

Going Digital

A Checklist to guide you through the decision making process

When you are considering 'Going Digital' in your dental office, there are many factors to be considered. The purpose of this document is to pose the appropriate questions so you can make a fully informed decision. Many of the items on this checklist have links to our website to expand upon the topics to give you a better understanding. If you have any questions about this checklist, please contact The Bridge Network by phone or email support@bridge-network.com

Digital Radiography Hardware

- ✓ Do you understand the [difference between direct \(sensor\) and indirect \(phosphor plate\) x-ray systems](#)?
- ✓ Can the hardware be used directly with 3rd party imaging software or does it only work with its own software via [bridge](#)?
- ✓ Who provides hardware support for the system? Does the manufacturer have a North American support phone number?
- ✓ How long has the system been available in Canada?
- ✓ How long is the warranty? Price of extended warranty? What is covered under the warranty? Loaners provided?
- ✓ Demonstrations should be performed at your office using your x-ray heads to ensure compatibility and performance.
- ✓ What plate/sensor sizes are available? Is the system going to be comfortable for your patients.
- ✓ If the sensor is a 'one size fits all', is that going to work for you? Will it work for pedo and patients with large tori, shallow palatal vault, constricted mandible, etc?

IntraOral Cameras & Digital Photography

- ✓ Do you know if you need an SLR [camera or if a point and shoot camera](#) will suffice?
- ✓ Do you know the difference between a [ring light](#) and a [ring flash](#)?
- ✓ Do you know the optimal resolution (megapixel) setting for digital dental imaging? [Is more better?](#)
- ✓ Did you know that wireless imaging requires a camera with [SD](#) or [Compact Flash Type II](#) memory?
- ✓ With mirrors, [an inexpensive digital camera can shoot all teeth from all angles.](#)
- ✓ Most Intraoral cameras today have a freeze button on them, and do not require a foot-pedal. Before purchasing the camera, make sure your software is compatible with the camera's freeze button.
- ✓ If you have an older intraoral camera that was not designed for use with a computer, you can connect it via a video capture card and use a foot pedal to capture images directly into your software.
- ✓ Some Intraoral cameras require additional docking stations in order to use them in different rooms. Make sure you discuss this so you understand the total costs of implementing IntraOral cameras in your operatories.

Imaging Software

- ✓ What format are the images stored? Is this an open format, or [proprietary](#) to the manufacturer, thus locking your files?
- ✓ How many [digital radiography systems is the software compatible with](#)?
- ✓ Do you understand the difference between direct integration and a [bridge](#)?
- ✓ What are the support terms for the software? Does support include updates or will you have to purchase updates each time a new version of Windows comes out? (such as what happened with Windows Vista)
- ✓ Does the software automatically rotate the x-rays? Can I take multiple x-rays consecutively without having to operate the computer in between exposures? Can I apply enhancements to the x-rays automatically?
- ✓ Who owns the x-ray software? Does this company also market x-ray hardware? If so, will the software be compatible with x-ray hardware marketed by competitors?
- ✓ Does the software [integrate with a charting and practice management software](#) so that all your images are available to you regardless of which software you are in?
- ✓ Can you [acquire photos wirelessly](#) into your software, using almost any camera of your choice?
- ✓ Can you create a library of images organized by category in order to do case presentations?
- ✓ Can your imaging software access the patient and dentist email addresses from your imaging software?

Charting Software

- ✓ Does the charting software automatically bill into your practice management? Can it schedule? Treatment Plan?
- ✓ Can you send claims from charting software? Can it bill non-restorative work? Can it print invoices, insurance forms, estimates? Can it display and share medical alerts with practice management?
- ✓ Integrated, shared database with Practice Management software or bridged?
- ✓ [Does the charting software show your digital images?](#) Can it attach the images to their tooth? Can you capture, edit and annotate images from charting?
- ✓ Are transactions secured and locked after 24 hours?
- ✓ [Voice Recognition for Perio](#) and Voice Dictation for notes support? Electronic Probe support?
- ✓ Integrated notes and clinical forms?
- ✓ Integration with [Patient Education](#)?
- ✓ Some charting software packages are promoted as 'touch screen compatible'. It is important to know that all charting software can be operated via touch screen and this is not a competitive advantage!

Clinical Notes

- ✓ Can notes be entered by keyboard, voice recognition and handwriting recognition?
- ✓ Can notes be [digitally signed](#) for authenticity?
- ✓ Are notes and forms secured and locked after 24 hours?
- ✓ Can forms be customized by the end user?
- ✓ Can clinical information be merged with letter writing software to reduce time writing letters?

Letter Writing & Patient Communication

- ✓ Letter writing software can automatically merge with data from Practice Management, Charting Notes and Clinical Forms, Digital Images and patient Education?
- ✓ Can perform electronic communication such as email?
- ✓ Saves all correspondence, which is accessible from Practice Management?

Patient Education

- ✓ Does the patient education link to the treatment plans in your charting and practice management software?
- ✓ Can you launch the appropriate video from within your PMS and charting software with one click?
- ✓ Can you print off or email materials for the patient to consider at home?
- ✓ Can you implement the [patient education videos on your website](#)?

Document Management

- ✓ Can [scan clinical documents for easy retrieval](#) within clinical software?
- ✓ Electronic documents can be attached to patient's profile for easy retrieval?
- ✓ Patient communications are saved to patient's file for easy retrieval?
- ✓ Can the system provide online new patient registration & dental/medical history forms and submit data directly into the database?

Integration – Practice Management, Imaging, Charting, Patient Communication, Patient Education, Notes.

- ✓ Is it a single, full software solution with shared data and integration, or separate pieces 'bridged' together?
- ✓ Does all your digital software have a single point of support?
- ✓ Does the software include a [chairside communication module](#) to facilitate inter-office communications?
- ✓ Does the solution include an online [backup solution capable of backing up open files](#)?

Hardware

- ✓ [Microphone cables are 10ft long. You can usually add 6 ft extension. If you need more, consider wireless.](#)
- ✓ Widescreen flat-panel monitors will allow you to best take advantage of today's applications.
- ✓ Dual monitors in operatory. One for staff, one for patient education / presentation.
- ✓ Your choice of keyboards and mouse should consider [infection control](#).
- ✓ Positioning of input/output devices should provide comfort and access.
- ✓ Monitor should be calibrated for optimal digital xray viewing

