

# THE SCOOP

THE OFFICIAL VERTUAL NEWSLETTER

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## Message from the CEO

by Debra Leeves, CEO

Summer has arrived and with it comes thousands of university students around the world preparing for and sitting their end of year exams. We are hearing excellent feedback from VERT users telling us how their students are using VERT products to consolidate learning and prepare for their exams in a pressure free learning environment.

VERT on Demand is the future of blended learning and ideal for teaching, consolidating knowledge and studying. The easy-to-use portal offers 24/7 dedicated access to the VERT on Demand platform, so an extremely useful learning tool for students who want to study anytime anywhere. The product enables cloud-based access to our latest VERT software from an online portal and the number of seats and hours is customisable for any institution and a range of budgets. One of the most useful features is that it provides access to online workbooks that follow mainstream radiotherapy curricula and are ready to use.

It's been a long time since my university days, and when I look back at the changes in education over the years there have been some amazing innovations, not least of which is the use of VR simulation to help educate and train the next generation of healthcare professionals. We're proud that Vertual is up there as an innovative and leading supplier of VR education and training.

I hope you have a wonderful summer, the next step for us is planning for ASTRO 2024.

# New Staff member

by Tom Netherwood

I started with Vertual in April 2024, just in time to join the team at a very successful ESTRO. I have worked within Radiotherapy since 2011, having worked in roles ranging from Trainee assistant practitioner to Advanced practitioner and Clinical Lecturer most recently.

I have been incredibly fortunate through my career to learn at multiple institutions and trained using several VERT Seminar suites, I have always appreciated the comprehensive scope of all VERT has to offer and am very grateful for the confidence and deepening knowledge of clinical practice it helped to provide for me.

I cannot wait to share my adoration and excitement of Vertual's products with you all and will look forward to succeeding the truly wonderful Tammy in managing customers across the European and UK regions, I aspire to continue Tammy's supportive and professional approach and am hugely excited to work with you all going forward.



# ESTRO 2024

By Tamsyn Vivian

In May, Vertual exhibited at this year's ESTRO congress held in Glasgow, Scotland. It was lovely being on home soil for the event and it was very successful to say the least.

We had the opportunity to bring a lot of our Hull based team to the show which allowed them to see first-hand the extensive amount of work and planning that goes into these events.

At the show we promoted our newest product VERT On Demand which features 40+ premade student workbooks, instant online access to the VERT software and all additional modules (including SGRT) included at no extra cost.

Thank you to all that visited us on the Vertual booth and if you didn't get the chance to come to us for a demo, please reach out to [sales@vertual.co.uk](mailto:sales@vertual.co.uk) to schedule.

# ICON Congress

by Tamsyn Vivian

Vertual were proud to exhibit at this year's ICON congress in Johannesburg, South Africa.

This was the first time as a company we have exhibited in South Africa and it was great to show the power simulation has on not only student education but patient education too.

During our visit to SA, myself and Andy Beavis went to visit two of our longstanding customers CPUT (Cape Peninsula University of Technology) and Groote Schuur. Here we met with the teams and discussed how VERT helps them bring the LINAC into the classroom for a full and rounded teaching experience. The teams are looking to implement VERT On Demand into their teaching in the future to teach online programs.



# VERT in Cardiff

by Kerry Owen, Cardiff University

At Cardiff university we utilise Vert in various modules and activities. Both students and staff value the element of applying theory to clinical practice. To name a few examples it is used for machine familiarisation prior to the students first placement, consolidation of learning, teaching radiotherapy technique and reviewing CT images. It can be a challenge to ensure adequate time in Vert for all students to understand some of the concepts and to meet the learning needs of students who require more time to process complex information.

We were delighted to see VERT release a version that students can access remotely. We are continuously striving to meet the diverse learning styles of students and felt this would provide an extra platform for supporting students.

The idea behind us implementing Vert on demand was to empower students to take control of their learning journey. This encompasses various aspects such as additional time to review content, complex techniques, or revisit previously taught materials at their own pace. We also wanted to encourage students to establish connections between their academic studies and clinical experiences.

Vert on demand went live for us in February of this year. To date we have trialled the use of Vert on demand with first year students.

We introduced the software during a module where the learning outcomes relate to understanding of treatment of cancers within the skin and thorax. Prior to this module the first-year students have only had a short orientation in clinical. With limited clinical experience they need to understand clinical techniques such as breath hold and SABR. Whilst the main Vert system is used students had the flexibility to visit Vert on demand following the session to revisit areas that were unclear or if they were unable to attend the session. They were also able to access during their revision for the exam.

Vert on demand has been used within this module as a self-study tool utilising workbooks to support the theory that is taught within lectures. Lecturers have been able to edit the workbooks to fit the subjects taught at the appropriate level. We've integrated techniques and protocols from radiotherapy departments across Wales into the workbooks, establishing an academic and clinical connection. This enables us to tailor the workbooks specifically for our university.

