



Communications: Social Media & Church Communications – Make It all Work

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Objective

This class will cover various subtopics relative to integrating social networking tools with your church information management system, including options, keys, and best practices.

What You Will Learn in This Session

In this class the following subtopics will be presented:

- Guidelines for the staff and using Social Media
- The history of social networking in the church
- The New Trinity
- Survey of trends in using social media in ministry
- The statistical facts of social media as they relate to churches
- Is Technology a Sin?
- The questions to ask and the marriage of the two
- The dilemma of the church
- The dilemma of the church information system provider
- Options for the church's use of social media, including integrated solutions
- Five Functionality Keys for church social networking
- Cautions for using church social networking
- 10 Concluding points about merging Social Media and ChMS

Early Online ChSN Development

- Churches have been doing SN for years
- Current SN tools are an evolution of what the church has been doing for decades
- Early adopters
- Student ministry
- Singles ministry
- Small group (SS) websites / webpages
- Prayer ministries
- Campaigns

The New Trinity

1. Facebook
2. Twitter
3. YouTube

Social Network / Community

- “A social network is centered around the individual...my friends, my media, my blog, my connections, my thoughts, my experiences, my pictures, etc...whereas a Community Network is centered around the Community, groupings of people, real relationships forge the bonds, not imaginary ties that have aspirations to reality.....”
Zack Hubert, pastor of technology, Mars Hill Church, Seattle, WA (The City). Former director of The City project, Zondervan/Harper Collins

Why is that important?

- Facebook was conceived as a way to connect people
- Facebook has evolved to also connect groups of people
- “The City” was developed to first connect groups and provide group management
- “The City” has evolved into a membership database management solution
- Other solutions have emerged (...)
- Facebook is still more peer-to-peer oriented

A closer look

- Lifeway Survey – 1/21/2011, 1003 Churches
- 47% of churches actively use Facebook
- 2nd most popular tool was ChSN through ChMS
- 3% use MySpace
- 1% use Cobblestone, Unifyer, The City, etc
- 40% use no ChSN at all

Reasons churches are using ChSN

- To speed their own communication with their small groups (i.e., SS Classes)
- Large groups (i.e., Students & Singles)
- Membership
- Visitors
- Community at-large
- 27% with 1-49 AWA use Facebook
- 43% with 50-99 AWA
- 46% with 100-199 AWA
- 56% with 200-499 AWA
- 81% with 500 or more AWA
- Large / suburban churches use ChSN more than small
- 57% suburban churches use FB
- 46% small city churches use FB
- 39% rural churches use FB
- Those churches who use ChSN
- 73% say they use for interacting with congregation
- 70% for distributing news and information
- 52% for fostering member-to-member interaction
- 41% for managing the small group functions
- 62% use ChSN tools to interact with individuals outside the congregation (the community)
- 46% of the pastors are personally using social media to interact with congregations
- 46% personally use Facebook
- 16% Blog
- 6% Twitter
- 84% utilize email to groups in the church

Questions being raised:

- Should a Christian use Facebook? Survey of the group
- Should a church use Facebook?

Facebook facts:

- Can and does become an obsessive phenomena
- 500 million FB accounts as of July 2010, up from 350 million on 1/1/10
- 3rd largest country in the world
- 700 billion minutes per month are spent on the FB servers by FB users
- 50% of all FB users log in daily
- 5.3 billion fans created each day for page content
- Average FB user:
 - has 130 registered “friends
 - Spends over 700 minutes per month on FB
 - Creates 90 pieces of content each month
 - Is connected to 80 community pages, groups, and events
- Contains over 900 million objects that people interact with (pages, groups, events, community pages)
- More than 30 billion pieces of content shared each month (web links, news stories, posts, notes, photos, ...)
- 55 million updates made each day
- 35 million states updates made each day
- Over 70 language translations
- 70% users outside the United States
- Top 10-11 Countries on Facebook, Users and population / FB users ratio
 1. United States, 111,212,840 users / 2.78
 2. United Kingdom, 23,449,100 / 2.47
 3. Indonesia, 19,528,560 / 12.2
 4. Turkey, 18,679,460 / 4.16
 5. France, 15,928,000 / 4.33
 6. Italy, 14,931,580 / 4.02
 7. Canada, 13,424,180 / 2.61
 8. Philippines, 10,647,100 / 9.31
 9. Spain, 8,861,140 / 5.34
 10. Mexico, 8,236,020 / 13.5
 11. Japan, 1,202,000 / 105

Twitter

- Took 3 years, 2 months, 1 day to reach 1 billion tweets
- 1 billion tweets posted per week
- 177 million tweets sent on March 11, 2011
- 456 tweets per second when Michael Jackson died on 6/25/09
- 572,000 new accounts created on 3/12/11
- 460,000 average new accounts per day during 2/2011

YouTube

- 60 hours of video are uploaded every minute, or one hour of video is uploaded to YouTube every second.
- Over 4 billion videos are viewed a day
- Over 800 million unique users visit YouTube each month
- Over 3 billion hours of video are watched each month on YouTube
- More video is uploaded to YouTube in one month than the 3 major US networks created in 60 years
- 70% of YouTube traffic comes from outside the US
- YouTube is localized in 39 countries and across 54 languages
- In 2011, YouTube had more than 1 trillion views or almost 140 views for every person on Earth

Is technology a sin?

