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My Favorite Apps
The Jesus Film Media App

With all of the interest in the History Channel’s depiction of the Bible, I thought this would be a great time to share another of my favorite apps, the Jesus Film Media. Jesus Film Media is the digital version of The JESUS Film Project. The Jesus Film has always been one of my favorite when it comes to movies that seek to provide an accurate movie on the Bible. And, now that it is available on an app, there are many advantages.

There are several reasons why this app is exciting. First, you can access the actual Jesus Film in a variety of languages. Click on the map, and you can see all of the different languages in which the film is now made available. But, with the Jesus Film Media App not only provides easy access to the Jesus Film, but there is around 64,000 videos, in more than 1,100 languages.

Just imagine the personal satisfaction in having such a great list of Christian videos ready to go, right from your app. Or, use the Apple TV, and you can easily project any of the videos directly to your TV or video projector.

Not only is the app a great source for you to view videos, but the app can provide you some excellent opportunities to share the videos with others, especially those you are trying to reach who speak a different language.

Finally, the good news is the app is available for the iOS and for the Android.

I would still like to hear from more of you on what you value as your favorite app. Either drop me an email at steve@CDPublishers.com, or post a note on our website, www.ccmag.com.

Together We Serve Him,
Recently, one of our readers asked about ServantPC, and their ChMS product Servant Keeper. It had been a while since I had checked them out, so I went to their website. I was very surprised to see all of the products and services they had added since the last time I checked on them, and felt our readers would like an update as well. So, here is my interview with William (Bill) Newman, General Manager at Servant PC Resources.

A Closer Look at ServantPC and Servant Keeper!

By Steve Hewitt

“It has been a few years since we have had an article in CCMag covering the many services and products that ServantPC has to offer. Bring us up to speed on what you now offer!”

In the last few years Servant Keeper has gone through a major upgrade and we have added a list of new products and services in response to our customers’ requests.

Check-In

One of the big features we created was the children’s check-in/out program. With this add-on product Servant Keeper users can easily and quickly check children and families into their events. This provides security and also feeds attendance information directly into the Servant Keeper database. Sticker badges can be printed in the check-in process that include everything from class to allergies and security information. In addition, parents get a “claim ticket” to provide security in the check-out process. While churches can incorporate our touch screen kiosks and thermal printers into their check-in/out process, the nice thing is that check-in can also be run on a simple laptop, making it a very affordable solution for any church. Many churches have told us that simply having a check-in/out system has made their church much more “visitor-friendly”, as visitors are often fearful of leaving their children in unsecured environments.
Background Checks
Along with the check-in/out process another big part of child safety is background checks. We reached out to Protect My Ministry to incorporate their background check service directly into Servant Keeper. Now, when a volunteer signs up to work with a children’s ministry, the church office can run their background check directly from within Servant Keeper and get the results within 48 hours. This reduces the administrative burden, gets more volunteers compliant with their Child Protection Policy, AND keeps their kids that much more safe.

SK Notify
Emergency alerts and group texting were also some things our customers needed. Whether it’s a last minute service cancellation or a text message to the youth group, more and more churches are sending mass communications. Due to the fact that phone tree style hardware systems can only dial one number at a time, we discovered these notifications were not being delivered fast enough. Servant Keeper users also expressed a desire to send messages from any device that was web-enabled, be it a PC, MAC, tablet, or phone. We responded with SK Notify. Using this web-based system that syncs with the customer’s Servant Keeper groups, the church can enable any staff or volunteer to send messages to their ministry teams. A real benefit is the ability to send text, voice, or email messages as well as video and audio files and PDF files. This assures that the recipients can receive the message, no matter what type of technology they prefer. Ministries across the country are using SK Notify to send their newsletters and bulletins (cutting down on print costs) as well as recordings of sermons and even video promos for upcoming events. A neat feature of the program is that church members can also get the free NotifyME app that will receive and archive messages from the church, as well as utilize notification settings on their mobile device. There are really so many features crammed into this amazing service. The end result is better, more focused communication between ministry leaders and the church body.

Volunteer Scheduling
Many of our users were spending a lot of time scheduling volunteers for ministry. They were us-
ing everything from paper calendars to expensive programs and still ending up with a frustrating experience. We connected with the folks at Rotunda who make the leading volunteer scheduling program “Ministry Scheduler Pro”. With their help we were able to create the only two-way sync between MSP and Servant Keeper. Now, Servant Keeper users can assign any ministry leaders to schedule their volunteers using this web-based tool. Not only that, the scheduling is automated, it emails reminders to scheduled volunteers and helps them quickly find substitutes when needed. In addition, volunteers can update their contact information, personal schedule preferences and areas of service at any time using the web-based interface. Any changes get fed back into the church’s Servant Keeper database to make life easier for the administrators. Many ministries report back that their ministry coordinators LOVE this program and that after implementation they experience very few “no-shows” with their volunteers.

OUTREACH
Almost every ministry does some kind of community outreach, whether it’s VBS or holiday services or even things like movie nights and bake sales. After getting requests to help them in this area, we partnered with Experian to create the SK Neighborhood list service, and bring Servant Keeper users the ability to easily contact the people in their community. This means, for example, a church can contact all the families with children between 6 and 12, who live within two miles of the church, and let them know about the upcoming VBS. Our customers who are using this service have called us and reported some amazing results with this simple outreach tool.

WORSHIP LEADERS
Many of our customers had been calling us asking if we made worship software that was as easy to use as Servant Keeper. As a result we developed Worship Keeper, which is a comprehensive planning solution for worship leaders. Worship Keeper is a song library tool that tracks song usage, helps plan services, schedules team members, and does overhead projection. Worship leaders can import songs from Song Select in whatever key they need. A nice feature is the ability to email worship materials to team members in a format that they can open on any device. This enables team members to view their music on their tablet, print it at home for personal preparation, and bring the music to rehearsal. Also, when the worship leader plans a service, the overhead presentation is created automatically and available for the A/V team to present. The A/V team will love the presenter, which opens the service in a dynamic format that even allows last minute, real time changes and integration with services such as YouTube.

“What do you think sets Servant Keeper apart from other ChMS products?”
What continues to set Servant Keeper apart from other church software products is it’s combined ease of use and powerful feature set. Over 25,000 churches have switched to Servant Keeper making it arguably the most popular church management software on the market. It’s also worth saying that we didn’t go out and buy customers through an acquisition or merger to get that big number. All of our users chose Servant Keeper directly.