Students found that it helped consolidate their knowledge of taught sessions and provided valuable feedback for future uses and improvements. While we are still navigating this new addition, we value the support it offers students and recognise its potential.

Future plans include using Vert on Demand to support the revision of students who are resitting or had to delay their exams for the summer. For the next academic year based on feedback we plan to incorporate more self-study earlier in the first year and also within the second year as well as more clinical related content for students to access whilst out on clinical placement.

CARDIFF  
UNIVERSITY

PRIFYSGOL  
CAERDYDD

# Hardware support

by Jan Antons & Sean Thompson

Customers who have VERT system hardware, including Compact VERT, Seminar, or Immersive VERT systems will have recently received communication from Vertual regarding their system hardware. Sean Thompson and Jan Antons are leading this hardware project, which has been in progress for nine months.

The project aims to evaluate the state and age of all VERT system hardware. Its objective is to update customers on available options as their hardware ages, the support available, and the advantages of the hardware support program.

A key message of the project is to inform customers that the expected serviceable life of VERT systems is 5 years. As time passes from installation, sourcing components for system repair becomes challenging, with hardware manufacturers discontinuing products every few years.

While telephone and email support will continue, along with best-effort hardware support, a full hardware refresh is recommended at the 5-year mark.

Your available options depend on your system's age. Customers with systems under 5 years old can opt for the hardware support plan, offering extended warranty coverage, as well as covering costs like reinstallation and calibration after repairs. In certain cases, we can provide hot swap equipment to expedite repairs or lend a Compact VERT system while yours is being fixed, ensuring minimal downtime and peace of mind. Additionally, you gain access to qualified engineers for issue diagnosis and onsite part ordering, streamlining the repair process.



Being part of the Hardware support program may also entitle you to discounts on other Vertual products; simply consult your account manager for more details.

For systems beyond the 5-year serviceable life, we recommend upgrading to the latest technology.

If you wish to discuss the recent communication about your system hardware and explore your options, please reach out to [sales@vertual.co.uk](mailto:sales@vertual.co.uk).



## VERT Hardware Support Package

### What are the options?

#### Full Hardware support

-  Prioritised, fast and efficient email and telephone support.
-  Complete peace of mind for your system to reduce any downtime.
-  Comprehensive advice and prioritised support, we are with you every step of the way.

#### Benefits

- Covers full costs of hardware replacement, hot swap, shipping, or onsite repair and labour
- Available for systems up to 5 years old.
- Telephone and email triage for hardware issues.
- Loan of a Compact VERT system to reduce downtime (when available).
- Discount available for a future hardware refresh.

#### Basic Hardware support

- Basic hardware support is offered for purchase to customers with systems over the 5 year recommended life.
- Any hardware issues that cannot be fixed by Vertual's team remotely will incur additional charges for parts and labour.
- Basic hardware support includes remote diagnostics and telephone and email support.

#### Hardware support life

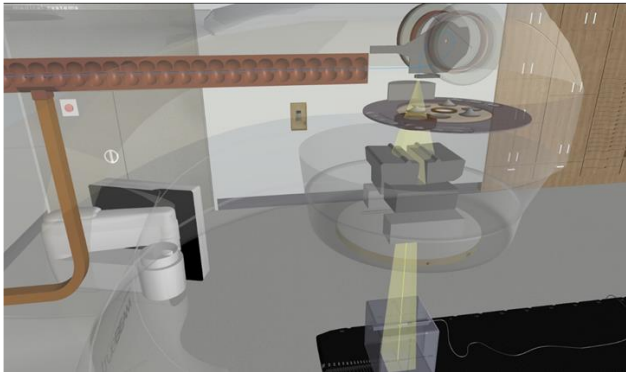
-  Vertual cannot offer support for hardware not purchased or approved by us, or installed by an unapproved supplier.
-  Vertual recommends a hardware refresh after 5 years. After 5 years support will be on a best efforts basis.

### Contact Us

 [sales@vertual.co.uk](mailto:sales@vertual.co.uk)
 [www.vertual.co.uk](http://www.vertual.co.uk)

# VERT 8 Update

by Jan Antons



VERT 7.1 is now released and customers in support will receive an email inviting them to download the software. The release includes Sample Plans 6 providing more example patient data.

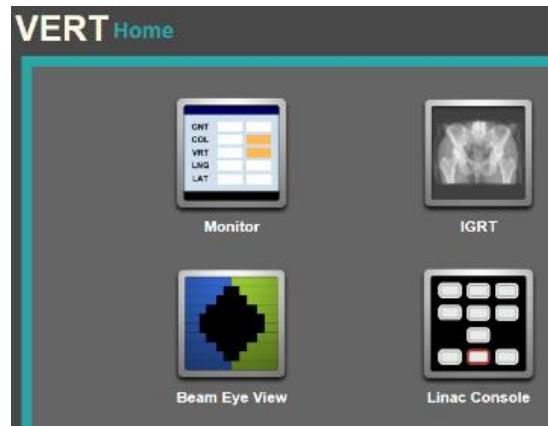
Work is progressing well on the VERT 8 software. We announced in the last newsletter that Linac anatomy was under development. The TrueBeam Linac now has all components modelled, and a stream of electrons can be visualised moving along the waveguide.

