go. The practice management system is really the foundation for everything, so it is imperative that it is sound. If it's not working now, it's not going to work in the future. I tell people, "Don't settle for just good enough." Make sure you have that right foundation, and if you have that the rest is easy.

Open Dental: Don't try to do it all at once. Going paperless involves dozens of little steps that move you towards a more paperless office. The staff needs to learn each technology before moving on to the next one.

XLDent: Prepare your team, plan your strategy and be patient. Preparation and good planning are the keys to success. Follow-up training is also a key to success. Keep in mind that old habits die hard and it's not just about learning how to use the software. Going paperless is about getting rid of paper-centric mentalities and implementing point-of-care solutions. Scheduling on-site follow-up training 45-60 days after the initial installation is a good idea. Yearly refreshers to have your paperless workflows assessed and get up to speed on new software enhancements is an even better idea.

There are many companies out there that offer helpful practice management software programs to dentists. What, specifically, are the unique, above-and-beyond features of your company's practice management software?

Curve Dental: As a web-based system, we eliminate the hassles of keeping the software up to date and the worries of backing up the software. Moreover, patient information can be accessed from anywhere without purchasing, installing and configuring additional software. With Curve Dental a server is not required, saving the doctor all of the maintenance and costs that come with high-end hardware.

Dentrix: Dentrix Electronic explanation of Benefit Statements (eEOBs) and the Dentrix Web Site Manager – Patient Kiosk. eEOBs eliminate the delays created by mailing documents and the hassle of managing paper. With eEOBs, your practice will reduce manual data entry, streamline insurance claim reconciliation, speed up patient billing and secondary claim submission and

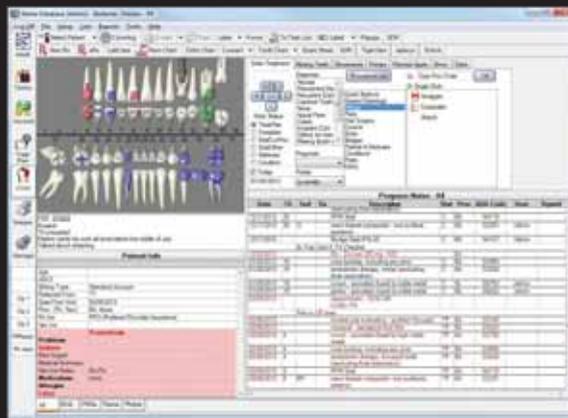
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Paperless Practice Products



Patterson Dental – Eaglesoft

Eaglesoft Practice Management Software from Patterson Dental is designed to offer increased functionality and adaptability in a practice. To simplify daily tasks within dental offices, Eaglesoft includes functionality such as a user interface allowing for more personalized use, and line-item accounting, which allows the user to apply a payment directly to a specific line item. By fully utilizing these tools, practices can equip themselves with the software needed to make their office run more efficiently and increase revenue. Visit www.eaglesoft.net.



Open Dental Software

Open Dental Software is a secure practice management software used by dentists around the world. Features include a customizable appointment system, 3D tooth charting, easy recall scheduling, comprehensive billing system with e-claim support, flexible queries and reports, and integration with X-ray, scanner and digital camera services. It also offers data conversions, full technical support, remote and on-site training, simple installation and frequent updates. Open Dental is EHR-certified and HIPAA compliant.

improve accounts receivable accuracy. The patient kiosk feature revolutionizes your patient form completion process for increased productivity and better overall patient experience. Now patients can update contact, insurance, medical history and other information easily from an in-office kiosk.

DentiMax: DentiMax allows you to electronically send prescriptions for all classes of drugs. This feature tracks the medication your patients are taking, giving you instant access to drug, allergy and disease interactions. This electronic prescription tool will even inform you if a patient is receiving pain relievers from multiple locations. Another “above-and-beyond” feature is the built-in ability to send text and e-mail messages to patients reminding them of their appointments. Patients can even respond electronically and have their confirmation results displayed in the appointment book. And if you are truly going paperless, you’ll need a software replacement for all those Post-it Notes. The DentiMax “electronic sticky” notes will keep you and your staff organized and on task by allowing you to record “to do” items for yourself and team members.