Servant Keeper is customizable and churches of every size and denomination are using it around the world to manage their ministry. Whether they are tracking 25 people or 25,000 people, time and again Servant Keeper users express that finally, they found “a software program that helps them do ministry”.

Servant Keeper also saves an enormous amount of time. Through automation, easy interface, and powerful features, church administrators and volunteers alike are getting back precious time to minister to people.

People also love the fact that Servant Keeper is so affordable. With just a one-time low purchase price, churches have been using Servant Keeper for decades with little to no expense. Our Help Desk is extremely affordable and is made up of an incredible team that really loves to help ministries succeed.

It really gives us a lot of pride that most of our customers are referred to us by current Servant Keeper users. That says a lot about the program, and about the support team we have here at the company.
Ministries are always seeking creative ways to reach and engage their audience and to facilitate their mission. Ministries are looking for innovative and affordable resources, to reach their members, staff, and the general public, with their own teaching content.

Most ministries in recent years have recognized the value of the internet and digital media. They have incorporated creative web sites, audio/video content, and social media into their mission. Now, another new resource available to ministries from the internet revolution, are web based training tools. One such tool is a Learning Management System (eLMS).

A web (or cloud) based LMS can provide many options for ministries to apply to their teaching and training needs. An LMS is designed specifically as a training resource. It provides 24/7 online access to your training/teaching. It will keep track of all your training activity, provide easy management tools for enrollment and course building, can be used for an internal or external audience, can be customized for your ministry brand, can integrate with your web sites, CMS and church management software system. This web resource can help lower costs for training and also be a revenue generator.

Let’s explore some fundamental applications, value and benefits of using an online learning system.

How would you use an eLMS?

Training/teaching takes place most everyday within a ministry. It can take many shapes and forms from informal to formal. It can be generic and recurring or customized for a single purpose. It might also be for an individual or for a large
diverged audience. Ministries no longer have to be constrained by time and location, or limited to how creative and engaging the training can be.

The use of an eLMS adds digital tools which allow you to be in control of when, where, and how training/teaching is delivered. Let’s look at the virtues of the LMS which apply to making this a good training/teaching resource:

- Virtual 24/7 access via the web
- Courses can be composed with no special skills required
- Utilize existing video, audio and text materials for courses, or create new ones
- Use for informal or formal training for any audience
- All course participants can be tracked for participation, comprehension and completion
- Reviews, exams, exercises and interactive workbooks can be included
- Online can be a complete course or a component of a live class
- Structure learning paths to create progressive development
- The courses can include other social applications (forums, chat, webex, email) to stay connected to the facilitator, teacher, participants
- The eLMS can connect to the ministry database to consolidate with event planning, enrollment and record keeping

These eLMS attributes can be applied as needed to most any training/teaching activity.
How does this help my ministry?
Using online training tools can have several tangible benefits, including, cost savings (cost for facilities and materials) revenue generation (expanded enrollment, course retail sales options) and convenience.

The online training/teaching tools could serve your ministry and your participants in many ways. Here are several examples of the value you may find:

• Online access for participants who can’t attend live sessions, allowing for more participation and reduced drop out numbers
• Provide prep or post information in conjunction with live sessions, thus optimizing live time together
• Minimize facility impacts, staff requirements and associated support costs by applying online delivery
• Reach out to a virtual audience with your content, to grow ministry awareness, membership, contributions
• Offer content to sell to a select or open market and create a revenue source to offset other expenses
• Extend your ministry content as an offering to other ministries

By adding the digital tools of an LMS you now have a variety of ways to package your content. There can be very obvious and tangible hard dollar savings for things such as facilities and materials. But, perhaps more importantly, there is the benefit of virtual access to reach and involve more people.

What are the most common applications?
LMS applications can be applied for small localized ministries, multi-site congregations or global outreach.

APPLICATIONS
1. Online Campus (augment Sunday web casts with review and discussion questions)
2. Learning Center (a complete online school using a variety of courses and content)
3. Assessments (qualitative assessments of volunteers and staff knowledge)
4. Leadership development (learning paths to develop leaders)
5. Discipleship development (learning paths to grow spiritually)
6. New member orientation (orientation with review)
7. Staff, volunteer, department policies (review, quiz and certificate of completion)
8. Missionary, church plant training (24/7 training content available from the home church)
9. Conference workshops and keynotes captured and placed online to extend the reach and impact of the conference

Solomon LMS for Christian Ministries
After 3 years of research and development Gateway Instructional Design Group LLC (Gateway IDG, Overland Park, Kansas www.gatewayidg.com), is pioneering the trail for providing ministries with online learning services and expertise.

Gateway IDG has invested hundreds of hours sitting down with ministries ranging from churches, authors, associations and publishers, strategizing on the possibilities associated with implementing
eLMS solutions to fit their needs. The Gateway IDG mission has been to create services which meet needs, are easy to use, have tangible benefits, and are affordable.

According to Gateway the adoption has begun. Several large churches, organizations and some publishers are now rolling out LMS based services. However these tools are not limited to the large users. With cloud based services a ministry of any size sign up a use the tools even just to offer one class.

The key features Gateway IDG sees necessary for broad adoption are:

- Cloud based services
- Subscription usage based pricing
- No up-front or set up fees
- Do-it-yourself or skilled help course building options
- Brand image customizable
- Existing web and data systems integration
- Course catalog and retail storefront options
- Social media application and instructor led options

**Case studies and Use Cases**

**Authors and Speakers: “The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace”**

Derived from the bestselling book by co-author’s Dr. Paul White and Dr. Gary Chapman, (Moody Press) two online courses were developed, one for facilitators/trainers and the other for individual consumers.

Dr. White is active on the speaking circuit, while operating a clinical practice. He needed a solution to make his teaching/training virtually available to clients.

Two courses were created to supplement the book and targeted to both the faith community and the corporate market. The branding, marketing and online learning experience are integrated with the author and publishers web sites, (www.drpaulwhite.com, www.appreciationatwork.com) as well as the provider site (www.ulearn24.com). The courses will accommodate both individual participants and groups.

Other author examples: Dr. Liz Selzer, Marty Leonard

**Church Member and Staff Training: Covenant Church Dallas**

Covenant Church Dallas is a large (15,000) member non-denominational church with five campuses and many additional churches in fellowship. It needed help to standardize on the training across all sites, overcome class scheduling issues, and lower costs of materials production.

Covenant is creating a learning path of courses for new members through aspiring church leaders. Some courses will be stand alone, others will be blended with live classes and instructors.