- Technology is one of the greatest tools for spreading the gospel
- However, it can be obsessive (FB / YT / TW)
- Too much is harmful
- Very little is preached about the harmful habits of personal overuse. What are the parameters?
- ^{1 Cor. 6: 12} “I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but I will not be mastered by anything.

So, what are the questions to ask?

- Are you tweeting / FB posting about your life rather than living your life?
- Is there a real problem of moderation?
- Is too much harmful?
- What are the parameters?
- Are you more concerned about your image than your impact?
- Are you living in a fantasy world?
- Does social networking distract from your relationship to God and your family?

The challenges

- From a ChMS perspective, how do we marry the tools of social networking and information management?
- How do we educate the end user?
- What tools do we use?

The marriage

- The evolution of ChMS (non-financial)
- Back Office solutions
- SaaS – Software as a service (online, browser based)
- Integrations
- Facilities Management solutions
- Financial Management solutions (check 21, etc)
- Portals – ability to view certain info online
- Mobile solutions *
- Modules / add-ons (check-in, background checks, etc)

The dilemma for the church

- How to integrate social / community networking into the ChMS environment?
- How to manage from a privacy perspective?
- How to facilitate customization to each church’s or group’s individualized needs (group management, etc)?
- User friendliness?
- Investment in technology for the church? How far should we go?

The dilemma for the ChMS company

- Do our customers need this solution?
- Should we develop these features?
- Should we invest the resources necessary to build?
- Is this a fad or a foundation?
- Are there better alternatives?

Alternatives for you, the Church

- Keep your current ChMS solution
- Ask your provider what their roadmap is for integration with existing Social Networking solutions for churches
- Find a solution for your church's social networking needs
- Change your ChMS solution to one that incorporates Community networking tools
 - Examples: MyChurch, Online Family Center, CircleBuilder, (...)

Why Reinvent the Wheel?

Sample Church Facebook Strategy

- **Instead of forcing people to come to us (our site), Facebook allows us to go where they're already active online.** Instead of trying to be a separate destination, we get to integrate with their lives.
- **The outreach potential is huge.** Example: we post a baptism photo and tag the person in the photo who is getting baptized. The photo shows up on that person's Facebook wall, as well as in their friends' feeds, giving them a simple way to share their new life in Christ with their Facebook friends.
- **In addition to conveying information about events, classes, etc., Facebook creates the opportunity for community and connection.** It serves as an online representation of the campus, where people can get to know each other, ask questions, and keep up with what's happening in people's lives and the life of the campus.
- **It reduces bloat on our church website and allows us to be laser focused with our content there.**
- **We don't have to re-create the wheel.** Facebook is already accomplishing many of the goals we have for our campus communication. By leaning on their tools, it frees up time and development resources in the long run.
- **It's free!**

5 Functionality Keys for ChSN

1. Ability for user interactivity / participation
2. Ability to discover and nurture friendships
3. Ability to push functionality to communication extremes
4. Ability to use as a hook for ministry
5. Provides group management for group leader and admin

Cautions for ChSN

- Can reduce real personal contact to and among congregation
- Exposes users to other online temptations
- Consumes staff and group leaders
- Technology is only technology
- Be in the world but not of the world...
- Be mindful of your audience...public sites
- Invest carefully, things change quickly

The Church

- It is the responsibility of the church leader to remove barriers to communication rather than increase them

The 10 Commandments

Source: Ben Stroup, www.thecontentmatrix.com

1. Encourage User-Generated Content – every person is a publisher
2. Make it shareable – “like”, “share”, (...)
3. Keep relationships the primary focus – remember, it’s a tool, not an end
4. Provide value – stay relevant mission
5. Create excellent content – content is king
6. Use Social Media strategically, not casually
7. Keep it short and simple – your audience doesn’t have much time to waste
8. Measure, and measure again – use analytics
9. Market your Social Media presence
10. Be patient – takes 4-6 months to see results

A Policy for Your Church

Source: April Mann, Christian Computing Magazine, February 2012

- Start simply but simply start
- Start with God’s Word as the cornerstone of your plan
- Be an active listener
- Be human
- Bring value to others first
- Be cultivators of unity
- Write your objective / make it measurable
- Design your strategy
- Designate an editor
- How to publicize your presence
- How often will you post content?
- What types of content will you post to support your objectives?
- Wrap it all up in love

Conclusions

- Social Networking and Group Member Networking can be a great tool for the church
- Communication is one of the main reasons to adopt ChSN
- Using ChSN across generational lines can be challenging
- Know that members of your congregation do struggle with Social Networking temptations
- Social Networking has been around long enough to prove it is not a fad
- Ask your current ChMS provider what their roadmap is for ChSN development
- Your best ChSN management solution may be a 3rd party provider
- Understand the hidden commitments when diving into ChSN (admin requirements, monitoring use, managing groups, etc)
- Remember, you get what you pay for
- **Keep it simple!**

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