

VetSCOPE News

On the Border -Line

Parkview in Strabane using VetSCOPE for cross border clients

Following our acquisition of our practice from Mr. Joe Campbell in 2002 we changed from the existing VMS system to SAGE Instant accounts. Although SAGE was adequate for sending out invoices we found the scope of the system to be very limited. In 2004 we upgraded our computer system to enable better account keeping and to ease labelling and batch number recording. Having looked at a number of systems we found VetSCOPE to be the best all round package. Being a cross border practice we needed a system that could handle both Euro AND Sterling currencies as well as the various VAT rates and drugs legislation.

Following the installation of VetSCOPE in Spring 2004 we found office administration time reduced dramatically and everyone (even the more computer phobic) were soon adept at using the system. All the initial queries and problems were quickly sorted by an ever patient Stephen.

Following the success of the large animal system we introduced the small animal system to our



Stephanie operating VetSCOPE in Parkview Veterinary Practice

practice in 2005 and found it to be a massive improvement on our old manual card system. At last we could find the animal records when the owner came in again and we were charging for our time at a more sensible rate.

Over the past year we have expanded our use of VetSCOPE to cover all aspects of our business including supplier invoices, lodgments and bank reconciliation which we have found to make life much easier for us and our accountants.

Overall we have found VetSCOPE to be an excellent investment and the backup and support from Stephen to be first class.

Stuart Johnston. Parkview Veterinary Practice, Strabane

Welcome to this Winter issue of VetSCOPE News. We hope you find it interesting and thought provoking.

In this issue, veterinary practitioners, Stuart Johnston, Parkview Veterinary Practice, Strabane and Pdraig Duggan, Killenaule, give insight into their individual experiences of operating VetSCOPE.

George Cooper, who has addressed veterinary conferences on management issues, looks at some benefits of computerisation.

Ronnie Culliton and Brian Culliton of Foresthill Financial Planning encourage you to take a 'health check for your practice'.

We emphasise the importance of taking regular backups and we also look at how viruses effect Macs versus PCs.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our clients for their continued support. We hope you had a very happy Christmas and we wish you a happy, peaceful and prosperous New Year.

Stephen Lawler

PRINT ELECTRONIC PRESCRIPTIONS

In January 2006, a new version of VetSCOPE was launched. It is compatible with the new animal remedies legislation from the Department of Agriculture. VetSCOPE can print both prescriptions and bottle labels in one go. Simply select the POM required, enter the tag number and confirm the batch number and then print. All the information required by the legislation will automatically be included in the printed prescription together with a label for the bottle.

GO MOBILE

Remember that it is also possible to print prescriptions from within your vehicle on a mobile printer. Record fees and income at the same time. At the end of a week or month all the data on the VetSCOPE Mobile is synchronised with the main computer ready for producing client statements. The main drugs register is updated simultaneously. Any price changes or new clients along with the new client balances are sent to VetSCOPE Mobile for viewing on the move.

SOME BENEFITS OF COMPUTERISATION

Vets can be concerned with falling client numbers and the difficulties of maintaining revenue streams both in large animal practice and small animal clinics. Having been across to Ireland quite a few times in recent years to deliver talks on Management issues, I appreciate issues and concerns of veterinary surgeons in Ireland may be slightly different to those of your UK counterparts. However, common to all is that you are all really keen to develop your businesses.

This article concerns computerisation, and in particular one aspect of how you can very simply and easily use your computer to build your bonded client base by delivering great service, and thereby increase your revenues and profits. And if you are not yet computerised, then my encouragement to do so is heart-felt; you will re-coup your investment in only a few months because of better pricing, better debt control, and – here we go – the use of the reminder system.

Reminders are one of the best aspects of being computerised. This is because, at the time of the sale of a product or service, the system will, all on its own, store that information and can, in the pre-determined time, produce a reminder for you to send to a client. This can be for anything you like – but obviously it is better to do it for something that will benefit your business by benefiting your client and their

pet. This is a true Win-Win-Win situation. All you have to do is to decide to DO IT.

The example we will use here is the simple and basic act of sending out reminders for worming treatment. This is something that no pharmacist, or agricultural trader will do – and it is something that more and more vets are doing as they see the benefits. I started this in my practice in Hereford about 12 years ago. At the annual booster I'd say "we'd better get you some wormers, because we don't want Fido having worms, do we? In fact – if I give you a years' supply you'll be able to do him regularly!" And sure enough, the clients were delighted and I was delighted because I'd supplied four doses...

The next year I'd repeat the dialogue above, but was met with "Oh – I think I've still got some left from last year!" Hmmm.. that's good marketing, then, I thought! At that point I'd a brain-wave, and with my local Bayer rep we worked out a system to generate a reminder that we sent out every three months to the client. This is because the BSAVA approved protocol is to worm four times a year.

