

THE SCOOP

THE OFFICIAL VIRTUAL NEWSLETTER

September 2021

Vol. 4

Message from the CEO

by Debra Leeves, CEO

As I reflect on the past 12 months, I'm enormously proud of the achievements and advancements we have made throughout the year, which will enable even more students and healthcare professionals across the world to use innovative VERT solutions for their training and education. VERT systems are now being used in 36 countries and 157 teaching institutions, training thousands of future radiation therapists and medical physicists every year.

We welcomed five new distributors based in Peru, Thailand, South Korea, Pakistan, and Russia, and a new reference site program was set up in the summer months with six universities and hospitals in Oregon (USA), QUT (Australia), InHolland (Europe), London City (UK), University West of England (UK) and the University of Cape town (South Africa), all stepping forward and agreeing to test our pre-release products to help shape these new products for the future.

You told us that Virtual had revolutionised the way radiation therapy is taught, and with more of our VERT users having to find new and different ways to teach students during the Covid restrictions we accelerated our research and development programs to develop a new product 'VERT on Demand' which will enable remote learning away from the classroom in 2022.

Compact VERT proved to be a success with our users. This mobile, self-contained, and flexible VERT system was the perfect alternative to an installed system for those with less space, smaller teaching groups and those without a dedicated space within their organisations to teach radiation therapy.

We're currently doing the final testing stages for VERT 5 software before release, and I think you are going to love all the new features we have introduced.

On a rather sad note, we won't be able to meet you face to face again this year at ASTRO, Chicago. Covid travel and quarantine restrictions have meant we had to take the difficult decision this month to pull out of the event, but we will plan a series of virtual user events in the coming months, and I hope you will still be able to join us.

CONTENT

A Message from the CEO 1

VERT 5 Update 2

Memories of a Founder by Andy Beavis 3

VERT Connect – the online forum 4



VERT 5 Update

by Jan Antons, Business Development Manager

VERT 5 will soon be released to all customers with a valid support contract, and we wanted to update you on the progress and what's included in the release.

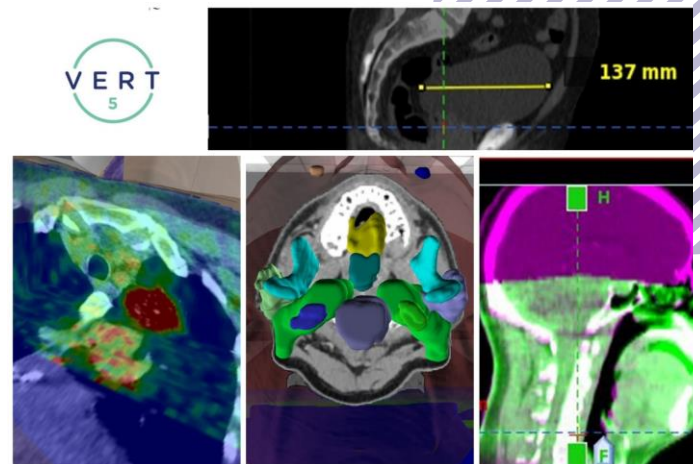
Our software developers have worked hard on VERT 5, and the internal software release to the commercial team took place a couple of weeks ago. The next step is testing by the commercial team and our reference sites before the official software release.

We hope you will be delighted with the software. There are many new features, including:

- DVH recalculation with set up error.
- Plan comparison.
- The first phase of Orfit immobilisation equipment.
- Additional electron applicator sizes.
- Play all beam, beam information, and set up beam identification options.
- Additional language support.
- Command-line option to create plan shortcuts on the desktop and more.

Imaging improvements include manual registration for plans without spatial registration, zoom feature, measure tool, pause acquisition and MR/CT and CT/PET overlay within the matching interface.

Proton VERT now includes further development of the IBA Proteus One machine. Nominal beam energy display, improved spot delivery and range shifter support for both machines are implemented. ProBeam preset options from the hand pendant are available.



Further DICOM data will be available to customers, helping you make the best use of new software features. The data will come with details of each plan, including the plan type, energy, dose, fractionation, and plan objectives.

VERT 5 includes a release of teaching materials, two workbooks with virtual presenters already prepared. They are a Lung IGRT case study and patient positioning and vertebral levels.

We encourage you to share your feedback regarding VERT 5. Newsletter articles regarding your use of VERT and your experience are welcome too! Finally, if you have any suggestions on how the software can be enhanced, please get in touch.

The Varian Halcyon machine and Proton VERT are purchasable upgrades.



Memories of a Founder – Prof. Roger Philips

by Andy Beavis

Over the last 15 years it has been wonderful to see VERT continue to develop from the tool that emerged from a collective research interest of the three Inventors/Founders. Personally, having understood the value of simulation training from military/pilot training, I expected it to be useful, but have often sat and ‘pinched myself’ thinking about the extent of its success.

These are exciting times and at Vertual we are enjoying creating new developments for VERT, building new platforms for the post-COVID world, facilitating remote training whilst trying to ensure we don’t reduce opportunities for students to ‘spark off each other’.

