

Progent

Daniel Girard, Eng., MBA
President



Your Data Belong to You ... Still!

In November 2009, I published an article on the delicate topic of management data ownership. If patient information belongs to patients, office management information obviously belongs to professionals.

However, in a unilateral move, the software suppliers of several new Progent clients blocked them from accessing their management data during just the first quarter of 2015.

Data confidentiality and the resulting security have changed a great deal in recent years, but that should never be used as an excuse by suppliers to take professionals hostage.

When I say "...still," I am referring to that situation, which is unfortunately still a reality in the dental software sector.

The field of software is still developing and highly competitive, and providers come and go fairly quickly.

As managers, you absolutely need to make sure, whatever software you choose, that you can easily export your basic management information and retrieve it in different software, if necessary. This feature must be one of the criteria you use to make your purchase.

Basic information includes the following data:

- ▶ Personal information (first, last name, etc.)
- ▶ Appointments
- ▶ Pending follow-ups (recalls)
- ▶ Treatments and operative notes
- ▶ Digital documents associated with patients (x-rays, PDF, etc.)

These data should be exported in the "classic" "CSV" (Comma-Separated Values) file format. It is normally very easy to import data from these types of files into new software. The only unknown variable is whether the new management tool can execute the data import, which is another feature you should consider when you make your purchase.

Once the information is technically retrieved, you will still need to perform the most important task, which is to train your personnel.

However, the software transfer process is a lot more enjoyable and satisfying if you can eliminate or minimize the technical efforts required. And quality, readily accessible information is an excellent platform to use when you begin training others.

Obviously, not all software products offer the same management functionalities, which results in some variation in the level of detail concerning their accessibility and exportability.

At any rate, remember that your management information belongs to you and that a supplier may not block your access to it.

In the event of a dispute, call your association to find out how it can help you through the process with your provider.

Feel free to contact Progent if you would like to discuss this matter. Progent is a service of your association!