Topics relating to the study of occlusion and the comparison of techniques and courses have been popular with members throughout January. Illustrating their posts with images, colleagues have discussed several cases and the use of various appliances.

In the practice management arena, members aired their views and shared experiences of dealing with verbally abusive patients, how to ensure the patient does not return, and supporting the practice team after such an event. An older topic concerning whether to give compassionate leave in unusual circumstances was rehashed, and this attracted further questions and concepts.

Despite the first meetings of the BDA Rep Body and the GDPC's three-year cycle, there wasn't much discussion of UK dental politics. Often, this is a time when political ideas and crystal-ball gazing are flowing fast and there is always condemnation of the UDA system, but there were few ideas of how to move the agenda forward, to make everyone happier about NHS dentistry.

GDPUK has been offering some verifiable CPD and hopes to offer more of this during 2009. An endodontic course was busy at Birmingham Dental School and attendees will use the event for networking, and putting faces to names they have known for years by email and on the web.

An innovation for UK dentistry has been GDPUK offering a webinar to members for free. This will be aired in early February and will be reviewed in this column. Sponsoring dental companies make this possible, and CPD certificates are sent out by email. These two events have made the New Year an exciting time to be involved in GDPUK, and as its owner, I have been involved in many aspects of improving the site, but more about this later in the year, and perhaps, like a blog, I can tell you more of the personal effects for me, as the year goes by.

I have been experimenting with what might be the next big thing on the web – Twitter. www.twitter.com has been championed by many savvy people, and despite being about two years old, has recently published its billionth ‘tweet’. Words such as this, are featured in Twittonary, its own dictionary, and real-world news seems to break there very early. Twitter also works on your mobile phone. A way of describing it is as microblogging, maximum message size on Twitter is 140 characters so writers have to be brief. By the time this column is published, expect GDPUK to be putting out its latest news by this method to colleagues who are interested. More followers might be found!

GDPUK round-up

Rather than any major debates dominating the GDPUK forum of late, shorter, less-involved discussions have been the order of the month.