The eLMS will be completely branded for the church, connected to the web site, ecommerce and church management system. www.covenantchurch.org

Other church examples: Saddleback Church, Redeemer Presbyterian Church,

**Pastors Teaching: Mike Hayes Ministries (MHM)**

Pastor Mike Hayes is founder of Covenant Church and an internationally known pastor, teacher and author. Pastor Hayes time is in high demand. The ministry saw a need to capture for present and
future generations the valuable teaching lessons Pastor Hayes is noted for.

They are creating an online school portal composed of a variety of current and historical content. The school will have formal and informal teaching content along with weekly commentary, blogs and other reference materials. By using new and existing audio and video MHM will construct a several courses, on many topics, along with learning paths for development. The online school will be open to church members, pastors and the general public.

Non-Profit Organization: Integrity Resource Center

IRC is organization with ministry services on ethics and faith in the workplace. It has several thousand members and holds monthly luncheons and quarterly conferences.

Rick Boxx (founder Director) is an author and speaker. In response to the growing interest in “faith at Work” Rick needed a way to provide biblical fundamentals for having a Christ centered perspective on ethics and living your faith in the workplace.

The “Fire in the Workplace” course was developed and is available on the www.integrityresource.org web site. This course along with an initial assessment test has helped to establish a shared standard of understanding among IRC members.

Other organization examples: Christian Leadership Alliance, American Association of Christian Councilors
Internet security, computer security, mobile computing security, and personal identity theft are in the news every day it seems! And, lately, there have been some very public attacks as even high level politicians have been hacked as well as top government websites. We need a new Psalm. Something along the lines of “Yea, though I walk through the valley of technology, I will fear no evil, for your antivirus program will protect me!”

If you get a dozen computer geeks in a room and start talking about which security program is best, you will probably get a dozen different answers. Recently I ran across a Christian brother who is trying to provide help to protect all of us from the dangers that are out there. Steven Sundermeier was quoted in USA TODAY (http://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/2013/03/12/stolen-celebrity-data-collectors/1983399/) in an article about the recent attacks on celebrity data that is in the news. I have had a chance to talk with Steven about his site (www.thirtyseven4.com) and the name of his company (Based upon a Bible verse). I have interviewed Steven in order to help all of us gain an introduction into what he does. However, I have asked Steven to do much more. Starting next month, he will be starting a regular column, using it to help educate all of us on practices and procedures to help keep us safe! And, be sure to read the last part of the article and learn how Steven has a heart to use the profits of thirtyseven4 for ministry!
Tell me about Thirtyseven4?

Thirtyseven4 is a leading provider of Windows, Mac and Android antivirus/security solutions. Our flagship product is Thirtyseven4 Antivirus.

How was the name Thirtyseven4 selected?

The name Thirtyseven4 comes from Psalm 37:4, “Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.” As a company, we really do seek to use the gifts God gave us to glorify Him through serving others.

How did you get started in the antivirus industry?

I received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Management Information Systems from Miami University with a minor in Computer Science, and began working in the antivirus industry directly out of college. One of the first computer viruses I got to analyze was I-Worm. Happy (Happy99), a computer worm still viewed by most in the field as the first virus to spread using email. It didn’t take long for me to become fascinated not only by computer viruses, but also with the security industry as a whole.

How did Thirtyseven4 get started?

As I climbed the corporate ladder (within the antivirus industry) the passion I once had began to fade as I became increasingly conflicted and unhappy with the inner workings of the organization I was with and their treatment of customers and partners. I felt that my moral values, talents and gifts were being compromised, and I knew the Lord was calling me to something different, something much better.

It was during a Sunday morning church message at the time that I felt the Lord speaking directly to me as the Pastor read a passage out of Psalm 1. I remember mediating and praying on that passage and on what direction the Lord had for me and my family. God continued speaking to me through the Bible and Sunday morning messages each week. I will say that after much prayer, discussions with my wife, and feeling led by God, my family and I took a HUGE leap of faith and in December of 2009 (in midst of a economic recession) - I quit my job (with no other source of income coming in), invested our savings and launched Thirtyseven4.

How is it going?

While it was a real test of faith early on (and at times, in different ways, continues to be), it has been a remarkable journey and a big testament on how faithful the Lord has been to Thirtyseven4 and our family. I could spend hours sharing with you with all the blessings and desires of our hearts that we have experienced through Thirtyseven4. The Lord has connected us with so many amazing employees, development partners, customers, strengthened friendships and even reconnected us with family. I am also happy and proud to say that now over three years later, Thirtyseven4 is proudly serving thousands of schools, business and churches nationwide.
The security software market seems to be competitive and dominated by big companies, how do you compare?

David vs. Goliath – we compete against companies with name-recognition, much larger advertising and marketing budgets, apparent biases with large technology publications, etc. – yet we win many of the battles.

We are different, and people sense that. Fair and honest pricing, live (friendly) support, and we truly care about our customers. We also are always improving and customizing our solutions to meet and exceed the needs of our customers. In a way I guess we provide old-fashioned good service with a cutting edge product. And even in today’s high-tech world, people want to know they matter and that they can believe in what they are buying.

How can a church, school, business or the average computer user purchase or try Thirtyseven4 Antivirus?

We like to keep it simple. Visit our website at www.thirtyseven4.com and click on the “store” tab. Our Windows, Mac and Android Security options are there, and we also have evaluations available. You can purchase on our website or by credit card over the phone at 877-374-7581. If you would like to receive a Quote for multiple machines or if you’re looking for protection in a managed environment, you can do so at sales@thirtyseven4.com.

Thirtyseven4 provides cutting edge Security with friendly Support, and we consider it a privilege to serve you. Expect more from Thirtyseven4!

Anything else?

One of my pastors encouraged us each to attack one global goliath: a problem that is unacceptable to God and should be to us as well. We decided on day one to give a portion of every Thirtyseven4 sale to Remember Nhu. They are a foundation that prevents at-risk children from getting caught up in the sexual slave industry. Remember Nhu literally saves children from a life of misery, shame and isolation. Many of us pray for the difficult things, but these people are out living them and changing them! To be a part of this has changed us. Carl Ralston, president & founder of Remember Nhu recently had this to say about us, “Thirtyseven4, Steve, Sarah and their children have become AWESOME Supporters, Champions, and Friends of Remember Nhu and my wife and I. Through their support they have helped us keep an additional 40 to 50 children from ever entering the sex trade!”

“We’re in the business of providing the same level of protection to our customers that we pay to our own family.”

—Steve Tatro, President & CEO of Thirtyseven4ultzion®

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WHEN MANAGING YOUR RETIREMENT PLAN DO YOU REALLY KNOW IF...