Lighthouse 360: Our recognition of almost *every* practice management software’s power and capability (we currently enhance over 30 and list continues to grow) to be beneficial *today* – as is. While many of the software company’s try to “churn” and push “the grass is greener” to offices, the reality is that the functional capability across the board on all is very similar, and they can and do run offices day in and day out. With the addition of Lighthouse 360, we can inject the best practices that are coached and shared with experts via an automated solution that will consistently do the tasks recommended.

Eaglesoft: One feature of Eaglesoft Practice Management Software that is key for paperless offices is SmartDoc. This lets dental teams easily convert paper documents into electronic versions and efficiently store them. One of the things that makes going paperless difficult for offices is that paper is always coming in, whether it’s mail, product documentation or other materials. So even if those offices aren’t generating papers on their own, paper still shows up, and they need an easy way to scan and store it. Not only does SmartDoc give offices a way to convert and store papers regarding a patient, it also lets them do it for employee documents or insurance documents. It’s a digital filing cabinet for all of those purposes. Additionally, the upcoming Eaglesoft 17 will give offices a customizable medical history so that no matter how the office likes to

structure the patient's medical history, they can do it in a paperless manner.

Open Dental: Online patient forms that are completely customizable, good bridges to many other software programs, many choices for clearinghouse, support for touchscreens and signature pads, and fully EHR certified.

XLDent: XLDent offers a complete suite of products designed for mobile, tablet PC technology. We deliver solutions at the point-of-care. Our digital integrations are open architecture solutions that offer a choice in any number of X-ray manufacturers. We also deliver a completely paperless solution by using a unique combination of web and ink-based forms. We are the only PM software out there that offers an integrated ePrescribing solution. Progress Notes are another feature of XLDent that offers above-and-beyond functionality.

What trends are shaping the direction practice management software development takes?

Curve Dental: An online society is dictating a new revolution in dental software. In the early 1990s, dental software transitioned from the DOS operating systems to Windows because Windows provided a more beneficial platform, both for the software developer and the end user. Today, practices are transitioning from Windows to the cloud for the very same reasons.

Dentrix: Cloud-based practice management. "Smart" software that provides a workflow for staff members.

DentiMax: Practices' almost universal use of a high speed Internet connection, the quick adoption of smartphones and tablets by consumers in general and advances in the quality of digital radiography are having the biggest impact on shaping the direction of practice management software.

Lighthouse 360: The marketplace is a very competitive environment with new innovation being copied and mimic as soon as it gets a toehold. Combine this with the technology in general evolution cycles that then allow non-dental tools to be applied to the environment – and things change even faster. There is also government regulations and other attempts at standardization to move us towards true information exchange regardless of original source or target destination.

Eaglesoft: We're obviously heading more and more toward the cloud space, making it easier so offices don't

Paperless Practice Products



XLDent's Wireless Tablet PC

Wireless Tablet PCs are becoming mainstream and XLDent is built from the ground up to work with this new technology. Many dentists are frustrated with the limitations that desktop computers, the keyboard and mouse have in the treatment room. Dusty cables and keeping everything clean adds to this frustration. With XLDent there are no cables, because of its wireless design plus it is totally mobile. Together, the intuitive, turnkey system gives you the power to dramatically streamline workflows. To see more go to www.xldent.com and see how XLDent is improving clinical workflows.

have to maintain software. There are some things that might be a challenge to transition right now, but certainly with everything we're developing at Patterson, one of the questions we're asking is, "Is this something that can be in the cloud space?" It's definitely where we're going.

Open Dental: EHR certification mandates for 2014 include secure digital communication between patients and their providers as well as between providers. This will first affect the physicians, where all software is EHR certified. It will then trickle into the dental industry, where certified EHR adoption is still very low.

XLDent: Last week Eric D. Schmidt, executive Chairman for Google, commented that the future of software was in one word.... mobility. Obviously, we agree with that. ■



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