The image on the computer monitor will look the same whether you are using an 8-, 10- or 15-megapixel camera.

If your usual need is for “snapshot” quality, you can bump up these figures by 50 percent, but either way, I think it makes it pretty clear that the 12- and 15-megapixel cameras won’t make a big difference, unless you plan to print 8-by-10 inch photos.

The image on the computer monitor will look the same whether you are using an 8-, 10- or 15-megapixel camera.

Or put it another way: if you have a choice of a 10-megapixel camera that’s perfect for your needs and preferences, or a 15-megapixel camera that would force you to compromise on the features and controls you want, don’t buy the 15-megapixel model just because it has more pixels.

When you are evaluating digital camera systems, I would recommend that you work with a company that specializes in systems designed for the dental market. Two known companies are PhotoMed and Lester A. Dine.

Both produce systems that include all the hardware and software that a dentist would need to go digital, although they take different approaches and have subsequently different costs of their systems.

The PhotoMed systems are typically cameras with all components included, such as a macro lens, flash diffuser or ring flashes, memory cards and battery charger.

These systems normally start around $1,200 and can go as high as $5,000 depending on the camera type and attachments that you purchase.

In part two of this article, we’ll cover making the move from analog to digital.