All eligible employees are enrolled?
Your plan is fully funded?
Your administration expenses are reasonable?

Use existing payroll data to quickly determine employee eligibility and plan contributions, giving yourself more time to invest in attending to other church business activities.

“This solution helped us meet our employee eligibility tracking and compliance initiative, with a one-year return on investment. I highly recommend it!”

Joe Braddock CFO - Diocese of Jefferson City, MO
“Good Housekeeping” Practices for Your Windows® Vista, XP, or Win7 Computer

Does your computer sometimes lock up in the middle of a document? Are you seeing more frequent error messages in your programs? Does your computer seem to be running slower and slower even though you have a “super-duper” model with plenty of RAM, speed, and hard drive space?

As the producer of the church management software product Church Windows, we often get calls on our Support lines about these topics. If you’re using Church Windows, browsing the internet, or creating bulletins, “good housekeeping” for your computer is often the solution to the problem. Whether your computer is whizzing along at 100% functionality or having minor issues, making a data backup is always essential.

The major components of good housekeeping include freeing up hard drive space, running checkdisk, defragmenting the hard drive, and backing up important data. These procedures should be completed on each computer on your network, not just the server. Let’s look at them one at a time.

1. Disk Cleanup
   Click on Start, go to All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, then click on Disk Cleanup. If appropriate, select the appropriate hard drive to clean up, usually your C drive. It will calculate how much hard drive space it can free up by deleting temporary files from various places, including downloaded internet files and old installation files. Click on OK and it will clean up your hard drive for you. Because hard drives are of such great size these days and are rarely full, we recommend not checking the box next to “Compress Old Files” as this can create issues with various software programs.

2. Run Checkdisk
   This is an error checking routine that runs on your Windows computers. To run Checkdisk, click on Start and on Run. Type in ‘chkdsk /f’ (note the space between “k” and “/f”) and click OK. This will open up a window asking you if you want to schedule Checkdisk to run next time you reboot your computer. Type ‘Y’ and press enter. Next you will need to close out of all windows you have open and reboot your computer. It will run its Checkdisk utility before it boots up.
3. Defragment the Hard Drive

Disk Defragmenter is another system tool provided by Windows. It reconnects fragmented files on your hard drive. Generally, this needs to be performed less often than Checkdisk. Click on Start, All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, and Disk Defragmenter. On Windows XP, it asks for the letter of the drive you wish to treat. Generally this is your “C” drive. Select the drive and click on Defragment. Note that on Windows Vista usually the Defragmenter is set to run on a schedule. You can check the schedule or manually perform the routine from the same window. This procedure can take more time, sometimes up to several hours.

4. Backing up Important Data

To back up critical information on the hard drive, Windows does provide a backup utility that is very easy to use. You can typically back up to any USB/flash/thumb drive available at any computer store or mass retailer. The Windows Backup, depending on your computer operating system, is likely located under Start > All Programs > Maintenance or Start > Programs > Accessories > System Tools. Church Windows software, as with some other database programs, contains its own utility backup data. Backups cannot be made too frequently. And multiple backups are always suggested in case one backup fails. Lastly, it is imperative to keep one backup copy off-site. We never want to think about something happening to the church building and a backup being lost along with the computer. But it is, sadly, a reality that must be thought about.

So how do these computer problems happen? Sometimes computer problems are simply a matter of the quality and performance of the hardware. Often, they are an indication of the quality of the electrical current coming into your computer or your entire building. Many people have their computers plugged into a surge protector. If you are going to be struck by lightning, a little surge strip will not save your computer. A power sag can be as equally as damaging to the computer and to the data stored there as a power surge. In the summertime, we may see the lights briefly dim. A power sag normally happens when the electric company is unable to keep up with the need for electricity during peak air conditioning usage. However, power sags can happen at any time and we sometimes don’t even know it.

A good way to help protect your hardware and data is by using a Uninterruptible Power Supply, or “UPS.” This piece of equipment is a battery pack. Your computer plugs into the UPS and the UPS plugs into the wall.

The UPS will provide power to the computer, which gives you the opportunity to shut down the system properly. This will help protect from having lost or corrupted data. The cost of a UPS varies by the length of time the computer will run off the battery. It is well worth the money to invest in a UPS. There should be a UPS for every computer on your network, not just the server.

Enjoy your “healthier” computer!
I’ve been thinking a great deal lately on what makes a great church website. I’ve seen some beautiful websites, gorgeous sites that are virtually non-functional and, on the other end of the spectrum, there are those content rich sites that are so densely packed with information they can only be used by experienced research librarians that don’t easily succumb to boredom and mental fatigue.

Critiquing those on the extremes of this spectrum isn’t hard, but what about the majority of the websites that fall into the middle of the road? Any rating mechanism is, of course, entirely subjective. However, a rating mechanism could help focus your website’s continuous improvement efforts.

At Liturgical Publications, we’ve come up with what we think is a simple, yet effective rating mechanism for your website. If you’re interested in seeing how you’re doing, take our simple test. It’s will take less than 10 minutes of your time and hopefully help you plan your next set of changes to your site.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Your Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Someone in your church clearly has in their job description the responsibility for maintaining your website</td>
<td>+30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mass times clearly listed on the Home Page</td>
<td>+20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Church phone number clearly listed on the Home Page</td>
<td>+20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Contact Us form or clickable church email address clearly listed</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Map or directions to the church can be found within 2 clicks from the home page</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Current copy of the bulletin / newsletter available for viewing or download</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Welcome message from Pastor</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8a</td>
<td>Staff Listing updated with current contact information</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8b</td>
<td>Staff Listing exists but is out of date (at least one person’s info is wrong)</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9a</td>
<td>Calendar of events exists and current (at least one event +/- 30 days)</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9b</td>
<td>Calendar of events exists but not current (no events +/- 30 days)</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10a</td>
<td>News or Blog section exists and is current (at least one entry +/- 30 days)</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10b</td>
<td>News or Blog section exists but not current (no entries +/- 30 days)</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11a</td>
<td>High quality, warm &amp; inviting graphics or video used on Home Page</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11b</td>
<td>Low resolution graphics or video used on Home Page</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Liturgical Ministries page(s) with descriptions and contact names</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Sacrament page(s) with descriptions and contact names</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14a</td>
<td>Link to the Church’s Facebook and/or Twitter feed, pages are active and updated regularly</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14b</td>
<td>Link to the Church’s Facebook and/or Twitter Feed but they’re not active or updated regularly (no updates within the last 14 days)</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15a</td>
<td>Podcasts or Videos of church activities exist, content is relevant</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15b</td>
<td>Podcasts or videos of church activities exist, but content is not relevant</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Link to online giving and/or donation opportunities</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Link to church’s school page (if applicable)</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Capability to capture email addresses (contact us form, newsletter sign up, etc.)</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>A “click counter” appears on the Home Page. Sorry, but its not 1989 anymore!</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>In Google, typing your church’s name and the city in which is located yields your church in one of the top 3 results</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>In Google, typing your denomination (i.e. “Catholic Church”) and the city in which your located yields your church in one of the top 3 results</td>
<td>+20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>On your smartphone, you can get to mass times and directions within 30 seconds. 20% of all your web traffic is now coming from mobile devices.</td>
<td>+25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Possible Points = 275
Your Score

