"We want a church community that is relevant."

USING TECHNOLOGY IN CHURCHES

Some basics to get you started…

Wi-Fi and projectors

Set up a Wi-Fi account that is accessible in all the rooms in your church building.

Have a projector installed that can project on to a screen, with speakers connected to it. Make sure you can easily connect a PC/laptop to the projector and speakers. A ceiling-mounted projector may be a financial investment for your church, but there are cheaper alternatives. It would be worth carrying out some research to find out what would work best in your building. Make sure that you intentionally train a number of people to be able to use it, so that the knowledge doesn't just rest with one or two people.

Having Wi-Fi and a means of projection, means that clips from video-streaming sites, such as YouTube (although there are many others), can be shown in church services and children's and youth group meetings. This can be a powerful addition to church services – video clips can educate, challenge or inspire the congregation. It also means that you can use apps, such as iSing Worship (again, there are others), which will play music and project words onto the screen, making it easier to learn and sing new worship songs. This is particularly useful if you don't have the musicians to lead the congregation in new music.

Use websites and social media

These can be tools for:
- communication
- building community
- discipleship

Both website and social media are worth investing time in, as they can be beneficial for all ages and make an impact to the life of the church.

Website: Make sure your church has a website. It might be worth investing some money to pay a professional organisation to create a website for you. There are a number of companies that specialise in making church websites and may not be as expensive as you think. A website will be a place where people will look to see what your church is like and what happens there throughout the week. Make sure the site is welcoming and accessible, with contact details. It may be helpful to see this as a tool for outreach. Make sure you gather the views of a range of ages when designing your site.

Church Facebook page: This can be a useful tool for the people who use/attend the church to keep in touch with each other throughout the week. Details about meetings/services that are taking place can be posted. The page could also be used as a way of sharing prayer requests, or continuing discussion about the sermon or a particular Bible passage. It is important that you have someone who regularly posts onto the page/group to keep the conversation active and up-to-date.

Other social media: There are many other social media platforms; two popular ones being Twitter and Instagram. These can be a tool, both for those connected to the church and those who are not, to engage with issues that the church is concerned about or to find information about what the church has been/is doing. If you set up a Twitter and/or Instagram account for your church, make sure that you have someone who posts to these frequently. If no one is able to commit to being the person who manages the account then you could set up a rota where different people are responsible for posting for two weeks or a month at a time. It would be a good idea to ask the youth group to be on the rota.

Use the knowledge and experience of others

Work with young people in your church to find out more about technology and social media. This is the world they have grown up in, so you will be able to learn from them. But it is not just for the young, many different generations are very familiar and active with a variety of technology and digital media. It is a great way for different generations to come together to learn from each other.

Further information

There is much information available to guide you. A couple of booklets you may find helpful are *Reach Out Church Online: Social Media* and *Reach Out Church Online: Websites* (both available to buy from www.cpo.org.uk).

A website that might be a good place to start to help you find out more information is www.premierdigital.org.uk.