The digital world is creating numerous opportunities for dental practices. To the practitioner, these may seem countless and it may not be easy to keep pace with relevant developments. The 2019 International Dental Show (IDS), which is to be held from 12 to 16 March in Cologne in Germany, will present the state-of-the-art technology and help clinicians determine the most suitable solutions for their practices and focus of work following the motto “It depends on which innovation brings me and my practice forwards here and now.”

The impetus for digital processes is often triggered as a consequence of today’s patient. A typical situation: the patient needs a crown replaced; however, his time constraints demand same-day treatment. One solution could be a chairside system and another a particularly fast digital workflow that includes the practice and the laboratory. Considerations regarding the ideal restorative materials also play a role. IDS will present the entire palette of options to the visitor and thus also lays the basis for well-founded investment decisions.

Whereas in the above-mentioned case, the priority was above all speed, digital technologies assist with both complex and difficult treatments. For example, in the field of implantology, a patient requires a fixed prosthesis for his edentulous mandible. Based on radiographs and model scan data, the dentist–dental technician team plans the treatment together in the scope of backward planning from the final prosthesis to the positions of the individual implants. The digital availability of the data facilitates this process and if necessary also enables a further professional to be involved—even at short notice.

There are various ways of implementing the planned treatment, including many options that involve digital support. For example, for a safe surgical treatment, drilling templates can be ordered from the dental laboratory or from an industry partner that provides the service. External support is also available for the virtual design and production, so that the individual work steps can be more flexibly divided up among the team (surgeon, prosthodontist, dental technician) today than ever before. In this way, the practice aims to achieve quality assurance or, indeed, an improvement in the quality, while at the same time possibly saving time and money. Experts predict a pace of progress that will mean that by IDS 2019 or IDS 2021 at the latest more digital implant treatments will take place than analogue treatment using standard products.

“The current trends for the digital technologies for the practice, as well as extensive workflows for surgeons, prosthodontists and dental technicians, will be presented in a unique form at IDS,” said Mark Stephen Pace, Chairman of the Board of the Association of the German Dental Industry. “The opportunities of digital dentistry have now arrived in all disciplines—from implantology and prosthetics, through to endodontics and orthodontics. As such, it is certainly worthwhile for representatives from all specialised areas to experience the current innovations at IDS in a diversity that can be found in no other place.”