

Ready for web-based practice management?

With consultants and their secretaries increasingly working from multiple locations, there has been an increasing demand for web-based or online practice management systems to deliver greater flexibility, security and efficiency.

DGL Practice Manager, the UK's leading practice management software system, is one such system that allows Consultants to effectively manage all areas of their Private Practice from one central location.

Consultant Ophthalmologist, Mr. Nicholas Lee, of Lee Medical Practice, Buckinghamshire and NHS Consultant at The Hillingdon Hospital and The Western Eye Hospital speaks about his experience of moving to the online version of DGL Practice Manager, the importance of data recovery plans and the benefits of reliable support and continuous product evolution.



“...Managing our own server was becoming too much of a responsibility. We had two servers synchronising in case one went down. You had to import and export every night and the system wasn't live. These days, now that I'm using the online version of DGL Practice Manager, if I write a letter here [in the system] it immediately becomes available to my secretary. My secretary can then actually print the letter, put it in the envelope and have it posted before the patient has even left my office. In the olden days she would have to wait for me to import and export the data from the laptop, which would be the next day

or if I forgot the laptop or if the import and export crashed it could actually be a day or two before she got the laptop.

The fact that DGL Practice Manager is completely live at all times means that everyone can see everything. If Bernie wants to add a patient it becomes available to everyone immediately. Always having access to the most up-to-date information is a huge benefit to us. And of course there's a huge resource of scanned data as well which means we always have access to the notes – from ten years ago in some cases. ”

There are many benefits to online applications, the more obvious including flexibility, instant scalability and “anytime, anywhere” access, all tied up in an attractive subscription business model. And if you don’t think access to information is important, then ask yourself why laptops and mobile phones are so popular. We all want easy access to our information and we all want it now. With online practice management systems, Consultants are no longer restricted to their clinic to look up patient information; practice management systems can be accessed anywhere there is a secure internet connection.

““ You can access it from any computer, anywhere once you have your security device. To think a few years ago it was all about getting the fastest laptop with the highest spec because the program was running on your laptop, now actually you don’t need a fast laptop, all you need is a computer that has a good internet connection. I’m not worried about the quality of the computer so that means we are hardware independent. Online has been, to my amazement, way better than I thought it would be. I thought we’d have problems but in fact we never ring the support anymore! ””



Disaster Recovery: Think when, not if!

““ You do still need to think about the disaster recovery though and none of us are good at this. Having a disaster plan is critical because it’s not if it happens it’s when it happens. What will you do when it happens? Have you tested your backup? For instance when it happened to us, my laptop just died. It was a Wednesday afternoon and I had a clinic that afternoon. So I loaded it onto the computer, or so I thought, and by this time the hospital technical support team had gone home. I rang Bernie to bring over my spare laptop and when I clicked on the icon – it didn’t work. I couldn’t get it working so then I asked my ophthalmic technician who works in London to bring her already configured laptop over. She works with me in town and she now uses DGL Practice Manager as well. So this was the third computer we tried and we managed to get it working.

We immediately started rebuilding things and getting the laptop working but even that one needed to be taught, the printers had all changed and programs had to be updated. So we were down for about 50 minutes; that’s actually pretty quick. If we had still been on a locally installed version of DGL Practice Manager and the server had gone down it would have been much more difficult to get back up and running and we would be talking hours not minutes. In summary I would advise: always have a spare computer or laptop configured and updated to take over immediately should your main computer fail. Consider also what happens when your internet line goes down, we have two fibre optic lines configured on a dual router set to fail over if one line goes down. In addition, we have different mobile broad band dongles. All this is to ensure we can always get an Internet connection wherever we are. ””

Legendary Support

A lot of practice management systems available today are generic packages which require that you adapt to follow their rules. DGL Practice Manager was designed specifically for Private Consultants and medical secretaries, carefully created to follow and enhance their daily and weekly tasks.

“ The time it takes me to find out what’s wrong with a patient is within a click of a button. Everybody loves DGL because of that; because it is very easy. Straight away you can look at the vision, graph it and instantly see what’s going on. Writing medication is brilliant as well. To be able to write the prescription through the system is great – the pharmacy loves it – we’re still the only department within a hospital in England that actually does typed prescriptions. Pharmacies know what the drugs are and we can put our own little memoirs in it.

The Support with DGL Practice Manager is also quite legendary...and the development side is legendary! Sometimes when we ask for a specific feature we are told that a request is technically impossible but more often than not we’re told it’s created before we’ve even asked! ”

For further details on DGL Practice Manager please visit www.dglpm.co.uk

