



MOBILE
MINISTRY
FORUM

SOCIAL MEDIA MINISTRY

MADE EASY



Social Media Ministry Made Easy

Beta Version 0.8 April 2017

Mobile Ministry Forum (www.mobmin.org)



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This guide's creation was initiated and spearheaded under the oversight of the Mobile Ministry Forum and would not have been possible without the labors of the following key contributors (listed alphabetically by last name):

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We are also deeply grateful to Bettina Dragan for her able work compiling and organizing the authors' contributions and adding her design flair to the mix in order to produce the finished product you have before you today.

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FOREWORD

When the [Mobile Ministry Forum](#) first gathered together a multi-agency team to consider the possibility of developing an introductory guide to the use of social media for Christian outreach two things drove us to say yes and amen, this is something worth investing hundreds of our combined man hours into.

First was the fact that each and every day now, more than two billion individuals are pulling their mobiles out of purses and pockets or opening their laptops to zap a picture of the meal they are eating and Instagram it, check on their friends' latest status updates, or catch a goofy cat video that is currently trending. A decade ago social media users were largely restricted to students at a number of university campuses in the U.S. but today I am as likely to be asked by a new contact for my WhatsApp details as for my e-mail address or phone number whether I'm in Austin, Berlin, Cairo, Delhi, East Timor or anywhere in-between.

The second thing that drove us forward was that, as a group, we could not think of an appropriate individual resource we could share with someone who came to us asking how they could take initial steps into social media ministry. Sure, there are some websites that address social media ministry but it seemed to us that a relative newbie was going to have a difficult time pulling together the multitude of web postings in a way that really gave them a chance at a good start in social media ministry. Similarly, we couldn't find one or even two books that we felt would set many of our enquirers off on a solid path. On the one side there were numerous social media marketing books that were helpful if you wanted to sell a product or a develop a strong brand following. On the other hand there were books for American/Western pastors sharing how they should be using social media to grow and shepherd their pew-based flocks. While both were good in their respective areas neither addressed issues faced by Christians living and working in non-Christian majority/potentially restrictive countries, men and women who desire is to see Jesus lovers raised up and disciple making movements flourish in those places.

We hope that this guide will help to fill in that gap and serve as a stepping stone for those of you considering or launching out into social media ministry. This guide cannot and will not cover everything you want nor everything that you need but we do hope and pray that what you find here will assist in you with a foundations that can be built upon for years to come.

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1. HELPING OTHERS FIND, FRIEND, AND FOLLOW JESUS

AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL MEDIA MINISTRY

We don't have a choice on whether we do social media, the question is how well we do it.

Erik Qualmann

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the seas.

