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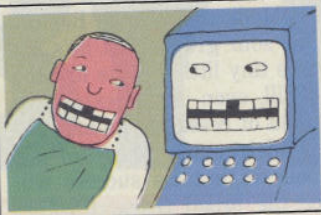
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Developments to Watch

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A CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT: COMPUTERIZED DENTISTRY



Computer-aided manufacturing may soon come to the dentist's office—and getting a tooth crowned will never be the same. Gone will be that lockjaw feeling while a mold is made of your mouth, gone the need to return once or twice to

have the crown fitted. Instead, the dentist will make a digital "map" of your teeth, then use that map to turn out a replacement tooth on the spot with a precision-milling machine.

The system is the brainchild of François Duret, a 38-year-old dentist from Grenoble, France. Using his wife Elisabeth as a guinea pig, he recently demonstrated it for a gathering of dentists. Duret first poked a so-called optical probe into Mme. Duret's mouth. The probe, not much bigger than a cigar, was hooked up to a Digital Equipment Corp. minicomputer. A three-dimensional image of a row of teeth appeared on the screen, including the lower-right premolar that needed crowning. Then the computer designed a crown and guided the grinder in making it. The whole process took about an hour.

Duret, who has spent 14 years working on the concept, has joined with Hennson International, a startup in Vienne (near Lyon), to market commercial systems expected to start at \$18,000. Hennson is looking for partners in Japan and the U. S., where it hopes to hit the market by early 1987.

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