

# THE EDITOR'S CORNER

## The Digital Revolution

Over the past 30 years, I have seen countless changes in the practice of orthodontics. But the *processes* of clinical practice are pretty much the same as they were 30 years ago: The patient comes in (or is brought in by parents) for an initial screening. The doctor conducts a cursory exam and tells the patient what will likely be involved, both clinically and financially. Once the treatment plan is agreed upon, consent is acquired and records are taken—generally consisting of the write-up of a more detailed examination, cephalometric and panoramic radiographs, facial and intraoral photographs, and study models.

While the same examination and consultation process is still followed in most offices, digital technology has revolutionized practically every step in that process. Pegboard accounting systems have been replaced by computerized bookkeeping. Alginate impressions and plaster models (though I've seen some really slick acrylic models that were common in the 1950s and '60s) have been supplanted by intraoral scans. The digital revolution has changed every aspect of orthodontic practice, but most of us would agree that the arena of office management has been affected first and most extensively. I have to say, *Vive la révolution!* There can be no doubt that our professional technology is vastly improved over what I had available when I underwent my specialty training some 30 years ago.

JCO published its first article on the use of computers in practice management well before that—in October 1974. This month, we're devoting an entire issue to the topic. First up, our JCO Roundtable brings together a panel of experts representing a wide swath of orthodontic backgrounds and locations. Dr. Ronald Redmond, our former Technology Editor, joins us from sunny Southern California, where he and his sons oper-

ate a multi-office, two-state practice that has spearheaded the uses of information technology. Amy Demas is the owner and CEO of Communicate Excellence, a consulting firm specializing in patient communications, and, I might add, a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Dr. Jeremy Fry runs a large and successful multistate practice headquartered in the Kansas City area; he is also, as I note with no small degree of personal pride, one of my former graduate students. Dr. Marc Lemchen of New York City, our current Technology Editor, was one of the pioneers of digital office management and thus brings impressive credentials to the discussion. Dr. Sarah Shoaf of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, has been a career mentor since she was one of my attending senior residents at the Eastman Dental Center in Rochester, New York. She offers a unique point of view in that she owns what is perhaps the state's largest orthodontic practice accepting Medicaid patients—a potential management nightmare that she has overcome through the application of digital technology. Last, but certainly not least, is Charlene White, an author familiar to our readers and to anyone who follows the orthodontic management literature and speaker circuit.

Topics covered in this tour de force overview range from accounting and billing to video clinical examinations and data tracking. I personally learned more about digital practice management from moderating the Roundtable than I have from any other source. But there's much more information to be gleaned from this special issue. Dr. Leon Klempner, a retired orthodontist and consultant from New York City, describes new digital communication technologies that can combat direct-to-consumer marketing campaigns. Dr. Neal Kravitz, our Associate Editor for Pearls, has

organized a group of orthodontists who will tell you everything you need to know about optimizing social media. Dr. Sheldon Salins of San Francisco covers Yelp reviews; Dr. Amanda Gallagher of Nottingham, Maryland, offers tips on Facebook; Dr. Grant Collins of Rochester, Minnesota, discusses YouTube videos; Dr. Dovi Pre-ro of Beverly Hills, California, shares his expertise on Instagram; and Dr. Greg Jorgensen of Rio Rancho, New Mexico, explores Google My Business. Elsewhere in this issue, Dr. Heather Hopkins

of Lexington, South Carolina, shows how to improve your new patient experience by replacing intraoral photos with images from digital scans. And Dr. Peter Sinclair, another of our Associate Editors, wraps it up with a Readers' Corner surveying the uses of remote computer access for doctors, patients, and staff.

I trust you will find plenty of nuggets in this issue that you can apply immediately as you manage the digital revolution in your own practice.

RGK