Habakuk 2:14

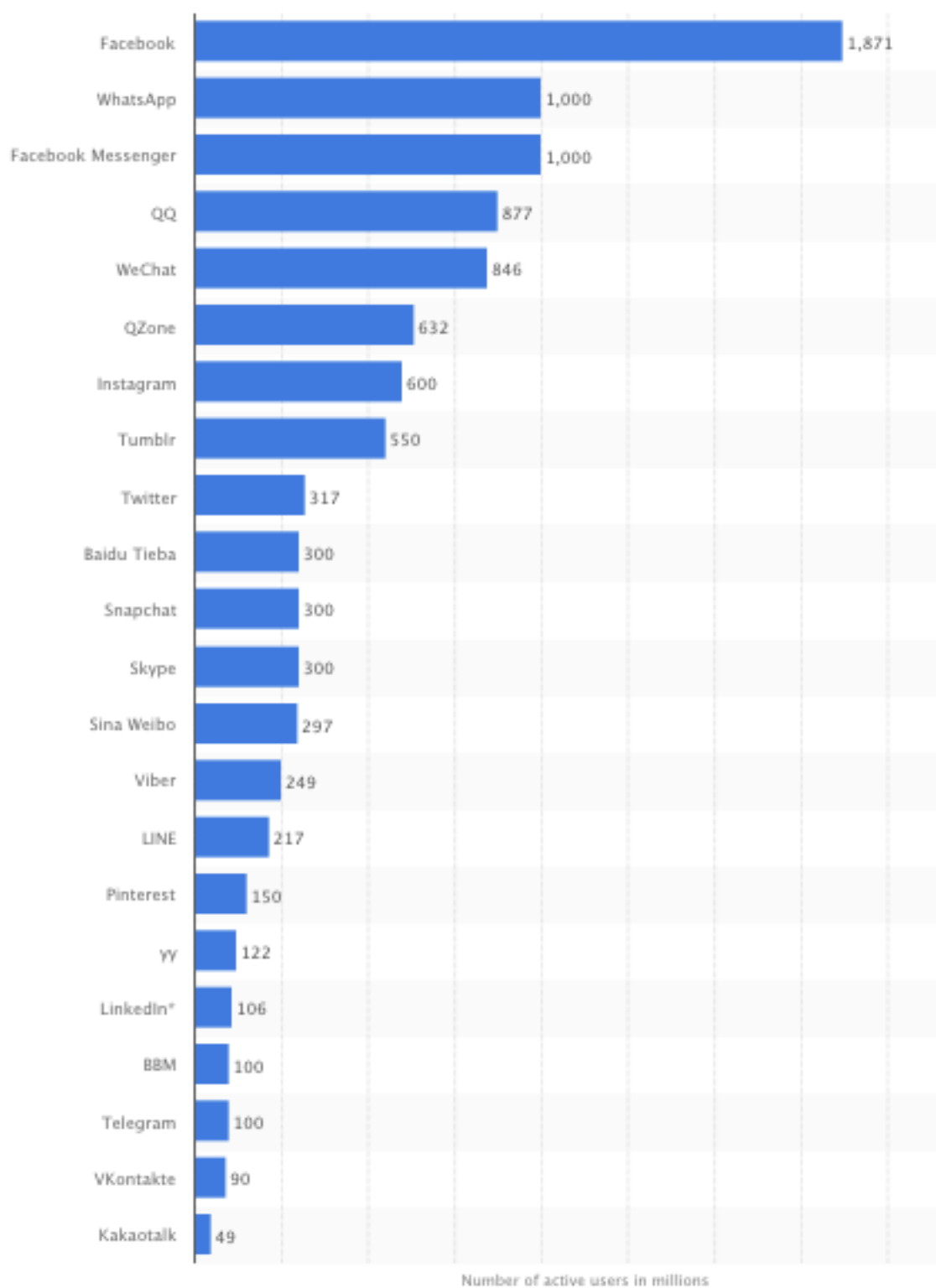
INTRODUCTION

Nearly 600 years ago, the mission of the Church was catapulted to a new level of influence and reach when Johannes Gutenberg developed the printing press, paving the way for the gospel to reach farther and faster into the lives of people around the world. Thanks to mobiles and the rise of social media, the gospel now has a way to reach beyond the limits of the printed word. You can view mobiles and social media as a modern day Gutenberg press enabling the further spread of God's kingdom among millions the poor and illiterate who previously were separated from it. We hope this guide will help you see ways God may be calling and enabling you to take ahold of these new tools for the spread of His Kingdom community, glory and goodness among the last and the least.

WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA & SOCIAL MEDIA MINISTRY?

In 2015 for the first time over a billion people logged into Facebook on a single day. That is now old news as Facebook counts nearly two billion monthly active users and the total number of social media users worldwide is nearing three billion. Multiply the 2.8 billion social media users by the two hours a day they average networking on social media and you literally have hundreds of thousands of years (not hours) being spent on social media each and every day. It would seem that if we want to meet people where they are at, social media networks wouldn't be a bad place to go looking. Meredith Gould, author of *The Social Media Gospel*, defines social media as "web-based tools for interaction that, in addition to conversation, allow users to share content such as photos, videos, and links to resources (Gould, *The Social Media Gospel*, pg 3). Below you can find a chart sharing some of the largest social media platforms today- are you on one or more of them?

Most famous social network sites as of January 2017, ranked by number of active users (in millions)



<https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/>

While some of the social media platforms are easily recognized there are others that you may be seeing for the first time and yet, as you can see, they have hundreds of millions of users. If you lived in China, Indonesia, Central Asia, Japan or Thailand (all considered “least reached” countries) some of those social media platforms would appear a lot more familiar.