0 – 100 Points:
Yikes… it’s probably time to create a “Web Committee” at your church. Get together and discuss solutions that can make your church website fully functional and beneficial to your overall mission. If you need a new website, please check out our website service at www.weconnect.com. We can have a new site up and running for you today!

101 – 150 Points:
You’ve got the basic framework for a working website, but there’s always room for improvement! Decide what’s working, what’s not, and assign tasks for web team members to carry out. Need some help? Advertise in the bulletin that you’re looking for volunteers to help get your website up to date.

151 – 250 Points:
Nice job! You’ve got a great website, but don’t forget to keep updating your content! Your site should keep your members up-to-date, as well as inform potential members or visitors about your faith community.

Joe Luedtke is the President of the E-giving Division for Liturgical Publications Inc (LPi), www.4LPi.com, an organization that provides print publications, communication solutions, Internet and online donation services to churches and dioceses. Joe and his wife along with their two children live in Wisconsin. Joe can be found online on his blog CatholicTechTalk.com. If you’re interested in learning how LPi can help you bring your Annual Appeal campaign to the web, Joe can be reached at JLuedtke@4LPi.com.

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The Bible app situation for Windows RT embarrasses Christian fans of the new platform. People who want to do serious Bible study on the new Microsoft mobile OS will have to settle for simple reading apps or go online for their advanced study to places like Logos’s Biblia (http://www.biblical.com) or My Study Bible’s online site (http://www.mystudybible.com). Yes I know there are other options, but none of them gives me what these two can. If I’m wrong, please let me know (@kapurcell on Twitter).

People who run Windows 8 on a desktop or laptop can always install their regular Windows 8 Bible study software. I’ve installed a few and they mostly work great without issue. Logos, WORDSearch, BibleWorks, e-Sword, Olive Tree and PocketBible all worked fine. I’ll be happy to test another company’s product if they’ll just contact me (kevin@kevinpurcell.org).

One runs on mobile phones and updated previous versions. We’ll not spend time on it here. I’ve not used it much. Another updated Windows 7. It’s meant for desktop and laptop PCs that use Intel or AMD processors. All of the Bible software that worked on Windows 7 should run fine on this version of Windows. When most of the world thinks about Windows, this is the new version of this operating system they have in mind.

Windows RT, the third new Microsoft operating system, looks just like Windows 8 and came out about the same time, but behaves much different. It runs on tablets, not full computers. Microsoft cre-
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ated it to work with lower powered ARM systems. ARM is a processor, just like the Intel and AMD processors that sit inside most computers on desks or laps today. The ARM processor, however, powers mobile devices and doesn’t work with the desktop version of Windows 8 that runs all of the Bible software we’re used to using for advanced Bible study.

If someone wants to see how bad the Windows RT Bible app situation really is, just open the Windows app store on Windows 8 or Windows RT and search for Bible. I can’t find a single app that I’d call an in-depth, hardcore, advanced Bible study app.

I’m not suggesting that the Windows RT Bible apps are worthless. There’s a few nice Bible reading apps in the Microsoft Windows RT store. A few recognizable names will hopefully morph their apps into something advanced students can use, like their apps on iOS, Android or the computer. Logos and Olive Tree each offer a Windows RT app. They’re just for basic Bible reading and searching at this point.

My search for Bible apps returned 94 hits. In the list we get other sacred texts like those of Hindu or Islam. That’s fine, but we’re looking for the Christian’s Scriptures. We also get scripture memory apps and single verse of the day apps. Of the latter I really like the Logos verse of the day app because it includes a pretty graphical presentation of the verse. Of the 94 “Bible” apps, there are apps for listening to Christian podcasts or reading Christian blogs and some quiz apps and more.

Only 30-35 of the apps in our search list actually let me read the Bible, and some only in foreign languages. We get a number of apps from the same company, HeavenWord. Their apps look useful, but why didn’t they combine them into a single app with lots of features? Even if they did, we still couldn’t do advanced Bible study.

Out of 94 apps, we’re only getting around 20 different Bible reading apps. None of them offer original language texts or powerful searching features. All of them pale in comparison to even the most basic desktop Bible study tool.

Granted the Windows RT platform lags behind iOS and Android by a few years and the computer by decades. I just hoped that some of the big boys in mobile Bible study, like Logos or Olive Tree, might have something great to offer by now.

Readers considering the new Windows RT platform for Bible study should wait unless they’re happy just reading the Bible or willing to go online to do some advanced study.

If a Bible reader is all you’ll need for Windows RT consider the following, which seem promising:

- Bible Pronto – looks more mature and advanced than the others
- Logos – it’s just a reader right now, but they have a deeper bench of programmers than most Bible software companies and a long history of offering great Bible software
- Olive Tree’s Bible Reader – same reason as Logos
- YouVersion Bible – they’re the most downloaded Bible app on any platform and I have hope that they’ll bring all the useful stuff we get in iOS and Android
- AcroBible – they make a great app for iPad and iPhone and their Windows RT apps should provide similar quality
- HeavenWord – they offer a few apps that look interesting

There may be others, but I’ve only looked at the above for now. I’ll be happy to test another app if the developer wants to reach out to me.

Which Bible app do you use on Windows RT? Let me know in our Bible Study community at CC-Mag’s site (http://bit.ly/winrtbible). As always, you can read more about Bible software at my website (http://www.kevinpurcell.org).
In the past few weeks since my article in the February issue of CC-MAG, cyber security has been in the headlines again. The biggest news has been the public posting of personal and sensitive information of a wide variety of celebrities and public officials, including such international notables as First Lady Michelle Obama and Microsoft tycoon Bill Gates. Moreover, thanks to the expert feedback I received from Tim Lors of Lors Consulting (http://www.lorsconsulting.com, a faithful CCMAG reader) after my article last month, I’ve decided to write this follow-up article and incorporate some of his advice for the good of the community.

