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PAT STANLEY | Mind Your Business

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I'm fascinated that every time I go to the dentist there seems to be some new high-tech gadget.

Dr. Adrian Fenderson's hygienist, Katherine Ryan, told me I was due for a new set of X-rays last week, but this time there was no waiting for developing in messy chemicals, the radiation dosage was lower and the doctor was able to magnify sections of a single tooth on a computer screen.

Yep, X-rays have gone digital. No film. The screen image was probably 20 times larger than the old real-to-life size on film.

Adrian said the new tool is part of a remodel of his "All About Smiles" office.

He has another new toy: a Diagnodent. This device is slipped into the groove of a tooth and can tell if there is a cavity hiding beneath the hard enamel surface. Was what the dentist saw a tiny stain or a microscopic hole? This laser technology will tell, and allow for both early detection and early treatment.

"It is one of the greatest new tools to come along," he told me.

He said it can be hooked up to a wireless computer network and sent through cyberspace to another laptop in a consultation room or for a second opinion.

Yes, Fenderson is the dentist with whom I flew to Mexico a few years ago to do a Register story and photo spread on the Flying Doctors.

Speaking of technology, I've taken a quantum leap into an area where only a few years ago I dare not tread. I've added a camera to my computer, and now have the ability to see the person I'm "talking" to and he/she can see me.

Of course, the big thing now is I only know two people who can share this wonderful technology with me. One is the person who gave me the "iSight" camera that attaches to the flat screen of my Macintosh. The other is a nephew in Canada who is a real gadget guru.

I haven't used it yet, but probably will. Hope it doesn't wind up like my exercise cycle Š I finally got rid of that at a garage sale.