Having then, an idea of what social media is and what the major social platforms are, what exactly is social media ministry? At its simplest, social media ministry is Christian ministry that is mediated through/enabled by social media networks. If God has called you to preach, love your neighbor, serve the poor, share the Gospel with unreached peoples, and almost anything else, that ministry can, to some extent, be mediated through and enabled by social media networks. Some of what many of you already do on social media could be considered “social media ministry” and sometimes our entry into social media ministry isn’t entirely intentional:

A retired minister had spotted from his Facebook feed that someone in the church was feeling low and sent a message asking if she wanted to chat. He expected that would mean meeting up for coffee, but she said yes and started typing...

Social media enables sharing, connection and community for individuals separated by distances, borders and even cultures. Social media ministry enables the spread of God’s love, truth, and Kingdom community to people and places long separated from them.

WHY SOCIAL MEDIA MINISTRY?

Did you know that India has more Facebook users than the U.S. India, in fact, has more Facebook users than any other country full stop. Saudi social media users, on average are spending nearly a fifth of their waking hour social media networking. I believe that Jesus is meant to be Lord of all and desires to be incarnated, “fleshed out”, among all peoples and in all parts of the world, He wants us to bring more of Him into these places. Do you realize that ISIS is literally killing it (and us) when it comes to social media? I would guess that security services have shut down more ISIS social media sites in the last year alone than the total number of Christian social media sites ever created. The Los Angeles Times ran a fascinating article some years back on a 63 year old Afghan mullah whose mosque attendance had been declining until he took up Facebook and started drawing the youth back through his interactions with them on it ([Afghan mullah offers ancient wisdom to youths on Facebook](#)). Are we willing to let these people control the online conversation about Christ rather than enter into it ourselves? Are we willing to allow social media solely be a place where people get radicalized for jihad rather than renewed in Jesus?

I have no doubt that many of you reading this guide are already running flat out wishing they had 26 hours in a day. I empathize with those of you who look forward to having to learn a new ministry technique or technology as much as you look forward to getting a root canal at the dentist’s office. I agree with those of you who worry about the sin-seeped content to be found on many social media networks- one should definitely not enter such places lightly nor without proper prayer and accountability backing. Yes, indeed, security concerns are rife when it comes to anything done on a social media platform. All of these things could keep us from moving further with social media ministry but then there is the heart of Jesus. The heart that looks out upon the masses and, with compassion, sees how harassed and helpless they are, like sheep

without a shepherd ([Mt. 9:36](#)). I believe God wants us to have that same heart as we see the surrounded by wolves that would keep them from ever knowing the Great Shepherd. Jesus has sent us into all the world and social media gives us access both to masses we've never been able to connect with as well as access to a place in people's lives where deep sharing takes place. May this heart of compassion, those eyes that see people as they really are, lead us on into this field that is ripe to harvest ([John 4:35](#)).

USING THIS GUIDE

The ministry potential of social media is enormous, yet getting started with social media ministry can be daunting. If social media were a swimming pool, should you dip your toes in first to test the water, wade in slowly to get acclimated, or dive in head first? There is no single correct answer, but this guide will help you better understand the pool (more like an ocean!) before you and equip you with some insights to help you decide on the best approach.

As Lewis Carroll so aptly penned in his classic *Alice in Wonderland*, "If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there." Put another way, it is an [easy way to go nowhere fast](#). The social media pool is easy to dive into, which is what makes it such a great place to reach people with the gospel. However, most social media users aren't entirely sure why they are getting wet. What is their objective, and how will they best accomplish it? If you want to use social media for ministry, the best place to begin is by having a plan. Chapter 2, "Developing Your Strategy", will help give you approach social media strategically so that you can harness its power for the sake of greater fruit in your ministry.

Social media as we know it has been around for roughly a decade - long enough for it mature and for us to recognize some general principles and practices that will help us accomplish our goals no matter what social platform you are using. These basics should be somewhat durable and apply wherever the winds of social media may blow (in the 12 months since the idea for this guide was first conceived, Twitter's Vine network has shut down, Snapchat has risen to prominence, and live, interactive video has become one of the fast growing segments). Chapter 3 covers general principles and practices that apply to any social media platform.

