

May 2020

‘The future of the contact lens industry rests in your hands’

Contact lens educators will play an essential part in the future of the contact lens industry and must adapt their teaching to the post-COVID world. That was the clear message from the first of our global live lectures on hot topics in contact lenses, as Alison Ewbank reports



‘Your role as educators is the most important job in the contact lens industry. Because the future of the contact lens industry really rests in your hands,’ said coach and consultant **Ian Davies**, delivering the first in our new series of weekly online lectures.

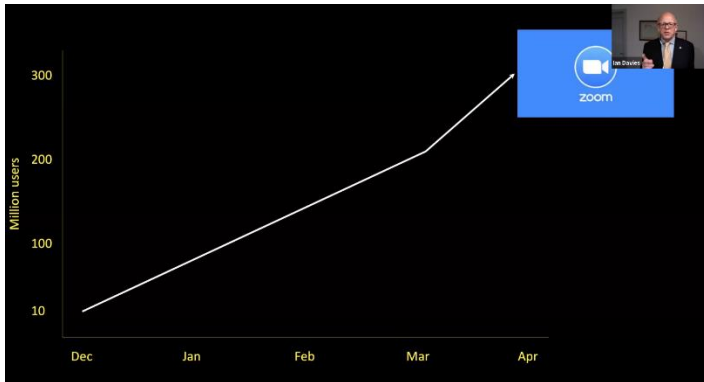
Seventy IACLE members from countries around the world watched Ian’s presentation, on **‘The art of the virtual lecture’**, and took part in a live Q&A session (5 May). He offered a wealth of practical advice on setting up the lecture – from dress code and background, to camera and interface – how to incorporate feedback and chat, and planning for a virtual future.

View the recorded lecture on our website via Member Login under Video Resources

But Ian also had this message for the contact lens industry and profession feeling the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic: ‘It doesn’t matter how many great products you’ve got, it doesn’t matter how many great consumers want them, it doesn’t matter how much you market them, if we don’t have a mass of enthusiastic, competent eye care practitioners who want to fit contact lenses, none of that is to any avail whatsoever.’

‘The role of the educator is probably more important now than it’s ever been at any stage in the contact lens history because of all the changes that are going on,’ he said.

By 2017, as many as 3 billion people around the world were already using social media but that figure had now increased, said Ian. Some 3.3 billion people worldwide were in lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic and that had profound implications for educators, for the industry and for the population who needed vision care.

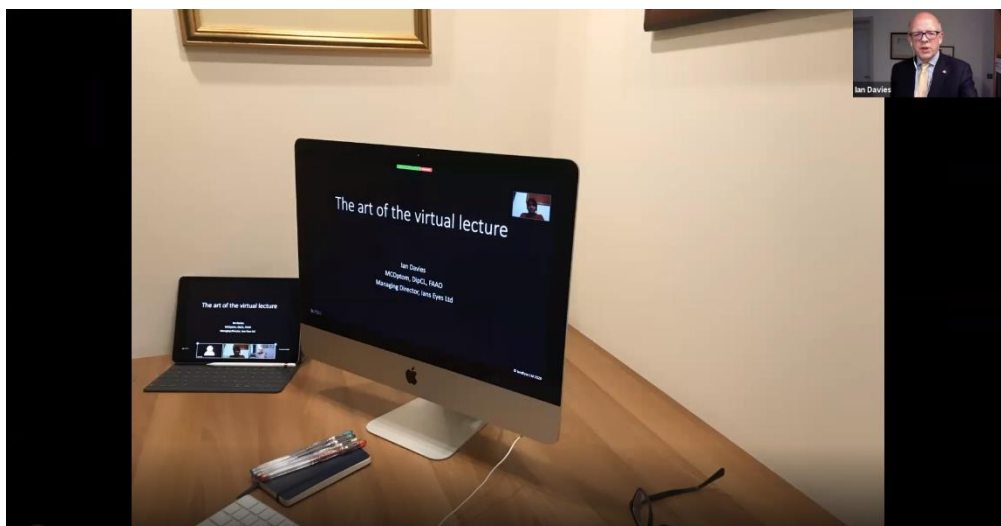


The number of Zoom users worldwide had increased from 10 million to more than 300 million in 4 months (left). 'That is a fundamental change in the way that people are communicating, it's a fundamental change in the way that people are being educated. Therefore it's a fundamental change in the way that we need to educate practitioners to get the contact lens industry moving in the future.'

When we returned to sitting in lecture theatres again the world would have changed. People had got used to digesting information in a remote environment. People were expecting to learn in a more interactive manner. 'One message I'd like you to think about is planning for a virtual future. The ramifications of lecturing online are vast. It behoves you as educators to think about what are the protocols for online lectures,' said Ian.

'The ability to engage people in watching them is only going to be the same as any other presentation. It's the ability to give something that people sit back and say... I wasn't expecting that. That was better than anything I've ever seen before.'

'IACLE could take an amazing lead here, in looking at what the future of contact lens education will be in a post-COVID world. Now is the time to grasp that opportunity.'



- The May series of Tuesday lectures on hot topics in contact lenses continues with two presentations on the latest findings on dry eye from IACLE Treasurer **Professor ETTY BITTON** (12 May) and FIAACLE **Professor James Wolffsohn** (19 May). The current series will finish on **Tuesday 26 May** with 'Contact Lens practice in the COVID-19 Scenario' by IACLE President **Dr Shehzad Naroo** and Vice President **Professor Philip Morgan**.