

Increase Your ‘Net Worth: Communicating in a Virtual World

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English is the language of ...

- science
- commerce
- diplomacy
- travel

Two billion people, especially in China, are learning English.

English + Bible training = advantage

English + Bible training + tech = über advantage

Reactions to use of technology in ministry:

“How should we use technology in ministry ? That's easy. Don't. Talk to people face to face, sit with people in a ditch, cry with people when they need a friend...”

“Thanks to Facebook, Twitter, and social networking, most interaction is done electronically, and no more human interaction is necessary.”

“It's too easy to be *misunderstood* on text, in emails, in IMs.”

“Social media is an enormous time drain—folks playing make-believe farmers, aquariums, what-movie-star-I-would-be. You don't really need a life. It can all be virtual.”

“Perhaps too much information isn't good for the soul, and some silence would be good...”

“The Word become flesh and tabernacled among us. The best message was a gift delivered in person.”

On the other hand...

Technology allows us to have a global reach. We can train from afar.

Examples:

- The Theology program
- DTS online courses

“Not all technology replaces interaction; sometimes it improves it.”

“It’s easier, less expensive, and more globally impacting to maintain a web-based ministry than a building.”

\$4 million research project

- Thousands of 16-19 year olds
- 12 twelve countries
- Comparative interview programs with earlier generations

Conclusion: “The Net Geners ... do not just observe, they participate... Technology is shaping their minds in a different way. Digital immersion may be encouraging a new form of intelligence that is strengthened through collaboration with other people and machines.” *Source: They’ve Grown Up Digital: How the Next Generation is Changing Your World*

Instead of going 1-2x/week to church, today someone...

- attends a worship service
- downloads sermon to iPod
- listens again while working out
- reads pastor’s blog
- learns how sermon affected others
- leaves a comment
- reads pastor’s responses, which include resources for further study
- posts sermon on Facebook
- hosts another discussion

Not all tech has to be cutting edge: The [pager](#) ministry

While you were sleeping...

Instead of ministering only in person, we can minister while we sleep, through media... (i.e., parable of the talents)

The Media we’ll cover:

- **Web site**
- **Blog**
- **Social Networking**

Your Web Site:



- Should look professional
 - Template (e.g, [Allwebco](#))
 - Slogan ([like this](#) or [this](#))



- Should look inviting (human faces like [this](#) or even [this](#))
- Matches tone to content. Like [this](#). Or [this](#).
 - Offers free stuff [like here](#) and [here](#)
 - Gives readers a reason to show up
 - Focuses on readers rather than advertising
 - Is easy to navigate
- Provides an uncluttered reading field.
- Has web-modified writing
 - Includes [lots of paragraph](#) breaks
 - Runs shorter than print articles
 - Has titles in sans serif, text in serif.

Advantage over web site over blogging: Does not require frequent updates

“**BLOG**” (Contraction of "web log")

Type of website, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order. "Blog" is also a verb, meaning to maintain or add content to a blog.

- Go with professional quality
- Two big freebies: [Blogger](#), Wordpress
- Focus: Define your purpose
 - Children? Humor? Gardening? Home schooling? Counseling? Bible Study? Financial advice?
- Choose color/design accordingly



- Create a slogan.
- Use “[white space](#).”
- Keep important info above scrolling line.
- Make font large enough to read comfortably (12 pt min.)
- Exchange services w/ friends: “Even the editor needs an editor.”



Posting

- If you have doubts about a post, sleep on it. Run it by a friend.
- If you can't post several times weekly, organize [a group blog](#).

- Use a less informal tone than in an article.
- Spend time [creating post titles](#).
- Aim for <350 words.
- Make the text itself visually appealing
 - Double space between paragraphs
 - Use subheads
 -
- Keep content full of variety.
 - Photos, video
 - DVD recommendations.
 - Book reviews.
 - Contests, giveaways.
 - Interviews
 - Polls
 - Commentary on current events

Top Three Traffic-producers at Tapestry

- Living Christainly in a post-modern culture
 - Racial prejudice at time of Obama's inauguration
 - The environment
- Recent favorite: Ellen and her "wife"

Here are the faves [from the past 30 days](#) at Her.meneutics

Increase Traffic

- Respond to comments. (Like [Heather](#).)
- Post regularly. (Like [Michael](#).)
- Leave insightful comments on other blogs.
- Create a [blogroll](#) – provide readers with links to sites you like.
- Include keywords. (Like at [Tapestry](#).)

Advantage of Blogging over Social Networking:

- Wider audience
- International presence
- All comments public, not private

Social Media

- It's free.
- It gets the word out.
- It's here to stay.