However, this year marked a sad anniversary, particularly so for James Ward and myself. Ten years ago, we lost our co-conspirator and co-inventor of VERT when Roger passed away. Simply put, VERT would not have developed without the input from each of the three of us, with each of us bringing different knowledge and skills to the collaboration.

Roger was one of the UKs original Computer Scientists and had developed some commercial experience when working with companies in the ‘early days’ of PCs writing operating systems. So, in our collaboration he took the managerial role. He expertly bridged my excitable, ‘let’s get it done today’ manic enthusiasm with James’ considered, well organised, conservative, and detailed approach.

Roger was a character and had opinions on everything. In the early days of us promoting and hawking the concept of VERT around, he and I would make frequent train journeys to the SCoR or DoH in London and those journeys always seemed to fly past, having solved another half dozen problems. When we were asked “could you do this/ that or the other”, we’d say yes, of course, then walk away and figure it out, but we always did. As a fellow PhD examiner, he also terrified me with his view that train journeys to PhD vivas (an oral exam) were useful as it meant you could read the whole thesis!

He was always late – for everything! For the important meetings, to get him there on time, we would tell him that it started 30 minutes earlier. At one of the early ASTRO conferences, we exhibited at, James and I met up at the hotel to have a Founders business dinner, not at all surprised Roger was late. A couple of hours later we were getting concerned when he breezed in.



Photo of (l-r) James Ward, Andy Beavis & Roger Philips

He explained that he had been held up in airport security; he had registered as being radioactive having earlier in the week undergone a PET scan. I asked him if the hospital had given him some documentation for such a purpose, he gave us the ‘Roger grin’ and, completely unphased by the whole experience, said “yeah – but I left it at home”.

At his funeral his outgoing music was Queen’s ‘Don’t stop me now, I’m having such a good time.....’, to this day that song still sums him up for me as I remember him with love and fondness. James and I feel blessed to have worked with him and have had him as our friend, research colleague and business partner. I think about him constantly and whenever we have some success with VERT or hit another milestone, I ask him if he is a pleased with what we have achieved; I believe he is.

VERT Connect – the online forum for VERT

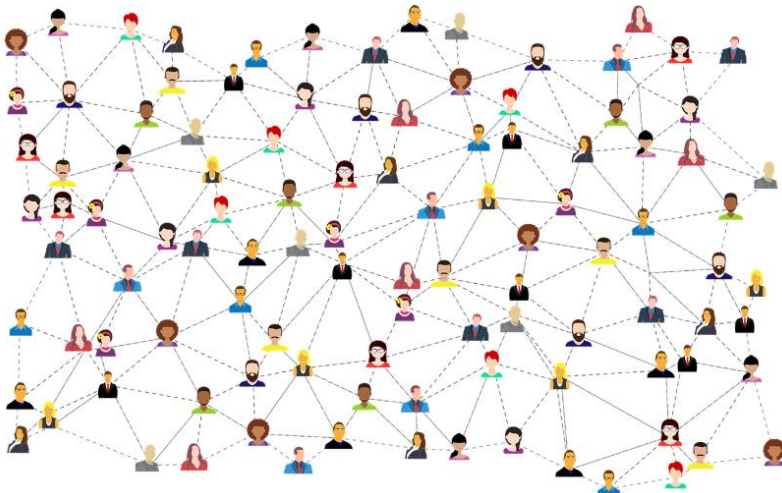
By Christopher Quinn Territory Manager and Product Specialist

VERT is a unique software that allows our users to practice, learn and teach in a safe space. But how do you know if you are using VERT correctly or to its fullest? This is the question we wanted to answer when we set up VERT Connect; an online platform for VERT users around the world to come together and share ideas

The idea behind VERT Connect is simple.... to give our users a platform to ask questions of other VERT users, be it clinical or academic; to suggest new ways of teaching and instructing students or developing alternative approaches that can broaden the use of their own VERT systems. Perhaps you have a particular module that you use VERT heavily to help you teach a section of anatomy, or you use VERT regularly for patient centered education.

Just as the use of Radiotherapy around the world is at differing levels of advancement, so too is the use of VERT. By promoting discussion and the sharing of ideas, Vertual hopes to be a contributor in this advancement and help everyone have a better understanding of Radiotherapy globally. Furthermore, we would like to see the formation of partnerships and research collaborations between our users, to help bridge the gap in skills.

The interface is simple to use and is broken down into 'channels' to help keep discussions focused. As well as a general chat area, we also have sections specific to other topics such as Dosimetry & Physics, Anatomy, Assessments and Tips & Tricks to name but a few. In these channels users can ask questions or post messages, share stories or suggestions on how they use VERT.



VERT Connect

If you haven't already signed up, please contact your Product Specialist, or simply pop an email to Info@vertual.co.uk and we will be happy to send you over our easy to complete form. It is completely free of charge, so what are you waiting for, get online and start chatting to users around the world today.

We look forward to seeing you online!

VERTUAL

LET'S GET CONNECTED

JOIN DISCUSSIONS WITH VERT CUSTOMERS AROUND THE GLOBE

VERT Connect

AVAILABLE NOW

EMAIL INFO@VERTUAL.CO.UK