The Elekta anatomy modelling is under development as shown below.



This long-awaited feature will be released with the VERT 8 software in the Autumn.

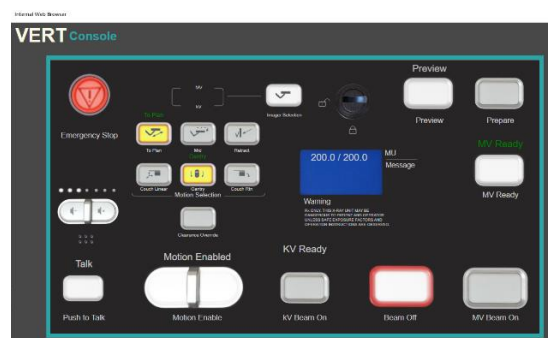
The Linac console was requested by many customers in the recent VERT 8 and beyond survey. Implementation of the TrueBeam console has commenced, the virtual console is accessed from the internal web browser. Here is a sneak peek of the first part of this implementation (a work in progress).



Part of the implementation of the console includes the ability to deploy the imaging arms from the console. This feature will also be implemented with the virtual pendant to simulate the clinical workflow.

We have plans for more exciting new features as part of the VERT 8 software and we look forward to sharing those in the next newsletter.

We are still accepting feedback. If you wish to share your ideas for the future development of VERT, or if you have any questions, please get in touch please email [support@vertual.co.uk](mailto:support@vertual.co.uk)



# Founders Corner

by Andy Beavis



In previous articles I have mentioned that one of the most rewarding aspects of our having created VERT is interacting with the community that has evolved around it. My VERT related travel in the last couple of months has continued to remind me of this and more to the point the importance of networking.

In May we attended ESTRO in Glasgow, close to home for us. In the days prior to the conference my family hosted Prof Dan Low the Chief of Research at UCLA. We enjoyed a day of downtime and took a trip up to Whitby in North Yorkshire with my wife, daughter and granddaughter, climbing the steps to the Abbey, looked for Lucy's grave (for the Dracula fans) and had a wonderful day. Of course, Dan presented his extraordinary work on 5D (yes five-dimensional) breathing motion management to a packed room in our hospital. The following day we took the train up to Glasgow, with James, rapping the whole journey about research opportunities and having tremendous fun. James and I also took the chance to review some of the new software for the VERT8 release... watch this space.

Dan and I have been friends for nearly 30 years, since I first visited the USA for the first ever time to present work I had been involved with developing the Dynamic Wedge implementation in the UK with Varian and working with the Multidata planning system. Through Dan I got to know so many key players in the radiotherapy physics world in America and Europe in those early days of Conformal Therapy and IMRT development.

Therapy and IMRT development. This year at ESTRO, when I could remember, I snapped selfies on my cell phone with people when I stopped to chat with them, I need to sort them out properly – but a quick count shows I had 'captured' 51 good friends from many different countries. I wish I had remembered to get pictures of all those I bumped into at the conference, but often times we were just so busy and I lost the opportunity. I truly believe I could trace most of these international connections back and end up at Dan! For this, I remain grateful forever!

Back to the VERT community, a conversation last week made me realise that it is now 15 years since the end of the first year our software was adopted in the UK and used by all the ten Universities that train Therapy Radiographers in England. A simple reckoning would suggest that around 3000 students in England, assuming circa 200 students per intake per year, have benefited from the use of VERT. Given that there are around 160 systems worldwide, it would be interesting to try to estimate the total number of students who have (I hope) enjoyed using VERT in their studies. I am going to pitch at least 10,000 with error bars – and like many manuscripts you might read, I will elect to not state what my uncertainties are – smiley-face.

Without wishing to risk this seemingly turning into an ego-trip, it is clear to me that the success of VERT has been in part due to my being able to promote the concept of our invention from the platform of being a recognised Medical Physicist. It would be remiss not to acknowledge James' wizardry and ability to create such a fantastic development team being another contributory factor; our Product Specialist team being another, the recent group having all being VERT-trained graduates!

It is likely obvious that I consider networking and developing collaborative working to be such an important facet of what we do. The VERT family is something I am so proud of and feel blessed to be involved with. The 'Community of Practice' seems to really be taking a life of its own. The opportunities that VERT on Demand offers will continue to grow this. I hope in the future to be writing about some very exciting developments, too early to hint at – but this summer is going to be a busy time for me.