Thomas Nelson's director of non-fiction marketing: "Social media is about building community. If you engage in social media with a marketing mindset, you are going to be sniffed out by the online community and do more damage than good." ("Twitterpated: Religion Authors Dive into Social Media," *Publishers Weekly*, 7/21/2009)

[Facebook](#): In the last two quarters of 2008, the age 34-55 group expanded by 276% . The number of members doubles every two months.

It's a great place to post information about meetings, lectures, news events,—as long as it's not too frequent or impersonal.

Option: fan page where “fans” can post comments, photos, events, videos
Includes fields for business location and general info

“And MySpace? *So* 2006. Nowadays, authors are not on MySpace unless they are

- (a) writing for a YA [young adult] audience;
- (b) in a rock band;
- or (c) having a midlife crisis. (See also b.)”

(From “Twitterpated: Religion Authors Dive into Social Media,” *Publishers Weekly*, 7/21/2009)

[LinkedIn](#): For professional networking

[Shoutlife](#):

Recent message (typical of late):

“Hello! So happy to have found you on Shoutlife. Looking forward to getting to know you better and learning all about your work. Meanwhile, may the good Lord shower you and yours with joys too numerous to count! Blessings, Loree 1 Corinthians 10:13 [web address] (where, if you sign up, you can win a free copy of my latest novel, to have autographed for yourself or give as a gift!)

[Twitter](#):

To Twit or Not to Twit?

Twitter is similar to a blog, with shorter posts (140 characters). You or your ministry can create a page and invite other Twitter users to “follow” you. Twitter pages are less complex than Facebook fan pages.

Twitter: Now has more than 4.5 million users.

A 2009 poll conducted for *The Wall Street Journal* found that only 14% of the general population used Twitter. Bloggers use Twitter much more than do members of the general population. A 2009 poll conducted for *The Wall Street Journal* found that only 14% of the general population used Twitter. Bloggers use Twitter much more than do members of the general population. Those who use Twitter say they do so to promote their blogs, bring interesting links to light, and to understand what people are buzzing about. Other uses include marketing businesses, interacting with companies (24%), politicians (11%), and celebrities (9%). Source: <http://technorati.com/blogging/feature/state-of-the-blogsphere-2009/> (See here esp: Chart about why people don't use Twitter)

A Boston University professor tweeted an online course on the world's religions in 140 characters or less: Taoism: “Confucius sucks. Ritual=empty. True Way = wu-wei, natural as flowing water. Be free, be qi, live 4 now 4 ever. Ahh!” His tweets relate directly to his 2007 book *Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know—and Doesn't*. (Source: “Twitterpated”)

Christian author Scot McKnight: “I gained friends and I lost friends because it's annoying for your Twitter feeds to have a hundred tweets by me in an hour.” (Source: “Twitterpated”)

“Twitter's most foundation-shattering contribution to date may turn out to be in the area of events and conferences.” (Source: “Twitterpated”)

- Remind people – it starts in three hours
- Receive feedback during the actual event

Do You Use Twitter? Why or Why Not?

- No. I kept getting requests from businesses.

- I do. I love the challenge of saying what I need to in 140 characters. I also really love that you can search other people's tweets.
- I do not. Don't know why.
- I already have access to a number of excellent ways to connect with the rest of humanity, FB alone is more than I need, why should I increase my exposure to the gimmick business? happy now without the tweet.
- It's enough for me to keep up with FB and still have a full life
- I am also twitter-free. Seems superfluous.
- How much can we really fill our minds with? Not to sound old or paranoid, but shouldn't we proceed with caution on all this technology? The more we connect "virtually" the less we may find ourselves connecting "in reality." (oooooh, scary sci-fi stuff)
- We now have a full generation that believes that all reality is delivered via electronic media and that everything else is superfluous. MTV, anyone?
- Erin (17): "I think it's stupid."
- The youngsters among us say Twitter is "for old people. "
- I don't need another distraction.
- It seems to be more for talking at people rather than talking with people. Facebook is better for talking with and I love being able to share pictures in the FB format.

I do not Tweet because FB, texting, email and the cell phone seem to be all I need.

- I blog and I Facebook (see how all this technology has us verbing our nouns), but I see no need for Twittification.

"Facebook and Twitter are marvelous new tools, but they have not replaced the blog, which is still the best place for content of any length." (Source: Twitterpated)

How Do You Increase Your 'Net Worth?

- Make wise choices
- Remember it's better to give than to receive
- Think worldwide.
- Ministry: Make www content a priority.
- Group blogs: Embrace diversity.
- Whatever you do, do well.

For a prose summary of this workshop, [go here](#).

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