

A crowning feat for dental work

Your dentist could soon be using computer-aided manufacturing to care for those precious teeth. Instead of the usual crowning process, for example, he would make a digital "map" of your teeth, then use it to turn out a replacement tooth on the spot with a precision-milling machine.

French dentist Francois Duret recently unveiled his brainchild to a group of dentists in Grenoble, using his wife as patient to demonstrate how a crown could be produced in just an hour. Duret, who has devoted

14 years to the concept, poked a so-called optical probe into her mouth. The cigar-sized probe was connected to a minicomputer which gave a three-dimensional image of a row of teeth on the screen, including the lower-right premolar that needed crowning. The computer designed a crown and guided the grinder in making it.

Duret has joined Hemmson International, a new company in Vienne, France, which hopes to start marketing commercial systems at \$18,000. The firm is seeking partners in

Japan and the United States for a projected 1987 sales launch in those nations.



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