While I don’t believe that having this particular protection against malware would have prevented the breach of the personal information security of either of these aforementioned public figures, it will nonetheless help to protect you from both data theft and damage to your personal computer. If only the U. S. Government and private companies who store our personal data would be as super-vigilant at protecting our personal information, such breaches as this might not occur!

First off, with regard to personal computer protection against malware, I was chagrined to learn of Microsoft Security Essentials, a free download from Microsoft available at http://www.microsoft.com/security/pc-security/mse.aspx. Although it has been around for a while and provides highly effective protection against malware, it has somehow escaped my notice. Thanks to Tim Lors for bringing it to my attention.

If you want to go directly to the download site, go to http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/download/details.aspx?id=5201 and choose the *amd64* installation file for a 64-bit operating system (OS) and the *x86* file for a 32-bit OS. If you’re not sure whether
your OS is 32-bit or 64-bit or if it meets the other system requirements listed on the download page, right-click your mouse on the “Computer” menu item from the Windows Start button (or key) and choose “Properties” from the pop-up menu. Your computer’s system specifications will be displayed in detail there.

According to one review I read at [http://www.zdnet.com/blog/bott/microsoft-vs-mcafee-how-free-antivirus-outperformed-paid/2614](http://www.zdnet.com/blog/bott/microsoft-vs-mcafee-how-free-antivirus-outperformed-paid/2614), Microsoft Security Essentials has either matched or exceeded other popular paid software that is supposed to perform the same function. In the interest of full disclosure, I haven’t had sufficient time to personally try it out so I can properly review this software for you, but on the basis of all this expert professional advice, I feel confident in recommending it to you now. I have already installed it on one of my primary household computers, and I will give you an update on it the next time I address this issue here.

Since the security breaches of personally sensitive information of the previously-named, high-profile people would not have been prevented by the mere installation of software that is more effective against malware, what can we lesser-known people do to protect ourselves against the very real threat of theft of our own personally sensitive information? To be honest, there’s only so much we can do personally, because once our private information is provided to any government agency, private company, or organization for the purpose of obtaining benefits, medical care, insurance, banking or credit card service, or any other necessary personal business, it is literally out of our hands. Even if we limit our participation in any sort of electronic business that has become the norm nowadays, we simply can’t prevent these other agencies from entering our personal information into databases that they maintain and share electronically with other agencies, companies, etc. It is this electronic information-sharing that puts our private information at risk in the first place, because it is precisely these computers containing this treasure trove of electronic databases of millions of peoples’ personal information that black hat hackers attack with more and more frequency and with ever-increasingly sophisticated hacking software.
It has been suggested that a software firewall is unnecessary with the advent of Web browsers with site-checking and filtering to prevent a “drive-by download” of malware, such as Internet Explorer with its “SmartScreen Filter” capability. The reason I disagree with this assessment is because there is more on the Web to protect against than drive-by downloads of malware. Every personal computer comes with thousands of unused, open and enabled virtual ports which third party computers can connect to and use for nefarious purposes. The primary

If only I could advise these government agencies and private companies, I would recommend that they take the following steps as a minimum to prevent hackers from accessing these highly sensitive databases. By the way, this same advice will also help protect the sensitive data on your church or other non-profit organization computers as well.

1. Do NOT store sensitive databases on computers with a continuous, direct connection to the Internet! If it is necessary to share information with another agency or company electronically, copy onto a secure USB drive the information from the record(s) needed to share and insert the drive into the USB port of an Internet-connected computer and send the information individually. At least, then the entire database would not be at risk.

2. Require that any Internet-connected computer used for sensitive information-sharing be connected to the Internet through a direct-wired router, meaning one that is connected via a Cat5 cable, rather than a wireless connection, unless that wireless connection can be both secured and encrypted.

3. When sending personally sensitive information via the Internet, use a secure Web site (meaning a URL that contains the “https” prefix) using a Web browser with the highest level of encryption available for transmitting the information from one computer to another, or else use the Remote Desktop Connection feature in Windows to connect directly to the other computer, providing also that this can be done securely.
Michael L. White is the founder and Managing Editor of Parson Place Press, an independent Christian publishing house in Mobile, Alabama. His book Digital Evangelism: You Can Do It, Too! (Parson Place Press, April 2011) is available wherever books are sold. For a list of his other books and articles, visit his Web site at books.parsonplace.com.

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Michael L. White is the founder and Managing Editor of Parson Place Press, an independent Christian publishing house in Mobile, Alabama. His book Digital Evangelism: You Can Do It, Too! (Parson Place Press, April 2011) is available wherever books are sold. For a list of his other books and articles, visit his Web site at books.parsonplace.com.

There’s so much more to say about this subject, but I will let this suffice for now. If you have anything to add or any questions about what I’ve written here, I invite you to initiate a discussion thread in the Digital Evangelism Community on CCMAG’s Web site (http://community.ccmag.com) so that the entire community can benefit.

Until next time, I pray you will have both happy and safe computing as you conduct your digital evangelism. I also wish you a most Blessed Resurrection Day and Season through Christ our Lord. Amen!
Early in 2012, Google introduced a revolutionary concept, connected eyeglasses providing an augmented reality view of the world. Called Google Glass, at first it appeared to be like many of Google’s “April Fools” jokes – so cool, but it couldn’t possibly be real.

Last month, Google made many geek’s hearts leap when they announced the Glass Explorer Program – a way for any of us to get our hands on an actual working version of the gear. Of course, it’s not free or easy. Google ran a contest for ideas on how folks would use the cool technology. Google says they were overwhelmed with entries. Winners would still need to pay $1,500 and travel either to New York, Los Angeles, or San Francisco to pick them up.

Google has posted some amazing videos to give a sense for how life could change with this new technology, but how should we, as church technology leaders view this “revolution.”

What is Google Glass?