With some basics on strategy and general social media best practices as a foundation, we suggest you browse chapters 4 through 7 for some more specific insights on how some of the more popular social media networks and tools can be used. These chapters focus on specific networks and tools and can be referenced to help you further develop your strategy. They are not, however, exhaustive. They are designed to help you begin to think about how to use these things for ministry. Each section includes a list of resources to help you go deeper when you are ready. And, as we all know, our ever-present teacher, YouTube, is always at the ready to help us if we have the bandwidth to go deeper still!

Chapter 8 looks at the rise of online/social gaming and the potential for ministering through social gaming and gamification. Chapter 9 shares some ways you can boost the influence of your social media efforts through both no-cost simple adjustments to your content as well as via paid advertising, particularly via Facebook advertising.

Finally, it is helpful to understand a few things about security. There are risks associated with any kind of ministry, and social media ministry is no exception. The news is full of stories of hacks and privacy intrusions that have happened online or through social media. The risks and security issues vary depending on which social networks you use and how you use them.

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

When we gathered together the greatest minds in human history (well, perhaps that's a bit of an overstatement) to write this guide we recognized that, while we had a fair amount of training and experience in the area of social media ministry, our knowledge of how God was using social media for the spread of His love, glory and Kingdom was quite limited. For that reason we are releasing this as a "beta" product. Beta products are released to allow users the chance to test them out and provide feedback as to problems they found and things that could be improved upon. We'd very much appreciate your feedback about this guide. Are there things that are confusing? Issues you wish had been covered? Stories, case studies or best practices you are aware of that we could include? We'd love your input and will be looking for your suggestions between April and July of 2017. One way you can do that is by going to www.mobmin.org/atlas and then going to the Google Docs pages for the chapters ([links to them are at the bottom of the www.mobmin.org/atlas](#) page) and adding your comments directly to the sections themselves. Alternatively, you can email your suggestions to us at SMMMEGuide@gmail.com. Share some of the lessons you've been learning. Tell us your stories about how social media is impacting lives in your corner of the world. With your help, and for God's glory, we'll make the next version of Social Media Ministry Made Easy an even more effective tool.

2. DEVELOPING YOUR STRATEGY

STARTING OUT WITH THE END IN MIND SO THAT YOUR EFFORTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA PRODUCE ETERNAL FRUIT

If you aim at nothing, you will hit it every time!

Zig Ziglar

My ambition has always been to preach the Good News where the name of Christ has never been heard.

Romans 15:20a

INTRODUCTION

There may be many things that have brought you to be here reading this chapter right now. Perhaps you've noticed how all your friends and neighbors are continually on WhatsApp and wonder what you can do to help them know Jesus better through it. Perhaps your boss has issued the proclamation "we need to do more on social media". Perhaps you've got some amazing videos that you wish more people could see and wonder what you need to do on social media to make that happen. Each of these is a fine place to start but it's where you and those you connect with end up that we want you to focus on over these next several pages.

THREE SIMPLE QUESTIONS

Five minutes, maybe less. That's how long it would take to set up an account on most social media networks. And with very little effort, within 15 minutes you can post at least once and be all but certain to have followers or "friends", and possibly even comments ("Reach and interaction – that's what social media is all about!").

The mechanics of getting started with social media are quite simple, but thinking and planning strategically can make a huge difference in terms of what results from your efforts. There are three simple questions that you really need ask before launching out:

WHO: Who is it that you are trying to reach?

WHAT: What is it that you want them to do/what do you want to be the result of your connection and communication with them via social media?

WHERE: Where are they/what context are they in when you connect?

WHO?

While this sounds like a simple question the more specifically you can answer it at the beginning the more likely you are to see fruit come from your labors in social media. While it may be exciting to start making all kinds of contacts on social media there is a select target group you should be seeking to connect with. Are they of a certain ethnicity, live in a certain area, do they have a special interest that they share in common? The more tightly you can narrow down your “Who” the more likely you will be to truly engage with them and communicate in ways that speak to them and move them towards deeper discipleship with Jesus.

