



THE EYE TALK DIGITAL Evolution

In Australia most optometrists subscribe to what is commonly referred to as the 'reference Bible', the *Eye Talk Reference Guide*. Whilst pricing suggestions are updated each quarter, how often do practitioners update the fees in their practice management software? With over 2,500 spectacle and contact lens products on the market it could be a daunting task. **Tony Hanks**

There are many things that require an optometrist's attention when managing their practice. Looking after the professional clinical side is one thing, but management of the business aspects can easily be overlooked.

One of the most important areas is the fees charged for spectacles and contact lenses

– these need to relate to the investment in the practice, but they also need to be realistic and competitive. They have to be fair to the patient; while still being fair to the practitioner and their staff.

At a recent conference, attendees were asked about the frequency of their fee revisions? With the work involved to

update prices in their computers, and making the assumption that adjustments were often minor, many were only performing this task every 12 months or longer. One attendee even reported a retail charge for UV Protection of AUD\$10 a pair which was less than the wholesale cost!

Eye Talk Digital

When you subscribe to the *Eye Talk Reference Guide* you also have access to the digital service. The Eye Talk Digital service is a downloaded computer file that contains all of the spectacle lens and contact lens information from the current issue of the *Eye Talk Reference Guide*. The service is updated every three months and can be used with your practice management software to make sure it is also up to date.

When you subscribe to Eye Talk Digital you can download a database file (called ETdigital.dbf) from the Eye Talk website

Feature		OPTOMATE			SUNIX VISION		
		Lenses	Suppl	CL's	Lenses	Suppl	CL's
Imports Information for Products:	New	■	□	■	■	■	■
	Existing	■	□	■	■	■	■
Imports Prices for Products:	New	■	□	■	■	■	■
	Existing	■	□	■	■	■	■
Imports GST Information (eg Fianos):		■	□	■	■	■	■
Imports Item Numbers for Products:	New	■	□	■	■	■	■
	Existing	■	□	■	■	■	■
Imports Item Numbers for Features of Products:	New	■	□	■	■	■	■
	Existing	■	□	■	■	■	■
Imports Descriptions of Features of Products:	New	□	□	□	□	□	□
	Existing	□	□	□	□	□	□
Imports Supplier's Product Code for On-line Ordering:	New	■	□	■	■	■	■
	Existing	■	□	■	■	■	■
Price Adjustments:	By Product Category	■	□	■	■	■	■
	By Percentage:	■	□	■	■	■	■
	By Flat \$ Amount:	□	□	□	■	■	■
Discontinued Products:	Deleted	□	□	□	□	□	□
	Marked	□	□	□	□	□	□
	Off Picklists	■	□	■	■	■	■
User's own Local Code gets information updated from a linked Eye Talk Data Code:		■	□	■	■	■	■
Spec Lenses - Imports whether Stock or Grind:		■	-	-	■	-	-
CL's - Imports Pack Sizes & Wearing Days:		-	-	■	-	-	■

Legend: ■ Yes ■ New (expected by Sept 2008) □ No - N/A

Above: Features integrated from Eye Talk Digital into popular management software

(www.eyetalk.com.au). The file can be viewed with a database program, or in a excel spreadsheet however it really needs to work with practice management software to achieve its' full potential.

Currently Eye Talk Digital can be integrated with practice management software Optomate and Sunix Vision which, based on feedback from users, have been designed and developed to incorporate Eye Talk Digital.

What Detail Is In The File?

Each Eye Talk Digital file contains information about every spectacle lens and contact lens in the current issue of the reference guide.

Similar information is included for all supplementary spectacle lens charges and all contact lenses. In addition, for contact lenses the file includes disposable lens pack sizes and the planned number of wearing days.

Integration with Optomate

Optomate (V:2003-1.05 or later) now works with Eye Talk Digital. The Eye Talk Digital file is downloaded to the user's hard drive; then from within Optomate the local database of lenses can be updated. After importing any new products and any changes to existing ones, the final prices in Optomate can be adjusted by a percentage variation from the Eye Talk suggestion.

It is then possible to make adjustments at different levels in each of the product categories (e.g. progressives and single vision can be adjusted by different percentages).

The final result is that information from the Eye Talk Digital file is stored locally in the Lens Details, so that it is available for use in patient dispensings and billings.

