



Does Your Practice Management Software Meet Expectations?

Gordon's Clinical Observations: The number of computer software companies continues to grow, and their software updates come on a regular basis. These programs are integral in all phases of your practice including business, clinical areas, and laboratory. Competent staff are essential to install/accept and integrate these programs and updates into your daily activities to improve work flow and efficiency. *This report includes the current trends in business software, a comparison of companies, and expected changes that will influence your practice.*

2017 User Survey Results and Important Trends: CR first reported on practice management software in 1992 when 23 systems were evaluated. In 1999, a total of 208 different dental software programs were identified in a user survey. Today many of these companies are no longer in business, and others have been purchased and consolidated creating a market place where two large players dominate and several lesser known software brands have high user satisfaction. In 2017, there were 60 unique softwares identified. Among the top ten are less expensive options and new cloud-based systems where you access software and patient data on a remote server with a web browser.

From a service and support prospective:

- Dentists can feel somewhat secure knowing there are large, stable companies that will be around for many years to support their software.
- However, all software developers have to deal with an exponential increase in complexity in the hardware systems that run their products.
- Additionally, software users own a large variety of servers and computers of different ages and features which adds to complications with software support.
- To deal with these problems, several developers are turning to online, cloud-based solutions.
- Dentists should decide if they are satisfied with current software, desire to try a different in-house server-based system, or move to the cloud.

This report shows user trends, identify the most used practice management software systems, names software with highest user ratings, lists most reported add-on software programs, and discusses advantages and disadvantages of cloud-based systems.

2017 CR User Survey Results (n=735)

Practice management software brands: The 10 most reported (listed in order of most used and then alphabetically), the current version, pricing, and six key criteria with the percent of users that rated those criteria as **excellent** or **good**.

Software Version	Cost	Monthly Service	Reported Use	Service Agreement Worth Cost	Seamless Upgrades	Return on Investment	Business Would Re-Purchase	Clinical Would Re-Purchase	Overall User Satisfaction
A Dentrix* G6.2	\$6,995† for 1-10 users	\$133 and up	31%	67%	73%	72%	72%	71%	87% CR Choice
B Eaglesoft 18	Practice management: free; Charting: \$2,000‡	\$125 and up	26%	62%	80%	77%	74%	74%	90% CR Choice
C Softdent 16.2.5**	\$6,950 for 1-5 users \$399-base/month cloud §	\$163	11%	44%	65%	67%	52%	44%	74%
D PracticeWorks 8.0**	\$6,950 for 1-5 users \$399-base/month cloud §	\$138	6%	51%	60%	56%	45%	38%	71%
E Easy Dental 11.4	\$3,500 for 1-10 users, or free with monthly service plan	\$99-basic, \$199-plus, \$299-complete	5%	46%	74%	71%	71%	66%	72%
F Open Dental 16.4	\$159/month/location year 1; \$99/month after first year	Included with software	5%	99%	92%	95%	92%	86%	97% CR Choice
G MacPractice DDS 5.1	\$2,000-base	\$92	2%	85%	92%	92%	92%	92%	92% CR Choice
H Curve Dental Hero ††	\$350-base/month	Included with software	1%	60%	100%	40%	60%	60%	80%
I Diamond Dental 5.1	\$595 for 1 year	Included with software	1%	75%	100%	100%	88%	71%	75%
J MOGO 20 ††	\$250-base/month	Included with software	1%	60%	100%	90%	80%	80%	100% CR Choice

* Dentrix Enterprise (group practices) and Dentrix Ascend (cloud) also available

† List price; rebate programs available

‡ Digital imaging software module is free with purchase of \$5,000 in digital equipment; other offers available

§ Additional fee for more than 7 users

** Available as in-office server-based or cloud-based

†† Cloud-based only

CR CONCLUSIONS: Dentists have many software options to help with dental practice management. Dentrix (Henry Schein) and Eagle Soft (Patterson) continue to be the most used systems. However, Open Dental, MacPractice DDS, and MOGO have the highest reported user satisfaction across several key criteria including overall satisfaction.* Add-on software may also enhance your practice management software.

