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 to 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 very well-known companies are PhotoMed and Lester A. Dine.

Both produce systems that include all the hardware and software that a dentist would need to start using digital photography, 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.

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**About the author**

Dr. Lorne Lavine, founder and president of Dental Technology Consultants, has more than 20 years invested in the dental and dental technology fields.

A graduate of USC, he earned his DMD from Boston University and completed his residency at the Eastman Dental Center in Rochester, N.Y. He received his specialty training at the University of Washington and went into private practice in Vermont until moving to California in 2002 to establish DTC, a company that focuses on the specialized technological needs of the dental community.