

The Next Step for Angle

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The ever present and constantly growing ground swell of the digital revolution continues and opens concepts that many of us have never even considered. The newest step that we are presenting in *The Angle Orthodontist* is the three-dimensional figure. Without any Madison Avenue pizzazz, I want to share what this means for you, the reader.

It was just a decade ago that we got caught up in the transition from analogue paper to online digital. First it was putting the current issue on line. Then we added some back issues. This was followed by putting everything the journal had ever published up on line. The kicker was that in the process *The Angle Orthodontist* simultaneously became an electronically open access journal. Anyone anywhere could make use of our information whenever they choose, free of charge. This was, of course, in the spirit of openly and freely communicating orthodontic science.

Few people saw all of the potentials that these changes created. The digital revolution has opened new and exciting possibilities. Last year one of our authors at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada wrote me to ask what we could do in terms of 3-D figures. Locked in a paper publishing mentality, I had never even considered this option. After slapping myself on the head for not thinking of this before, we set about to what we could do in this functionality.

You all have probably already worked with digital models and experienced the ability to pick up, and visualize a set of orthodontic models from any perspective you desire. It adds a great deal to see the occlusion from any desired perspective; far superior to a two dimensional picture of one view of the models.

Well, after some discussions with our printer and our Canadian colleagues, we worked our way thru several glitches and produced a prototype that works. All that remains before fully implanting this technique was developing instructions and the capacity for the author to submit their work with 3-D figures. It takes little imagination to see the day ahead where all case reports will be published in this way enhancing the

ability of the reader to better view the figure and understand the treatment issues. This is, of course, not limited to figures of models. Any object that can be digitized in three dimensions can become a 3-D publication the same way.

It's a poorly kept secret that the print media has a problem. Harvey Mackey, author of "Swimming with Sharks", recently stated that 35% of Amazon's book sales are for the Kindle. This is expected to grow to 50% in the next five years.

The fundamental issue here is rate of change and this is partially governed by us and the rate of our conversion to the electronic media. Certainly younger people have been raised on electronics and are relatively comfortable reading on a screen. The implications of this for professional journals are obvious.

The most recent advent in this evolution is the social media. Time magazine's 2010 man of the year was Mark Zuckerberg, the creator of Facebook. In the US, in less than one year, one person in every three has joined Facebook. I heard recently that, by many parameters, Facebook is now bigger than Google.

Whatever the format, personal communications will irrevocably change our life and how we get information. Mackey stated that there are 200 million bloggers with a third of them offering comments about commercial products.

Where are orthodontists getting good information about orthodontic commercial products? Certainly *The Angle Orthodontist* has long held a position of avoiding product testing per se with the conviction that this aspect is the responsibility of the manufacturers. But it could be argued that this is akin to leaving the fox to guard the henhouse. We need to find a substantive way to use the media revolution to serve orthodontists as a valuable and unbiased source of professional product information.

Anyway you view it, communication and information transfer is evolving. A tip of the hat and an accolade to our Canadian colleagues who gave us a boost and helped us reach this next level.