Is computed radiography right for your practice?
By Kathy Kincade, Editor in Chief

January 18, 2013 -- 3D Imaging & Simulations (3DISC) is making its first foray into the dental market with a compact, affordable computed radiography (CR) system designed for dental practitioners who want to test the digital imaging waters without having to invest tens of thousands of dollars in the process.

With its small footprint, the 10-lb FireCR Dental Reader is designed to fit into even the most space-challenged dental offices and exam rooms, improving productivity and optimizing chairside time with patients, according to Sigrid Smitt-Jeppesen, CEO of 3DISC.

The company, which was founded in 2007 and launched its first FireCR system in 2010, is already well-established in the medical and veterinary markets. The company introduced the FireCR Dental Reader last November at the Radiological Society of North America annual meeting in Chicago.

"We are looking at areas where we can apply our knowledge of CR and imaging, and some of the people we work with felt that a small, compact, fast unit with a good price point would do really well in dentistry," Smitt-Jeppesen said. "We are trying to move from a model where a practice has centralized scanning to a more distributed model, so a practice could put one of these devices at each chair if they want."

The FireCR Dental Reader, which sells for less than $10,000 and utilizes phosphor plates rather than digital sensors, is designed to enable dental practitioners to do all forms of digital radiography with a single piece of equipment, she emphasized.

"We were trying to create something you can do everything with," Smitt-Jeppesen said. "This is an all-around imaging device, which is why we opted for this approach rather than digital."

The FireCR Dental Reader. Image courtesy of 3DISC.

It was also a patient-comfort decision, she added. The reader is DICOM 3.0 compatible with existing systems and uses reusable bitewing and intraoral imaging plates that are easier and faster to position than intraoral digital sensors, according to the company. Plate sizes range from 0 to 4c; the true-size 4c imaging plate means technicians don't have to use software stitching to combine images from two size 3 plates, Smitt-Jeppesen noted.

Customized software

The FireCR Dental Reader utilizes 3DISC's QuantorDent imaging software, a version of Quantor that has been optimized for dental image acquisition, processing, and management. To ensure that scans are arranged in their precise locations, the operator picks the relevant tooth on the dental chart in the software.

The scan time for each image is less than 10 seconds, so a complete set of bitewings can be taken in 30 seconds, she added. Depending on the size of the plate, the image can be viewed on screen in four to seven seconds.

"The practitioner can see a preview of the images on the screen to make sure they have the right tooth, positioning, etc., and they can do this without ever having to leave the patient," she said. "You can do the scan and take the image without even taking your gloves off."

In addition, the system features integrated ultraviolet sterilization and erase functions -- it sterilizes, scans, and clears the imaging plates so that they are immediately ready to use again.

"This is an all-around imaging device" that can be used as a central reader

> **"With something like the FireCR, you can completely get rid of film."**
> — Sigrid Smitt-Jeppesen, CEO, 3DISC

to distribute images throughout the practice or as a chairside system, Smitt-Jeppesen noted.

"Some of the dentists we spoke with were waiting for a device that could do all of this," she said. "They couldn't do bitewings with the digital systems, so they still had to use film and keep a film room. With something like the FireCR, you can completely get rid of film."

The device will be available this quarter and marketed and sold through 3DISC's network of distributors.

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