Every time we sold a Drontal tablet we asked the client "Now he's been wormed, he needs doing again in three months – would it help if we sent a reminder?", and of course the clients (well most of them) were delighted. We grew the business by 75% compound from £5k a year to about £35k a year in five years on just two products. And a spin off came that when clients came in for their tablets they bought other products as well.

Having proved the success of this system, Bayer launched the scheme nationally and there are

now over 2000 practices sending out wormer reminders.

How do you do it? Firstly you make a decision that this is good for you (because you want to build good business), good for the client (because they have busy lives and want healthy pets), and good for the pets (because they don't want worms). You then enter your computer's reminder system and set it up to generate a reminder in 90 days from the sale of the product. And finally, in three months (though you should do reminder runs very regularly so you don't overload things) you do a reminder run and produce your form letter, or address labels or whatever system you want to use.

Inevitably you will be asking what is the cost benefit of this. The answer is simple – add another few Euros to the price of the Drontal to cover the postage – and before you all howl in complaint just think what you are offering. YOU are the experts in animal health and welfare, and you're giving your clients a superb service and the advice to go with it that they cannot get anywhere else. And just remember – if you do 10% more as a result of this that's better than you have been doing! Be positive, and think of the add-on sales, too.



The effect of worms....

And show clients what can happen if they don't worm regularly.

George Cooper, MRCVS

New Mobile Feature

It is now possible to enter supplier invoices and payments using VetSCOPE Mobile. Invoices input on the Mobile can be uploaded to the main system the next time the two are synchronised.

VETSCOPE MOBILE - OUTSTANDING IN THE FIELD

Buying into the VetSCOPE Mobile concept wasn't actually a big decision in the practice. We have been using VetSCOPE professional since 2002, and as Stephen had promised, the more we put in, the more we got out of it.

Billing is easy. Farmers are satisfied with the detail on their monthly bills / statements.

Naturally the bottom line gives rise to the usual "discussions", but at least they can see what they're paying for.

Supplier invoices are entered as they arrive, and VAT reporting is just at the touch of a few buttons (or so I'm told!). Even the accountant is happy - in as much as an accountant can be happy! So toward the end of last year, when Stephen mentioned "Mobile", I was immediately interested. As a two person



predominantly large animal practice, with the minimum of support staff, being able to enter farm visit details into the system as I went along was immediately appealing. The fact that it also fully satisfied the then impending drugs regulations just made it more attractive.

That said, when it arrived, with a bright shiny new "iBook", I was still a small bit nervous. I'm not the most computer literate person in the world, and just to make it more complicated I had decided to switch from PC to Mac. But Stephen made it simple. Because the system is! I probably learnt how to use VetSCOPE Mobile in about twenty minutes. So after each call it's "Client...", Call Details..., Tag Number..., Drug Name... Qty..." and the system does the rest - VPA number, Batch Number, Withdrawals, etc. and then print. Everybody happy,

even the powers that be. At the end of the day or week all information is transferred to the main system using a USB key, so no duplication of information, and no answering questions at the end of the month about "What in God's name have you written here?". All in all, we're more than satisfied.

As for the Mac.....

The hard-drive on the office PC went up in flames recently. Stephen was on hand straight away to help us salvage everything, and we made the decision to switch everything over to Mac. It even takes up less space in the office. I'm still not sure what some of the buttons are for. But if I ever feel the need to know, I'll just ask Stephen. He's been more than helpful about everything else.

The whole VetSCOPE system has made life in practice a whole lot easier.

Padraig Duggan, Killenaule

**114,000 Viruses? Not on a Mac!**

By the end of 2005, there were 114,000 known viruses for PCs. In March 2006 alone, there were 850 new threats detected against Windows. Zero for Apple Mac. While no computer connected to the Internet will ever be 100% immune from attack, Mac OS X has helped the Mac keep its clean bill of health with a superior UNIX foundation and security features that go above and beyond the norm for PCs. When you get a Mac, only your enthusiasm is contagious.

Connecting a PC to the Internet using factory settings is like leaving your front door wide open with your valuables out on the coffee table. A Mac, on the other hand, shuts and locks the door, hides the key, and stores your valuables in a safe with a combination known only to you. You have to buy, configure, and maintain such basic protection on a PC.

On a Windows PC, software (both good and evil) can change the system without you even knowing about it. In order for software to significantly modify Mac OS X, you have to type in your password. You're the decider. You approve changes to your system.

