With 2012 drawing to a close, I would like to take a brief look back at the past and share some thoughts with you.

While it sometimes appears that time flies by at a rapid pace, advancements in dentistry have truly been rapid. Presumably, the extraordinary progress may not be felt as strongly by dentists in the former Eastern Bloc countries, such as the Czech Republic, as it is by dentists in Western Europe or the USA. However, nearly 20 years ago, most of our dental units worked with pulleys and cables, while the offices were equipped with chairs that did not allow treatment of a patient in a horizontal position.

From a global perspective, dentistry has undergone a series of significant changes. Not long ago, there was only one company involved in CAD/CAM technology—intra-oral scanning and milling of dental restorations in particular. Currently, there are nearly 10 intra-oral scanners and at least 20 extra-oral laboratory scanners from which to choose. Today’s dentists can obtain intra-oral images from CBCT devices and we can manufacture implant guides in-office while the patients wait—all of which was the realm of science fiction until recently. I am grateful to be experiencing this exciting development.

Therefore, I am not sure that today we can still refer to 3-D technologies in dentistry as "revolutionary". In some areas of dentistry, these technologies have already become a diagnostic tool, or have even established themselves as a standard operating procedure. That is one of the reasons we decided to build, and in May 2012 opened, the Czech Society of CAD/CAM Dentistry (CSCD) Training Center. The centre is focused primarily on the practical education of dentists and dental technicians in the use of CAD/CAM technologies and CBCT. Inspired by the old Chinese proverb “It’s better to see once than to hear a hundred times”, we equipped the centre and the operating room with high-definition cameras and audio-visual data channels. This allows the participants to view the live procedures in the classroom (in the case of large audiences, the entire process can be shown in a nearby 3-D cinema). In the centre’s training laboratories, every course participant is equipped with his or her own ready-to-use intra-oral scanner and a phantom head connected to the dental units—because as dental professionals we all realise that without training and hands-on practice in proper preparation all advantages of CAD/CAM technologies are meaningless.

I wish you not only a perfect fit for your scans and millings, but also a fulfilling personal and professional life in the upcoming year. I also sincerely hope to see you at some of the practical courses in the Czech Republic soon!

With kind regards and best wishes,

Dr Josef Kunkela
President of the Czech Society of CAD/CAM Dentistry