* Emphasis added by MacPractice

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Add-on Software to Aid in Practice Management

Add-on software systems from CR Survey (in order of most used) with base pricing, a brief description of services offered, and compatibility with top ten softwares (A–J above):

- **SolutionReach:** \$399 setup, \$379/month. A program for appointment reminders, recall notices, and birthday greetings. Manage relationships with active, inactive, and prospective patients. Market dental services, engage with patients, and ensure patients are not overlooked. Compatible with A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J.
- **Remote Lite by Renaissance :** \$50/month, no setup fee. Simple, affordable, dental e-claims processing that works with most practice management softwares. Compatible with A, B, C, D, E, F, I, J.
- **DemandForce:** \$299 setup, \$299/month. Attract more patients and grow your practice with automated appointment reminders, certified patient reviews, and custom email campaigns. Compatible with A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, J.
- **Lighthouse 360:** \$299 setup, \$329/month. Practice management and patient communication solution. Automatically confirm appointments and send recall reminders. Reach patients via email, text, phone, and mail. Compatible with A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H.
- **Weave:** \$750 setup includes phones, \$349/month (4 or more phones). Combines practice management software, mobile device, and business phone into a single simple tool that improves conversations with patients by displaying relevant patient details during every patient interaction. Compatible with A, B, C, D, E, F, G.

Online Cloud-Based Systems *(remote server accessed with web browser)*

With a cloud-based system, the software resides on central computer servers managed by the software company. The dental practice user goes online (uses a web browser) to enter and retrieve data.

Advantages:

- Initial cost can be lower. Most cloud-based systems have monthly fees based on the features the practice chooses to utilize.
- Updates to the software take place on the server and are initiated by the software provider.
- Less hardware is needed in the practice to run the programs; no servers needed.
- Back-ups of data are typically accomplished by provider with built-in redundancies.
- Cloud-based database is convenient for practices that have multiple locations and need simultaneous access to practice and patient data.
- Some systems allow patient to review treatment plans or schedule appointments.

Limitations:

- Large amounts of data need to be accessed which require a broadband connection to the internet such as fiber optics, cable, or DSL.
- If internet connection is compromised, practice will not have access to data.
- Data stored in a format recognized by your provider may not be portable (*convertible*) to another newer program in the future.
- Data ownership. Does the practice or provider own the data? Can provider access data? How is confidentiality of patient records handled?
- Many dental practices will have to maintain file servers for other technologies such as digital radiography, conebeam, digital impressions, etc.
- Security of practice and patient information is a concern voiced by many dentists. “The problem with the cloud is that it simply expands the systemic vulnerabilities that have existed since the internet was developed. The internet was built for redundancy, not security,” Will Donaldson, CEO of digital security firm nomx.

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What is CR?

WHY CR?

CR was founded in 1976 by clinicians who believed practitioners could confirm efficacy and clinical usefulness of new products and avoid both the experimentation on patients and failures in the closet. With this purpose in mind, CR was organized as a unique volunteer purpose of testing all types of dental products and disseminating results to colleagues throughout the world.

WHO FUNDS CR?

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HOW DOES CR FUNCTION?

Each year, CR tests in excess of 750 different product brands, performing about 20,000 field evaluations. CR tests all types of dental products, including materials, devices, and equipment, plus techniques. Worldwide, products are purchased from distributors, secured from companies, and sent to CR by clinicians, inventors, and patients. There is no charge to companies for product evaluations. Testing combines the efforts of 450 clinicians in 19 countries who volunteer their time and expertise, and 40 on-site scientists, engineers, and support staff. Products are subjected to at least two levels of CR’s unique three-tiered evaluation process that consists of:

1. Clinical field trials where new products are incorporated into routine use in a variety of dental practices and compared by clinicians to products and methods they use routinely.
2. Controlled clinical tests where new products are used and compared under rigorously controlled conditions, and patients are paid for their time as study participants.
3. Laboratory tests where physical and chemical properties of new products are compared to standard products.

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