People attempting to break into computers may disguise a malicious program as a picture, movie, or other seemingly harmless file. You might download such files from the Web, or get them via mail or chat. A PC just blindly downloads

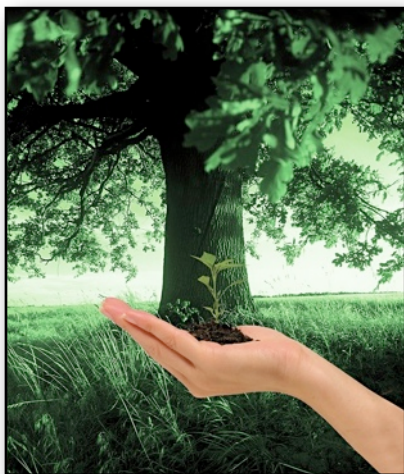
them without a peep. A Mac, however, will let you know that you may be getting a wolf in sheep's clothing. The Mac web browser, Safari, can tell the difference between a file and a program, and alerts you whenever you're downloading the latter.

A Mac gets much of this out-of-the-box protection from its open source UNIX heritage. The most critical components of Mac OS X are open for review by a worldwide community of security experts. Their input helps Apple continually make Mac OS X ever more secure. And it's simple to update a Mac with the latest advances. By default, a Mac checks for updates weekly. For pure peace of mind, you can set a Mac to download security updates automatically. Apple digitally signs the updates, so you can be sure they come from a trusted source.

What's more, the 100 most virulent attacks cause 99.9% of damage from malicious software. None of these attacks work on a Mac. Don't you deserve such protection?

Numbers from Sophos, a world leader in integrated threat management solutions, developing protection against viruses, spyware, spam and policy abuse for business, education and government. The Sophos Security Threat Management Report 2005 [links to white paper after form] outlines the number and kind of attacks, while the March 2006 Top Ten reports the latest number of threats. A Mac running with factory settings will protect you from viruses much better than a PC, but it's never a bad idea to run extra virus and security software. Article from Apple.com

CASH IN AN SSIA ... EVERY YEAR!



There is much in the news these days about SSIA's, with over 1.1m maturing between June of '06 and May of '07 and some paying out over €20,000 to the diligent saver. It may be possible for your veterinary practice to generate an additional SSIA every year by judiciously looking at the financial management of your practice.

Carrying out a 'Financial Health Check' on the practice will show the difference between fixed costs and variable costs and how best to manage these. The exercise can help improve profitability through increased turnover, reduced costs and better tax planning. As a result of subtle but focused adjustments in the

financial management of your practice, you may be able to do just that – release an SSIA from your business every year.

Unfortunately, due to the time constraints imposed by a busy practice, many vets do not have the luxury to take the time to review the way their business is managed from a financial perspective. Based on the results of a survey Lawler Developments carried out among veterinary practitioners, we believe that there is an appetite for assistance in this area.

Lawler Developments have discussed the particular needs of veterinary practice with Ronnie Culliton and Brian Culliton of Foresthill Financial Planning Limited ("FFP"), a financial planning company. "I'm confident many practices can benefit from carrying out this 'Financial Health Check' which will identify areas where the practice can gain from better financial management and cost efficiencies, through greater focus on the financial direction of the business." said Brian who has almost 20 years experience of wealth management and financial planning.

"Having looked at VetSCOPE we recognise that it is a powerful financial tool and that with some

financial guidance it can be used effectively to increase profitability for veterinary practices." says Ronnie Culliton who is a Chartered Accountant with over 17 years experience in the financial services industry. Most practices would benefit from taking an eagle eyed view of their business. It is often easier for an outsider with the appropriate financial experience to identify areas where you may improve business practice. FFP is regulated by the Financial Regulator as Authorised Advisor. If you would like to speak to Ronnie Culliton or Brian Culliton of FFP, they can be contacted as follows:

Tel: +353 1 4693716, Email: info@foresthill.ie,

To learn more about Foresthill Financial Planning visit their website www.foresthill.ie

*Ronnie Culliton and Brian Culliton,
Foresthill Financial Planning*



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CONTACTING VETSCOPE

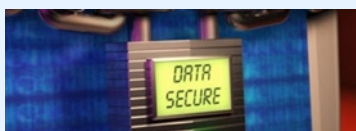
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BACKUP NOW - NO REGRETS LATER!

Consider how much you use VetSCOPE and the time spent inputting valuable data each day. Now imagine that all this work was lost. Then multiply that by the number of days since you last did a backup and yes its now time to PANIC!

Thankfully computers are more reliable nowadays than in times past. However sometimes the problem is not the fault of the computer. What if the computer is stolen, damaged or burnt! Would you have an adequate backup. What if the backup disk itself failed? All of these issues are critical to any business staying in operation after some disaster. Would your business be able to cope having lost two or three years worth of data?



We are examining the possibility of using an online automatic backup facility. If you have broadband and are interested in this facility. Please tick the appropriate section on the reply sheet and fax it back to us.