

SCANSNAP™ CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT: DR. ICHIMURA, D.D.S.

Cleaning and Digitizing the Dental Office

In September, 1992, Dr. David Ichimura, D.D.S. established his cosmetic and family dental practice in San Jose, Calif. Dr. Ichimura is the sole practitioner in his office, tasked with creating and maintaining long term relationships with his patients, administering high quality dental care, coordinating referrals to specialists, overseeing business operations, including employee payroll, insurance and patient billing, and protecting a reputation for quality customer service.

Dr. Ichimura conducts approximately 10-15 patient consultations during any given week. Patient visits require up to 10 different forms and documents for each appointment including: patient information, health and current medication history, existing or changing dental conditions, detailed accounts of administered procedures, formal records of prescribed medication, recommendations for future dental care and visits, referrals to specialists and, of course, related insurance information. The brunt of the paperwork is split between patient charting and insurance claims. On average, Dr. Ichimura's office handles up to 30 or more dental charts and claim documents every day.

In an effort to maximize efficiency and take advantage of an installed network, Dr. Ichimura's office installed a bulky, complex and slow performing flatbed scanner in April 2000. With massive amounts of paper records and limited storage space, Dr. Ichimura was intrigued by the concept of a digitally archived and operated office -- one that reduced paper records while integrating digital radiographs and electronic file transfers such as sending insurance claims to be processed.

Dr. Ichimura soon faced an administrative intensive process requiring scanning insurance claims and patient charts that ranged in size, color, and shape – scanned one page at a time. Scanning time of even simple black and white documents was taking up to 10 minutes per page. Considering the average patient chart includes 10-15 pages, this required an unreasonable amount of valuable time, and monopolized the scanning workstation. Dr. Ichimura routinely found himself beginning a scan job then returning later to find double scans and documents with poor readability. Consequently, Dr. Ichimura frequently found himself multitasking and spending up to several hours each day running between patients and the flatbed scanner.

The notion of having centralized records instantly available to any workstation and reducing storage space was attractive. Additionally, the added financial benefit of being able to speed the reimbursement time with electronic claims to less than a week versus a three to four week waiting period was especially appealing, however, Dr. Ichimura's flatbed scanner was not meeting his scanning needs.

The Choice Is ScanSnap

Scanning challenges were Dr. Ichimura's main roadblock to creating a digitally archived and operated office in an effort to maximize both time and space. To do so, he knew that he needed a simpler, faster, higher-performance scanner with minimal maintenance requirements. Dr. Ichimura decided to install a ScanSnap scanner, which is now used to scan documents into an eight computer network. The ScanSnap scanner now scans his patient records, charts, photos, and insurance claims at the touch of a button, digitizing documents into PDF and JPEG files for secure storage and archival.



Today, Dr. Ichimura easily creates and forwards PDF and JPEG files for use in specialist reports and patient referrals. He also has the capability to easily share files and pictures with The Seattle Study Club, a highly regarded dental continuing education forum which shares and critiques case studies with a nationwide network of dentists seeking continuing education.

The ScanSnap solution serves as the digital gateway to facilitate the capture, archiving, sharing, and retention of documents. Additionally, as insurance companies increasingly adopt electronic billing, Dr. Ichimura sees the ScanSnap scanner growing increasingly vital to his practice. He has plans in place to leverage the ScanSnap scanned PDF files for modification and revision of standard office template forms, including patient treatment records, dental charting, periodontal recordings, health history, updating constantly changing medical conditions, as well as standardized insurance pre-authorization and claim forms.

“My time is dedicated to my patients’ dental health, not paperwork,” said Dr. Ichimura. “I required an easy to use, compact scanner that was simple to install. I’m still debating which feature offers more convenience – the automatic document capture or the scanning speed capturing both sides of a document at the simple touch of a button.”

The ScanSnap scanner helped free up Dr. Ichimura’s time and brings him one step closer to establishing a truly digitally operated office. The ScanSnap scanner also eliminates the double scan challenge that had previously hampered the scanning process, while providing a fast, higher resolution copy for improved readability. Additionally, Dr. Ichimura’s practice is now able to send up to 90-percent of his dental claims electronically, saving \$70-100 dollars a month on postage, while also reducing accounts receivable by enabling electronic re-imbusement of claims.

“Electronic claim submission reduces reimbursement time,” said Dr. Ichimura. “Now funds are deposited directly into my account, eliminating time spent processing mail by hand, physically taking receipts to the bank, and waiting through the bank processing cycle.”

“As a small business owner and the solo dental practitioner responsible for my patients’ health and the office environment, it is imperative that the business operations run smoothly with minimal clutter,” Dr. Ichimura continued. “I want to focus on what matters most, my patients. The ScanSnap scanner’s speed and versatility allows me to easily digitize paper, quickly archive and modify documents necessary to the everyday operation of my business, and increase my ability to communicate quickly and efficiently with others in the field without using expensive and time-intensive snail-mail.”

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