

This is just the beginning...

Here, **PATRIK ZACHRISSON**, Dental Surgeon and Partner at Wensleydale Dental Practice, tells *The Probe* all about how and why the Digital Dental Academy was set up and what impact digital technology is having in his working environment and across the wider dentistry profession...

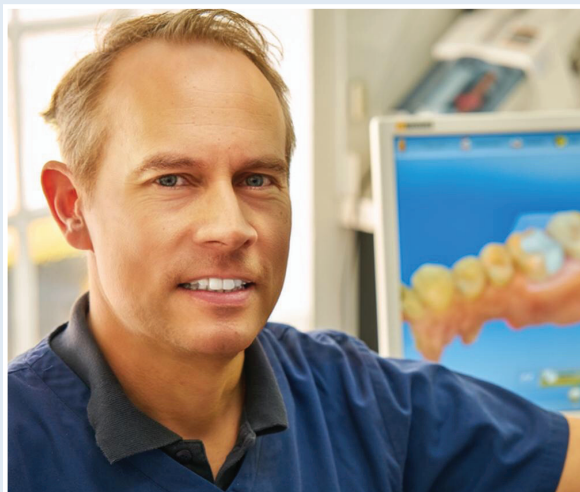
MY practice, The Wensleydale Dental Practice, in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire is a long-established mixed practice run by my wife and I with nine surgeries. We are fortunate to have a number of great associates who share our different interests in endodontics, perio, implants, restorative and orthodontics. A few years ago we were getting increasingly frustrated using different labs and we wanted to develop the services further. We decided to integrate a full digital workflow in the practice, and to have an on-site laboratory. We got ourselves a Sirona CBCT, Omnicam and MCXL milling unit and we built a lab. It was a complete game changer and the patients and staff were all delighted with the quick turnaround of lab work, the full control of the workflows and the predictability of the work. We now have two full-time technicians making nearly all my crown and bridge, implants, dentures and Cr-Co work.

However, when we invested into the system we had some thoughts about how it would be possible to take this further, what to expect, what training would be needed and what support was available – but in reality we found that not everything was that quick and straightforward. Advanced techniques in restorative, implant dentistry and digital orthodontics are no longer something confined to the occasional practice with a digital radiograph sensor, as more practices are investing in high quality technology. However, most practices that have intra oral scanners or general digital technology use it in a limited way, either out of fear of the unknown, lack of training or the cost and hassle involved in setting it up.

The formation of the Digital Dental Academy

About two years ago I met Adam Nulty and Chris Lefkaditis on a digital implant course in Lisbon and we found that we all had very similar experiences. The three of us decided to set up the Digital Dental Academy and create an association that encompasses experience, collaboration, innovation and support for the end user, and hence for the patient. We started going on courses together all over Europe, which helped expand our contacts lists in the field of digital hardware and software. Very quickly we became a global association for digital dentistry and The International Digital Dental Academy (IDDA) was formed, with clear aims to support users in an evidence-based and unbiased fashion. We brought the most prominent worldwide digital dentists, technicians and dental auxiliaries together to bring this association to every dentist, helping to support and advise in relation to all things digital.

We feel that this is the future and there is a need to work together towards the development of unbiased research in



digital dentistry; there is a need for training and a huge demand for courses in this new and exciting field, especially as it is changing so quickly. Professional bodies need support to develop standards, guidelines and protocols for dentists using technological services and digital equipment, and that this would be in the best interests for us all, as well as the hardware and software developers.

The IDDA has a free base level membership, with access to guidelines, protocols, links to digital dentistry videos and more, and a Premium membership for £195 that also gives access to our Congress, discounts from manufacturers and on things like consumables and courses. We have a very active Facebook page with nearly 8,000 followers worldwide, as well as a supportive WhatsApp group. We run regular courses on digital subjects such as CAD/CAM, 3D printing, guided surgery, All-on-X, photography and more.

An exciting development now is that we are running a Digital Dentistry PG Certificate & PG Diploma course, a UK first, in collaboration with Tipton Training, with a start date in September this year.

With the Digital Dental Academy and the facilities and educational distinction available at the Tipton Training Facility we will provide a world first in this sector, enabling students to provide more predictable care and to work with digital workflows, CAD/CAM techniques, digital dentures, guided surgery, orthodontics and much more. We are working towards progressing this course to a full hands-on Masters Degree, which this course will provide credits towards.

