

THE FUTURE IS NOW

WE ARE LIVING IN EXPONENTIAL TIMES. THE TOP 10 IN-DEMAND JOBS IN 2010 DID NOT EXIST in 2004.

- One out of eight couples in the United States last year met online.
- There are more than 200 million registered users on MySpace.
- There are 31 billion searches on Google each month; there were 2.7 billion in 2006.
- The first commercial text message was sent in December 1992. Today the number of text messages sent and received daily exceeds the total population of the planet.
- The amount of new technical information is doubling every two years. This means that for students starting a four-year technical degree, half of what they learn in their first year of study will be outdated by their third year of study.
- A fiber-optic cable has been developed that pushes 14 trillion bits per second down a single strand of fiber. That is the equivalent of 2,660 CDs or 210 million phone calls every second. This capacity is currently tripling every six months and is expected to do so for the next 20 years.
- Predictions are that by 2049, a \$1,000 computer will exceed the computational capabilities of the entire human species.

Even the source of the information cited above—a slideshow video presentation on YouTube entitled “Did You Know?” (originally created by Colorado high school teacher Karl Fisch and updated by Iowa State University professor Scott McLeod, JD, PhD)—attests to this phenomenal growth in technology.

No matter at what stage you are in your professional life as a dentist, technology has become an integral part of the provision of dental care. It is here to stay. Yes, there is a learning curve and, yes, it is expensive, but the positives definitely outweigh the negatives. However, you have to be prudent as to which “latest and greatest” advancement you need to purchase. Think about it—go into your basement and look at the number of dental gadgets you have bought over the years and tried for a little while, only to realize they did not live up to the hype. The first generation of a new innovation is just that—first generation. Things change so quickly that it may be worth waiting to see if it is found to be useful. If it is, it will evolve into something even more efficient and practical—and probably less expensive—in a very short span of time.

Dentists are definitely gadget people, so consider what your needs are before you buy:

- Will it benefit my patients and improve the quality of care I provide?
- Will it be a resource that my staff and I can utilize for office management or the delivery of care?
- Will it benefit the way my patients see my practice (e.g., impress them with the bells and whistles)?
- Will it help market my practice?
- Will it make my life easier?

Be especially careful if you are reading about something new or if you see an interesting new device at a meeting. If something is brand new on the market, experience shows that it might be better to wait before buying so that little problems or chinks in the armor can be worked out before you make an investment. You do not want to be

the one to discover any inadequacies in promised performance. Let the market make its changes. Newer and better may indeed turn out to be newer and better—or it may turn out to be basement decoration. ■



David B. Becker

Arthur I. Schwartz

JOURNAL OF THE MASSACHUSETTS DENTAL SOCIETY

EDITOR

David B. Becker, DMD

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Arthur I. Schwartz, DMD

EDITOR EMERITUS

Norman Becker, DDS

MANAGING EDITOR OF
PUBLICATIONS AND WEB SITE
Melissa Carman

MANAGER, GRAPHIC DESIGN
Jeanne M. Burdette

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Shelley Padgett

Editorial Board

Bruce Donoff, DMD, MD

Robert Faiella, DMD

Russell Giordano, DMD

Shepard Goldstein, DMD

Stephen McKenna, DMD

John McManama, DDS

Noshir Mehta, DMD

Charles Millstein, DMD

Philip Millstein, DMD

Maria Papageorge, DMD

Michael Sheff, DMD

Steven Tonelli, DMD

Copyright © 2009 Massachusetts Dental Society
issn: 0025-4800

THE JOURNAL OF THE MASSACHUSETTS DENTAL SOCIETY [usps 284-680] is owned and published quarterly by the Massachusetts Dental Society, Two Willow Street, Suite 200, Southborough, MA 01745-1027. Subscription for nonmembers is \$15 a year in the United States. Periodicals postage paid at Southborough, MA, and additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to: Journal of the Massachusetts Dental Society, Two Willow Street, Suite 200, Southborough, MA 01745.

Contributions: Contact the Communications Department, or visit www.massdental.org for author's guidelines.

Display ad closing dates: February 1, May 1, August 1, November 1. For more information, contact Rachel Marks, Exhibits Coordinator, at (508) 480-9797, ext. 259, or email rmarks@massdental.org.

Member Publication
American Association
of Dental Editors