The process in Optomate is simple and any updated information in the Eye Talk

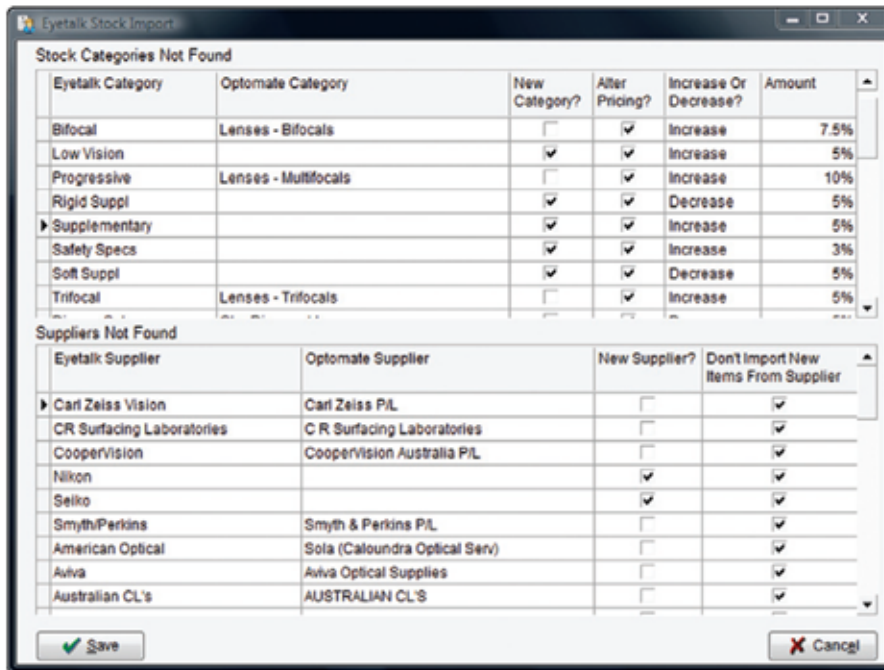


FACT:
4 in 5 patients prefer Transitions® lenses to regular clear lenses.*

Transitions®
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*Practice Marketing Management, November 2006.
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Left: Percentage adjustments by category in Optomate.

“Eye Talk Digital is a valuable resource of information to assist in the effective business management of optometry and optical dispensing practices.”

Digital file (like new item numbers or spelling changes) is included as part of the import process.

Unfortunately, the spectacle lens supplements are not included in the data importing (e.g. things like tinting, UV protection, multi-coats, etc). The areas that do currently integrate between Eye Talk Digital and Optomate (and those that could do so in the future) are summarised in the figure on these pages entitled ‘Features of Integration Summary’.

Integration with Vision

Sunix Vision (V:2004.02 or later) has now also been designed to work with Eye Talk Digital. The Eye Talk Digital file is downloaded to the user’s hard drive. Then from within Vision the local database of lenses is updated, with spectacle lenses, lens supplementaries (‘Lens Extras’) and contact lenses being handled separately.

Importing the codes adds all of the new products to the local user’s database and updates the Eye Talk reference prices for all existing products. Vision offers either ‘Import All ...’ to update existing products

and add everything else in Eye Talk Digital, or ‘Update ...’ to only update existing products. This second option might be useful where a practice has edited their product list to only have the lenses that they use, but any new products would not be added. After the data import it is then necessary to update the existing products based upon the new price information that has been updated. The final prices in Vision can then be adjusted up or down by a percentage, or by a flat dollar amount. They can also be adjusted differently in each of the lens group categories.

The final result is that information from the Eye Talk Digital file is now stored locally in the Lens Details so that it is available for use in patient dispensings and billings. This works quickly and simply.

The areas that currently integrate between Eye Talk Digital and Sunix Vision (and those that could do so in the future) are summarised in the figure on these pages entitled ‘Features of Integration Summary’.

Conclusion

There are over 2,500 product records in the Eye Talk Digital file and each of these

has 36 fields of information. That equates to 90,000 pieces of data every three months. How this is eventually used in an optometry practice situation is dependent upon how the practice management software makes use of this resource.

Eye Talk Digital is a valuable resource of information to assist in the effective business management of optometry and optical dispensing practices. The integration with practice management software is an excellent example of co-operation between different businesses. After many requests for this service over the years, it now exists and is working. Practice owners and managers can influence how it integrates into their practice by letting their software providers know if there are areas where they would find further integration valuable. The product areas of Contact lens Solutions, OTC Ophthalmics, Consultations and Veterans Affairs Visual Aids will also be added to Eye Talk Digital in the October 2008 edition.

For more Information on Eye Talk Digital contact Eye Talk Consultants, +61 2 9451 2737 or email: margaret@eyetalk.com.au. For info on Optomate contact Monkey Software, on +61 3 9393 2055 or email: cmonks@monkeysoftware.com.au. For info on Vision contact Sunix Computer Consultants on +61 2 9988 4862 or email: sunixvision@optusnet.com.au. ■

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