



Software: choose “easy to use”

Previously, I SHARED WHAT I WENT THROUGH to choose my digital radiography system. Now let's discuss another element of converting to digital radiography: selecting software that's easy to use.

Why is this so important? Taking radiographs is the lifeblood of a dental practice. The average office easily takes 50 X-rays a day. If the design of your digital radiography software means that you have to perform multiple clicks, numerous selections, and countless steps every time you take a radiograph, it's going to frustrate you and your team, cut into your practice's efficiency, and ultimately affect your bottom line.

Let me start with the actual program screens, which are the basis of any digital radiography software. The first thing I noticed about the DEXIS® software I installed in my practice is that it is very straightforward. Everything I need is on one screen. I can even see all my patients' images with one click. Easily recognizable icons (Figure 1) enable me to select what I want to do, like a radiation symbol to take X-rays, a caliper icon to measure, and a notepad icon for annotations. I just click on an icon and I'm using that feature immediately.

Also, I can get help easily. I just put the cursor on an icon, and a little bubble (Figure 2) opens up and tells me its function. If I want more details, two mouse clicks get me to the exact page of the built-in manual that tells me all about that icon or feature. Chances are your team may never have to use the help features because the software is so easy to learn. Every member of my team quickly caught on to how to take X-rays and breezed through the software right after our training session.

Another important thing about this software is that I don't have to wade through multiple drop-down menus to

perform a simple task. Here's an example. If you want to take a full-mouth series, you simply click on the X-ray icon and click on “Full Mouth.” It doesn't get any easier than that. Then, the system highlights the teeth needing an X-ray on the tooth chart, and it guides you, like a map, through the sequence. You take the X-ray, the software advances, and you simply go on to the next shot and treat your patient. You don't spend excessive time at the computer.

This leads to another example of how “clinician-friendly” this software is. You can easily configure it to accommodate everyone's X-ray preferences. If your hygienists take an FMX in different orders, each one simply clicks on his/her own button (Figure 3), and the system automatically takes X-rays in that user's routine sequence.

The point is you should not have to excessively interact with the software. Remember, digital radiography should save time and effort, and make your workday easier than it was with film. Software that has fewer steps and clicks saves time and keeps team morale high.

I urge you to choose a digital radiography system that has software designed with the clinician in mind, one that is responsive to the everyday needs of the dental practice. “Easy to use” was important to me and my staff, and it should be at the top of your list of important things to look for in a digital radiography system. **DE**

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Figure 1 — Instant overview: See all patients' images with a single click



Figure 2 — Concise icons help you work quickly

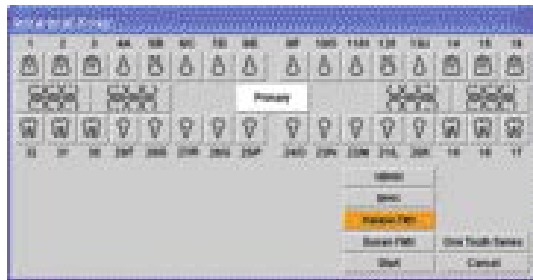


Figure 3 — Define your own workflow with customized series