

GET TO KNOW THE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ECOO

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What is your professional background, and what is your role at ECOO?

I graduated as an optometrist in 1995 and started working in an interdisciplinary clinic with optometry, ophthalmology and orthoptics merged. During my clinical years I spent a lot of time on my own professional development, doing lots of different courses and education. I finished my PCO-master's in clinical optometry in 2003.

In early 2000 I engaged in the organisations within optometry at the national level. I held several different positions before becoming president in 2007 of the Norwegian Association of Optometry. In 2011 I stopped working as a clinician and president and started working full time at the office in Oslo. That's where I am now.

Where, when and why did you develop an interest in technology and its potential role in eye health?

I'm fond of technology – especially mechanics. Understanding how things work makes me happy. New technology has always been a driver



in our profession – this will carry on. The big change now is how we use all the data we have on our patients – and how this data is shared and used. My interest today is mostly made of two main reasons: that development should be in the patients' interest; and that there must be responsible health care personnel in charge – not machines or untrained personnel.

Do you see the growing use of technology and e-health as a threat or an opportunity?

Development is always an opportunity if knowledge and understanding of the change is good. In today's society, new changes are not always transparent. Gathering lots of data about people must be done in a good way, if not, it will be reckoned as a threat. Working in eye care is about trust. Losing trust must not happen!

What is your role at ECOO and why did you volunteer for it?

Panu Tast (Finland) first made me aware of the big coming changes in Europe regarding health data. First I was involved in a small working group looking at these issues. That made me realise there is a lot of stuff happening in large processes in Europe, which we need to know about, understand and influence if possible. For the last few years I have been co-opted onto ECOO's Public Affairs and Economics Committee to lead ECOO's work on e-health and technology. Now we need to find out if there is interest in establishing a new working group.

What has taken you by surprise in your work with ECOO?

Technology companies are big drivers and technology develops fast

nowadays. Politicians and the EU-system looks for solutions on future challenges and writes the maps just now. Patients and professionals are just tiny pieces in this picture. It has been a joy to see that ECOO has been able to make an impact in EU-processes – talking about patient interest.

What advice would you offer to eye care practitioners who are looking to make greater use of technology?

Use new technology if you know it's secure and reliable – and that you are able to be responsible for what you are doing. If you are not able to take full responsibility – don't use it!

What do you want to see happen in the coming years with this project at ECOO?

Today there can be many obstacles that make it hard for opticians and optometrists to work closely with other health professions. I hope future development in the technology sector will change this and strengthen the position of vision and eye care within healthcare.

Bonus question:

When you manage to escape from ECOO or your day job, how do you like to spend your time?

Like many Norwegians I spend much of my time outdoors, often walking our dogs. I also spend a lot of time on old motorcycles. My latest project was repairing a Norwegian built motorcycle named Atlanta from 1927 for The National Road Museum. A long lasting and interesting job to do – both technically and historically.