

## **Report on AAO Technology Conference 2008**

Dr. Kirt E. Simmons

The first stand-alone AAO Technology Conference, held in Las Vegas February 8-10, 2008, was a great meeting most of you missed. Moderated by David Sarver, who also provided several of his typically cutting-edge presentations, it included presentations from John C. Dvorak, Ron Redmond, Steven McEvoy, James Mah, James Pearson, Richard Walker, Douglas Depew, and Christy Corey. Mr. Dvorak entertained and educated us with his sense of humor, great background in the computer industry, and current insider knowledge. If you've ever heard of Twitter, Jabber, Digg, torproject, Yelp, or Dogpile, and wondered what they were, or are so "out of it" you have never heard these terms—you should have been there!

Ron Redmond reviewed the various digital patient teaching and informed consent options currently available. Steven McEvoy began his presentation by dropping his laptop off the podium—turns out he had another one conveniently waiting inside the podium—but it very vividly made his point that we need to be prepared for an equivalent computer catastrophe in our offices. He then proceeded to provide strategies to allow you to virtually pull the same "trick" he did in your office and be back up and running either seamlessly or with very little downtime. James Mah brought us up to date on the latest, greatest advances in cone beam CT while Richard Walker shared his journey through 2D and 3D reconstruction/rendering and the pitfalls and potential problems of these technologies. James Pearson reviewed all the wonderful new features, downloads, etc. available through the AAO website. Doug Depew provided a great review of the extensive online educational opportunities available for doctors and staff while Christy Corey enlightened us about the impending effects of the growing consumer-driven health environment. Her warnings about the impact of decreasing third party coverage and increasing patient costs for ALL of a family's healthcare needs were tempered by her recommendations utilizing technology to mitigate the negative effects of these changes on our practices.

A new concept at this meeting—Practice Pearls—consisting of short, intense 15-minute presentations at the end of the day was a great hit! William Engilman, Ron Jacobsen, Marc Lemchen, Ed Lin, and Ron Redmond all shared some great, usable information during their 15 minutes. Some of the topics covered in these "Pearls" included using VOIP in your office, free open source software, economical backup options, VPN (Virtual Private Networks), Windows on a Mac, placing monitors in your office, integrating Icat and SureSmile, public WiFi protection and online backup services. All the attendees and exhibitors I talked to were enthusiastic about the meeting and indicated a desire for the AAO to reprise this meeting on a regular basis. If the AAO chooses to do so, make sure you don't miss the next one!