Google Glass is a product by Google currently under development. The product is a form of wearable computing. Specifically, it looks like a pair of eyeglasses, but the right lens actually is a transparent display screen for information presented by a tiny computer embedded in the earpiece. It also has a front-facing camera that effectively captures what you see. The device takes verbal commands and also provides audio output, like a Bluetooth earpiece. It connects to your smartphone to connect to the Internet and to place and
These are just some of the features that come at no additional cost with the **RDS Advantage** Church Management System:

- **Credit/Debit Card and Kiosk processing**  
  (no initial, monthly or annual fees. Integrated with RDS accounting)

- **Leader Management**  
  (leaders can manage their groups remotely)

- **Event/Facility Scheduling**  
  (integrated with website calendars)

- **Physical Inventory Tracking**  
  (take inventory with scanners)

- **Payroll Check-In**  
  (no time clock needed - check in at your workstation)

- **Child Check-In**  
  (user control of features for each activity)

- **Library with Patron Lookup**  
  (bar code library item check-in and out)

- **Contact Management**  
  (care ministries - Pastor calls - follow up - mobile)

- **Check Imaging with E-Check Deposit**  
  (One step data entry with remote check deposit)

- **VOIP Voice Messaging**  
  (no hardware required - does not use your phones)

- **Cloud and On-Site hosted Systems**  
  (Tier III SaSS Cloud-hosted or install on your site)

These modules and more are part of a totally integrated system that includes ministry and outreach functions combined with comprehensive fund accounting. **BEST OF ALL**  
These features are included at **NO** additional cost.
receive audio and video calls.

However, Google is much more of a software company than a hardware company, so the real power of Google Glass comes in how the hardware is used to fundamentally change how we interact with the world around us.

Google Glass can capture everything you see, say, and hear and can share that over the network. Google Glass can interpret those inputs and take action appropriately. At its simplest, the product can respond to your verbal commands to take a picture, record a video, place a video or audio call, search for information, or provide directions. Think of it as Apple’s Siri, but with real world connections.

Obviously, Google Glass can also present information to you in a head’s-up display with audio. You can see and hear the friends you’re video calling with, or the results of your search, or the turn by turn directions to your destination.

But, Google Glass can also interpret what you’re looking at or hearing and overlay augmented reality information. Theoretically, Google Glass could recognize a painting you’re looking at and provide information about the artist and the work. It could recognize music that is playing and tell you about the composer, the musicians, the album, and even how to purchase a copy. It could recognize a product you hold in your hands in a store and provide ratings, reviews, and pricing information from competing sellers.

I’m one of those people who has encountered lots of folks throughout my career, but struggle to remember names. Theoretically, Google Glass could identify the person I’m looking at and present...
information from their LinkedIn profile or perhaps my e-mail history to help remind me of how I’m connected with that person.

How could Google Glass serve the church?

The potential applications for Google Glass in ministry are almost limitless. A pastor could see his sermon outline as he engages with the congregation. Each of us could see scripture as soon as we hear the reference. Hymn music and lyrics could appear before our eyes as we lift our hands in praise.

As we serve immigrants in our communities, Google Glass could provide real time translation. As we engage with our ministries, we can easily capture photos and videos, and even share them real time with those that are sick or otherwise unable to be with us so that they can feel as if they are there serving alongside us. Group studies and prayer time no longer require us to be together in one place.

For missionaries, Google Glass can put critical information right in front of them when they need it. Navigation, translation, emergency first aid instructions, Bible references in the local language – you name it, Google Glass could provide it. Supporters back home no longer would be limited to monthly newsletters, quarterly Skype calls, and occasional missions conference slide shows. They would truly experience the mission field through the eyes and ears of the missionaries as they serve the physical and spiritual needs of those God has placed in their care.

What is dangerous about Google Glass?

The power of Google Glass also points to the dangers of the technology.
At its most innocuous, Google can present whatever information it chooses in front of our eyes. Jonathan McIntosh created a humorous example of “ADmented Reality” via Google Glass on YouTube (click the link or search on YouTube). Google makes its money from advertising, and I’m sure the company will find some way to integrate advertising into the Google Glass experience. As demonstrated by this product spoof, Google has the opportunity to present ads based on what you’re seeing, what you’re doing, and who you’re communicating with. At a much simpler level, Google already does that via web ads and ads in Google Mail.

If you’re already concerned about privacy and the fact that companies like Google track what we do on the web and even where we take our Android cellphones, Google Glass should probably set off major alarms.

Finally, consider the missionaries serving in lands hostile to the gospel. Google Glass would enable every person visited, every meeting attended, every word spoken to be captured and potentially shared with the authorities.

Google is famous for their motto of “Do No Evil.” Do you trust their definition of good and evil?

It is my hope and prayer that these articles on the power and danger of technology will encourage you in your daily walk with Christ. Whether it is Java, the printing press, radio, television, personal computers, the Internet, the Cloud, mobility, or augmented reality, new technologies continue to advance our ability to know God and to serve Him, wherever we go.

Russ McGuire is an executive for a Fortune 100 company and the founder/co-founder of three technology start-ups. His latest entrepreneurial venture is Hschooler.net (http://hschooler.net), a social network for Christian families (especially homeschoolers) which is being built and run by seven young men under Russ’ direction.
I recently looked at a church website that celebrated the great success of their Easter outreach by listing the number of candy baskets given away at a pre-Easter egg hunt. Though I understand they were celebrating that they got a great turnout for their event, a great turnout alone does not make for a successful church event, especially for this kind of event. If you do even the most minimal advertising, it’s difficult not to get a great turnout when you are giving away free food and candy.

Some questions:

• What made this church event different from the similar events hosted by the local mall or downtown merchants?
• What did people learn about the church from attending the event?
• How many people came back to church the following week because of the event?
• Did the attendees learn anything about Jesus from the event?
• Did the attendees leave with any follow-up information that invited them back to the church or gave them information on how to find out more about the Christian life?

We’ve got to get honest with ourselves about the results of what we do if we want to make an impact on our world. If your answers to these questions aren’t all you want them to be, take some time to think about how you can make your upcoming events produce the results you want. The following ideas might help.

Measuring takes away the power of opinion
To keep peace in the body of Christ, we need to
measure results so that our opinion about what we did is not the deciding factor of if it was successful or not. Yes, people may have had fun and lots showed up, but was it successful for the Kingdom of God?

How can we do this? Sports help because just like in basketball—if you want to know who won or not, you don’t simply talk about if you liked the game or not, you look at the final score. Though we don’t score baskets, our goal to determine success in the Christian life is obedience to Jesus and in outreach a key factor is whether or not we are fully fulfilling the Great Commission. There are two parts to doing that:

1. That people come to know Jesus as Savior
2. That they grow to maturity in their faith and become disciples

Keeping score starts by simple counting

This is not rocket science. Score-keeping in church communications special event success is determined, first of all, by attendance. The simple numbers of people that respond (or didn’t) after you created and distributed your communications.

The score is determined by asking questions such as these:

Did you do a mailing? Send a postcard? An email? Web announcement? Pulpit announcement?
Did you equip your people with communication tools? Connection cards, postcards, website links?
How many people attended event? How many were new to the church?

