

# Going digital with the Heron IOS

It's been just over a year since American-based imaging company 3DISC made its Heron IOS solution commercially available. In this interview, Deputy Group CEO, 3DISC, Thomas Welding, talks about how the solution has developed over the past year and provides his view on how the Heron IOS solution can help dentists overcome the barriers to going digital.

**It's been a year since 3DISC officially introduced the Heron IOS solution to the market. Where is Heron IOS today, when compared to the initial launch?**

The solution we launched a year ago was our first version of an intra-oral scanner, and we have come a long way since the initial release. We've had two subsequent releases, which are important milestones for us, in that they take the solution to the next level of intra-oral scanning. First, in October this year, we had a major software release which improved the scanner performance, in particular. The core technology of this update introduces a new way of storing large amounts of 3D information in real time, improves performance and speed, and offers higher resolution, increased accuracy and higher quality output.

The 3DISC development team is constantly working on improving the product, and through recent software updates we have managed to increase scanning speed by more than 30 per cent, improve bite alignment and add support for 20 series graphics cards. In addition, we have significantly improved the surface quality and detail level of our scans by implementing new processing algorithms. We also have an upcoming software release that will introduce an entirely new user interface (UI) to the Case Management application in the Heron IOS solution. The new application will be based on our own, in-house developed, software platform. The new UI and easy workflow are a big leap forward and offer dentists a premium user experience. With these two releases, I believe we have earned a place among the best intra-oral scanning solutions available for dental practices and their patients.

**How will these enhancements better address the needs of your market?**

We know dentists value two things: user experience and efficiency. Having a faster, more precise scanner enables dentists to feel more confident about using digital technology, and at the same time, reduces chair time, giving them a more efficient practice. We also understand that one of the key barriers to adoption of digital intra-oral scanning technology is dentists' hesitancy to invest in expensive, advanced technology with a steep learning curve. They feel they don't have the time needed to learn the digital workflow and train their staff in using the scanner and software. Another key barrier is concerns about price and ongoing costs related to digital scanning solutions. The Heron IOS addresses these barriers, by giving dentists a solution that is ready to use right out of the box, has a low learning curve, requires little training and implements easily in their daily business. All of this at a very attractive price point, with free upgrades and no additional ongoing cost. With Heron IOS, I truly believe dentists get the best value for their money.

"With Heron IOS, I truly believe dentists get the best value for their money."

Thomas Welding, Deputy Group CEO, 3DISC.

**With so many intra-oral scanners on the market, what should dentists looking to go digital be looking for in a scanner?**

There are more scanners available on the market today than ever before, which means dentists are spoiled for choice. The challenge for many dentists is to sift through the abundance of products available to find the exact fit for their practice. I believe there are three key factors dentists should consider when selecting a solution. First, the solution must cover the dental practice's functional needs in terms of the actual impression taking task and the range of indications the solution sup-



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The intra-oral colour scanner Heron IOS (3DISC).

ports. Next, the solution should offer flexibility in the form of an open architecture that can work with any system. And, as I mentioned before, the solution has to be easy to implement and use; for the dentist, for the lab and for the patient. I believe the Heron IOS ticks all of those boxes.

**Digital technology is everywhere. Why do you think there are still dentists who have yet to embrace digital intra-oral scanning technology?**

What I see when I travel and meet with dentists is that they all understand the benefits of going digital. It's more the barriers I spoke about earlier: price and time, that are preventing wide-scale adoption. Yet, I think we'll see a push towards adoption from two fronts. One, that there are solutions like Heron IOS, which remove the cost and time barriers by providing a cost-effective, easy-to-operate solution; and that we will see a push from patients who choose to go with dentists who use digital technology. I think patients, particularly millennials, will increasingly navigate towards digital dentist practitioners, and that will help drive the next wave of digital intra-oral scanner adoption.

**What can we expect from 3DISC in the coming year?**

We commit to delivering the intra-oral scanning solution you see today with the current price model and upgrade path. In the future, we will offer more advanced add-ons that dentists can purchase in order to expand their solu-

**Impressions from the field—  
a Heron IOS testimonial**

Dr Salvatore F. Perna practises dentistry in Phoenix, Arizona, where he works with digital cosmetic dental reconstruction. Dr Perna graduated from Georgetown University School of Dentistry with a Doctorate in Dental Surgery degree. He has completed more than 2,000 hours of postgraduate clinical education, and holds certificates in a variety of areas, including advanced dental implantology and advanced full mouth reconstruction.



**Dr Perna shares his experience in working with the new Heron IOS solution:**

"I saw a patient for restoration of decayed and misaligned teeth #5–13. The patient requested ideal anatomical cosmetics. I prepared the patient for full coverage crowns and scanned the maxillary and mandibular arches with the Heron IOS. I was curious to evaluate the cross-arch accuracy and marginal integrity of the upgraded software algorithm that 3DISC has recently released. The completed crowns seated perfectly on the patient's teeth, with exact marginal integrity. I found the interface and software module to be very user-friendly. The patient did not experience any discomfort, and I had no problems scanning the distal of any posterior teeth, due to the tapered Heron IOS handpiece. It was easy to transfer STL files to my crown and bridge and denture laboratory. The lab appreciated the digital lab slips comprehensive, yet streamlined approach to communicating my Rx to them."

tion. Our ambition is three-fold: to develop our technology so that we give dentists a quick and easy workflow providing increased productivity; to offer the most reliable solution on the market; and to be the best economical choice for dentists. In addition to these ambitions, we will also focus on our support services. Dentists need fast, reliable, professional help, when they have support questions or issues. Their success is our priority, so in addition to our physical support centres located around the world, we will continue to expand our online support services for end users.

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