We are also setting up the IDDA Mentor Network as a way for the experienced digital dentists and technicians to support the growing use of digital dentistry. Years ago when our board and committee members started using the software and hardware we now use on a regular

basis, there was little to no manufacturer support. Thankfully that has now changed but we still need a network of valued professionals to help guide the use of this technology in a safe and predictable manner in the best interests of our patients.

The future is bright

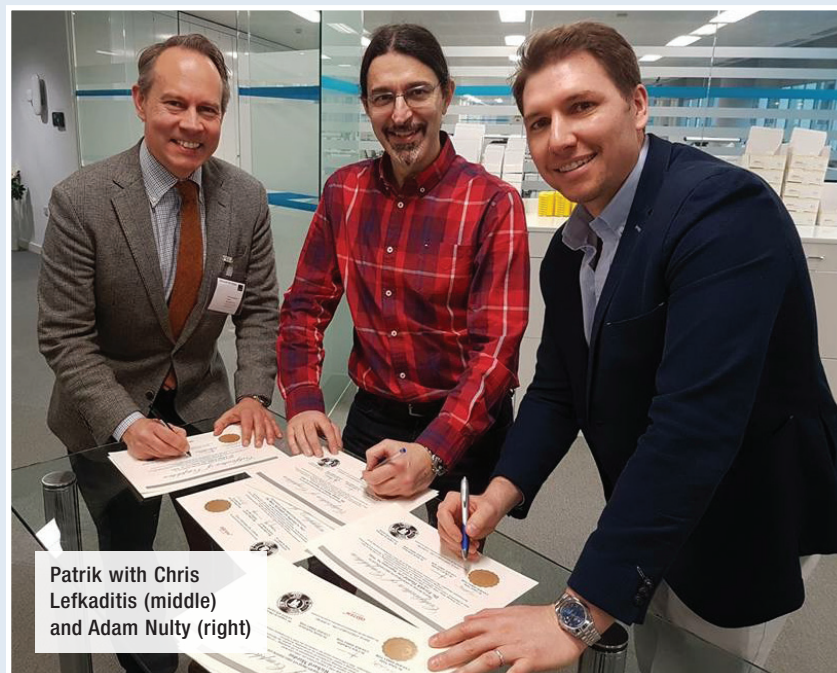
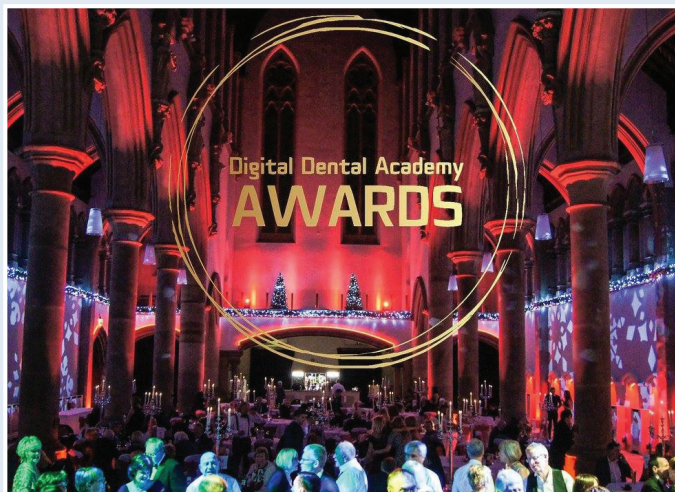
The future is very exciting and we are so lucky to be able to practice dentistry at a time when technology is so rapidly improving. Dentistry has come a long way and I can only predict it getting more and more advanced. We are seeing amazing digital work by our members and would like their efforts to be recognised.

We are also very proud to announce the launch of The IDDA Conference 2018 on 3 November 2018 in Manchester. It will be a brilliant day of lectures by international speakers, a digital exhibition with the main players in the industry represented, followed by a gala dinner where we will announce the winners of the IDDA Awards.

In summary, I have found that digital dentistry has completely changed the way I work, and has made it a lot more predictable, safe and fun – and it has also helped me grow my practice substantially. Patients are always impressed with our technology and come to see us specifically because they have heard that we do things differently. It has given me the opportunity to lecture and mentor internationally and in the UK, to make some fantastic friends and to meet some very talented dentists and technicians.

www.digitaldentalacademy.co.uk

Patrik Zachrisson is Partner at Wensleydale Dental Practice in Cambridgeshire, focusing mainly on aesthetic treatments and preventive dentistry, with a particular interest in restorative dentistry, Invisalign orthodontics and implantology. He also won Highly Commended Dentist of the Year at this year's Dental Awards in May.



Patrik with Chris Lefkaditis (middle) and Adam Nulty (right)