

DID YOU MISS THIS ONE?
Roger Matthews

What with everyone rushing off to Frankfurt and the International Dental Exhibition, you might well have overlooked the first Dental Regulation and Oversight Show (DROSS) at the Kirby Muxlow Memorial Hall and Tea Rooms.

There was no mistaking the crowd of the usual protesters at the entrance. Famous law firm Sue, Grabbitt and Runn clearly weren't about to vote for a compliant and regulated profession and were running a raffle for a recent Aston Martin they had found in the car park and couldn't remember whose it was.

Nearby, the BDA were quietly but persistently marching with banners: it turned out to be the British Deaf Association who had mistaken this for another event.

Inside, the profusion of stalls indicated just what a great spur to entrepreneurship and inventiveness this whole regulation business has been. Gadgets, services and protocols dripped from every stand.

Perhaps the quirkiest was the 'rent a small child scheme' which would monitor continuously and in real time the internal temperature of a clinical fridge. Apparently the electricity saved by *knowing* the internal light goes out could pay for the service itself.

The Commission for Regulating All Possibilities was demonstrating its new application software which can simultaneously handle 5,000 web forms. Expected to go into service in May 2012, the officials present regretted that it would miss the GP registration deadline by a week or so. In the meantime, the tried and trusted wooden carts towed by trained ferrets would continue to handle the back office admin.

It was perhaps appropriate that the Equality Diversity and Human Rights representative should have been hospitalised following the brawl in the coffee queue. EDHR do not approve of queuing, which is itself discriminatory, as someone always comes last. They demonstrated their Unfeasibly Long Reception Desks so that everyone could be dealt with simultaneously. The deluxe version rises and falls so that all classes of patient can interact on equal terms.

Yale locks had a new 'double' cylinder latch requiring a key on each side of the door. This effectively prevented patients getting in (proven as the major source of infection) while stopping the staff leaving until all daily validation checks were complete. In the event of fire, the lock releases at 200°C to allow removal of the victims by emergency services.

The Mock Inspection Company had three popular models on display: the Inspector Clouseau, the Fat Inspector (from Thomas the Tank Engine) and the traditional Inspector Morse. Clouseau's latex nose, which melts in contact with nitrous oxide, was a popular add-on.

The Design-a-Policy stand featured many attractive new lines: the Control of Contamination in Garden Water Features Policy and the Provision of Toileting Facilities for Disabled Guide Dogs Policy were both reportedly very popular*.

Over at the Armageddon company, a similar approach to the 'vanishingly unlikely, but essential to prevent' attitude was evident, with regulation nuclear bunkers (for business continuity) and immediate readiness neighbourhood evacuation plans available in the event of, say, the dropping of a used endodontic file.

Locum agencies were also well represented, offering chaperones to chaperone chaperones (CRB approved of course) and pre-Registered Compliance Managers for rental, each trained to induce terror and collapse within minutes.

A spokesman for the organising company of the Show said the clash with Frankfurt was unfortunate, but that "...in future years, we see DROSS as easily out-sizing the NEC, Excel or even the Chicago Midwinter."

I asked where, in that case, dentists might go to look for, say, new dental chairs? He assured me that dental chairs would shortly be banned on health and safety grounds, with many moving parts likely to trap fingers, feet and knees.

“What about dental units, then?” I asked. He displayed a clear in-depth knowledge of the field: “Ah, well I think you’ll find that dental units came in around 2006 but are almost certain to be abolished by 2014”. I was impressed by his foresight and understanding. This Show could run and run....

*Don’t laugh, but these two areas (or very similar) are reported to have been mentioned by Regulatory assessors. You couldn’t make it up.

[684 words]

Notes to Editors:

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Roger joined Denplan in 1995 having spent 20 years working in general dental practice and as a dento-legal advisor for the Medical Defence Union. He oversees dental advice to the company and its links with professional bodies, and is responsible for Denplan’s professional services.