The simple numbers of how many new people attend the church, why and what brought them there is important because you cannot start the road toward sharing the message of salvation without people getting inside the church and becoming part of the process. Whether your church accepts people as believers with a simple confession of faith after one visit or whether becoming a Christian is defined by a series of explorations and classes, followed by a decision and baptism, or any combination of these events, whatever your tradition, it must start with simple attendance.

Be honest in record keeping and evaluation

For example, if you put on an Easter outreach event and you spend thousands of dollars, what was your return on investment? Again ask the questions above: how many are now attending the church because of the event? How many have become Christians because of the event?

I suspect far too many churches do Christmas and
other holiday events because the people attending the church really like to put on the events. To decide if this is the primary motivation—track the results. To repeat: how many new people are now attending the church because of the event? How many have become Christians because of the event?

**If you aren’t tracking costs and results, why not?**

Even without tracking it, if you know the answer is something like “We didn’t do a very good job of communicating it to people outside the church and we can’t honestly point to anyone who is now attending, or who has come to know Jesus because of it.” You, then, please take time to learn to communicate more effectively. My website, [http://www.effectivechurchcom.com](http://www.effectivechurchcom.com) can give you lots of ways to do this so that your holiday events will yield measurable results in the future.

**Track more than holiday events; track all ministry events**

Tracking our communications and the results of them will keep us honest in church programming and evaluation.

**It can keep us from over spiritualizing.**

What I mean by that is that it is easy to conclude that people aren’t interested in something such as spiritual growth, when we simply didn’t advertise it very well.

**Honest evaluation can also keep us from false excuses.**

A popular excuse today is that “We just can’t afford to advertise church events because of the recession.” There is a lot of marketing that doesn’t cost much: web-based, email-based advertising, creating websites and blogs with WordPress.com.

Make sure what you do create has complete details. Involve your people instead of buying mailing lists. (e.g. equip them with inexpensive postcards to mail to friends)

All these ideas can generate lots of church marketing for little or no money.

A lack of money might force us to try new things.

Even if finances improve, we don’t have to spend increased money on communications now that we’ve learned how to communicate more cost-effectively. Giving to missions and to hunger relieving projects is far more important than unnecessary advertising expenses.

In summary, honestly measure the success of your communications by honestly evaluating their spiritual impact by determining from the event:

- How many people moved closer to a relationship with Jesus?
- How many people grew in their relationship to Jesus?

Once you have an honest measure, you can then work on whatever changes you need to make for more Great Commission-fulfilling result from your communication efforts.

*For more information on Effective Church Communications, Planning and Evaluating, go to: [http://www.effectivechurchcom.com](http://www.effectivechurchcom.com)*
A common discussion these days is whether a move to Google Apps makes sense. Is it a good option compared to Microsoft Office?

Why is this an Issue?
There are four driving forces among church team members wanting their organizations to adopt Google Apps:

- **Cost.** The cost of Google Apps is free, so from that perspective it can make a lot of sense. But Google has changed their pricing policy for religious nonprofits a few times; I think the end of the story on using Google Apps in a church has not yet been written. As of this writing (February, 2013) Google is willing to donate the use of Google Apps to nonprofit organizations with the following restrictions:
  - Less than 3000 users,
  - Registered and recognized 501(c)(3)—searchable in the IRS database; Google does not recognize the equivalence the IRS gives to churches,
  - Does not discriminate on any unlawful basis with regards to, among other issues:
    - Religion,
    - Sex,
    - Gender identity or expression, or
    - Sexual orientation

  Many churches do discriminate in those areas, though one could argue that doing so is not unlawful because of certain Supreme Court decisions. However, federal law and the U.S. Department of Labor do not give churches an exemption regarding those sexual discrimination issues. Churches who have been transparent with Google regarding them have been denied the free use of Google Apps.

- **Familiarity.** Many younger computer users and home computer users use some of the features of Google Apps, and are thus familiar with them and want to continue using what they are familiar with.

- **Easy Sharing of Docs and Calendars.** The perception that this is a benefit that Google Apps provides that is not available to network users of Microsoft Office apps is not correct if the church’s computer network is fully used.

- **Availability.** One of the reasons some push towards Google Apps is their need to connect to email, calendars, contacts, etc when they are away from the church property. That is also easily done in Microsoft’s solution. If it’s not working, it is usually either because of email server configuration settings or poor Internet connectivity at the church; both easily overcome.

Further Legal Implications
While talking with some prominent nonprofit attorneys I asked if signing contracts stating a church does not discriminate in those areas mentioned above could dam-
age its ability to defend itself in a lawsuit. They said a sharp plaintiff attorney could try to introduce such signed contracts as evidence the church lies about how it conducts itself. They also said that if they were defending the church, they would try to get the contracts removed from consideration since they are not specific to the case at hand, but there’s no way to predict that outcome.

Another issue raised by the attorneys was about the likely lost confidentiality of the contents of the emails and docs created in Google Apps. They stated that Google is not as secure an environment as private servers can be, and the possibility exists that Google could mine the content for Google’s purposes.

**Google vs Microsoft Pricing**

Microsoft allows churches to qualify for their charity licensing program. The one-time cost for the items that compete with Google Apps are:

- Exchange Server: $158
- Exchange Client Access Licenses: $3 per mailbox
- Microsoft Office Standard 2011 (Mac) or 2013 (Windows): $50 per computer

If a church wanted these solutions without the IT cost associated with supporting them, there are many who can host them— which would minimize those costs.

Based on Google’s requirements and the demands of integrity, many churches cannot qualify for a free version of Google Apps. If it’s not free, the cost is $5 per month per user, or $60 per user per year. That’s already more in one year than the cost of Microsoft Office’s one-time fee! So what is the further reason for considering Google Apps? Outsourced IT.

Now outsourced IT is something I agree with. However, consider whether what Google delivers as outsourced IT is what you’re willing to accept.

- Unscheduled and unannounced downtime. Google aims for 99.9% uptime as their standard. That also means an average of nearly nine hours of unscheduled and unannounced downtime per year. As an IT services and support provider, I think our clients would fire us if their system was down that much.
- Who ya gonna call? When Google is down, there’s no one to call. At most there will be an announcement on a website or via social media.

I think Google Apps is a solution that is not right for the church. Her mission is time-sensitive and integrity-rich. Many of her internal communications are content-sensitive, and she is the target of many who want to stop her dead in her tracks. It’s helpful that there are secure private solutions, like those provided by Microsoft, that readily available and inexpensive.

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