EDITORIAL

'Appy Dental Christmas

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Editor-in-Chief

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Technology and digital applications are changing our lives markedly and I have written here previously about the peril of us not embracing these developments in our professional world. The speed of change means that not only could our ability to provide up-to-date patient care be compromised but the expectations of our patients may be unmet and our success in an increasingly competitive market may be undermined.

Various recent developments have brought this into sharp relief, making this Christmas issue an ideal time to reflect over the holiday period on ideas to weave into New Year's resolutions for upgrading our working practises. The report of the use of a robot in China to provide the complete implant treatment for a patient (apart from giving the local anaesthetic) is a dramatic demonstration of just how far technology has developed but whether it is a threat or an opportunity depends on our attitude towards it and our applications of its possible advantages.

There is no doubt that the emphasis has been shifting onto the patient to take a greater responsibility for his or her own oral health. The use of data transmitted from toothbrushes to monitor and improve oral hygiene is now a well-known and accepted example, meaning that we have a greater insight than ever before about what our patients do in the privacy of their own bathrooms. However, one company has gone a stage further by sending patients an intra-oral camera on loan so that they can have a virtual check-up in their own home. HomeDentCheck (HDC) will do all the work for you, delivering the camera with full instructions, capturing the resulting footage and then forwarding it to you for professional assessment at your convenience. If no treatment is required then the patient is sent a congratulatory email certificate but if further examination or intervention is needed then HDC will automatically schedule an appointment through the practice software,

enabling maximum efficiency of valuable chairside time.

In another initiative to be launched early next year, Uberdent will be the online home-to-practice travel system app which enables patients to call a car and be at the surgery in the fastest time possible. Alternatively, rather than risk the cost, inconvenience and frustration of missed appointments the patient's photograph can be sent from the practice's management program to Uberdent. Their facial recognition software will then detect the individual's location in home, business or public place so that a car can be despatched to pick them up and transport them, forcibly if necessary, to the practice in perfect time. The app also allows an 'apology detour' feature which re-routes the car for a further five, ten,

decides. Marketing is planned to extend the concept so that, for example, families or a group of friends can rent a practice, together with dentist and support team and have all their treatment completed over a long weekend or during the course of a holiday.

The savings in terms of time and money could be considerable, especially when combined with a longer holiday for treatment items that might need to be completed over several days such as advanced cosmetics, restorative treatment and implants. So far, fixed orthodontic treatment has been ruled out as a holiday of a year to eighteen months is deemed excessive. For those practitioners concerned that their location is not a holiday destination such as Torquay or Skegness, city breaks as well as country retreats are anticipated to be just

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fifteen minutes or a time of your choice. So, if you are running late it is the patient who has to apologise for being delayed due to traffic rather than you for keeping them waiting.

Meanwhile the app Airrotor has emerged in the holiday and short-stay accommodation field, much like its inspiration, Airbnb, with the capacity to rent out one or more surgeries or your entire practice, or chain of practices, for a day or longer. The idea came about because many of us have a surgery that is not used 100 per cent of the time, meaning a loss of potential income while the establishment overheads still need to be paid. Combating this, Airrotor allows fellow professionals, or patients for that matter, to rent surgeries for whatever period the owner or occupier, such as an associate,

as popular bringing, in the latter case, a much needed economic boost to rural practices.

While developments such as these are conceived to make life easier, as well as put smiles on faces, there is no doubt that they are just the beginning of a continuing revolution with which our livelihoods are intimately bound. Whatever the further future may bring I would like to take this opportunity to thank readers for all the amazing support and feedback throughout this year, once again making the *BDJ* one of the best dental journals in the world. The whole team here at the Journal join me in wishing you a very Merry Christmas, Happy Holiday Season and Healthy and Prosperous 2018. ■

DOI: 10.1038/sj.bdj.2017.1091