It’s at this point that we highly recommend that you consider developing a target persona (or a few of them) whom you and others you minister with can refer back to whenever you are considering potential ministry opportunities and communications ideas to ensure what you are doing fits with the “Who” you are doing it for. While we won’t cover all the ins and outs of persona creation (we recommend the following resources for that- [Indigitous’ Persona Creation Kit](#), particularly pages 4-5 or, from a marketing rather than ministry perspective, [Buffer’s The Complete, Actionable Guide to Marketing Persona’s, or Hubspot’s Buyer Persona Template](#)), here are some of the things you might want to include in a one to two page maximum persona:

- Make the persona as real of a “person” as possible. Give them a name, gender, age, “address” (city or town and country- potentially include whether they live in a city, suburban, or rural setting), education, occupation, religion, particular interests, likes and dislikes
- A photo of the face of someone who could be that persona is often very helpful for individuals and teams using those personas to help direct their outreach.
- Create a quote that they might say which sums up their life outlook or some other core aspect of their identity.
- Express the values that govern their actions and attitudes. Possibly rank their current religious practice (from completely non-practicing to fulfilling and even exceeding the requirements of their religion), spiritual openness (from no openness to new/alternate ideas to very open to examining new/alternate ideas), their emotional response to Christianity (anywhere from strongly opposed on one end to neutral to strongly favorable to even secret follower or publicly identifying follower on the other end)
- List their felt needs/pain points? How satisfied are they with their life? What is missing or lacking in their life? What are the struggles they face? The concerns, questions and past experiences that keep them awake at night?

WHAT?

What you want your contacts to do as a result of your social media outreach has to be more than them friending you, commenting on your posts or liking your pictures. While those are certainly not bad things I trust that what you really want to see happen is people moving on to a closer discipleship relationship with Jesus and perhaps even movements of Christ followers being raised up to become salt and light in their communities.

It's here that we need to think about a funnel that people progress through with your general target audience members mainly being found at the wide opening of the funnel and your ideal Christ-follower coming out at the narrow end.

While our goal may be to see people becoming a follower of Jesus we need to recognize that becoming a Christ follower often involves many small steps- changes of belief, the development of relationships, an ability to imagine a new reality and identity, alterations of values and perhaps even a reversal of emotional reactions to certain concepts.

While we cannot possibly know all the steps members of our target audience must go through to come out at the other end of such a funnel we do need to, with much prayer, ask God to help us see the likely steps and issues they will face the further down the funnel they travel and seek to develop a strategy of communications, media, and opportunities for interpersonal interaction (looking to bring them into face-to-face connection with believers from the earliest possible point) that will address those steps and issues and enable them to continue to move further along the funnel.. Frank Preston provides an excellent overview of this in his Indigitous presentation [Why Rahmad Comes to Faith and Abdul Does Not](#).

WHERE?

Your audience's viewing or listening context can make a lot of difference in what kind of interactions you should plan for and the ways you should reach out/platforms you should use. What media technologies do they have access to and how do they use them? Do they watch certain TV channels/shows, listen to certain radio channels/programs? What do they do with their phones? Calls, texting, games, listening to music, watching videos, etc.? Do they do social media and, if so, which platforms do they use and what devices do they use them on?

If you hope to connect with them via media what kind of context will they be in when that connection occurs? Will they be alone or with others? If they are worried someone could be looking over their shoulder (physically or online) your interaction with them will probably take a different track and you should be prepared for that. Are they filling brief snippets of time between other duties or spending leisurely hours looking for the latest and greatest? If they're randomly checking in while waiting for a ride to show up any second you're going to want to keep your engagement opportunities short and thought provoking. If they are the taxi driver it's probably a better idea to use audio content than hope they can read your writing or watch your video while driving!

THREE POSSIBLE APPROACHES

As I think about ways an individual or a smaller, less-resourced team (i.e. a team that doesn't have a lot of time, money or personnel to throw at social media) might look to leverage social media for ministry I conceive of three overarching approaches. The first simply looks to use social media as listening tool, a means of getting your finger on the pulse of the people you are reaching out to so that you can better speak into their lives as you leave your home and step out into their world. The second approach looks to use social media to broaden and deepen existing "in real life" connections. The final approach is the most intensive as it is focused on developing new connections and engaging with people on social media in a way that moves them to a deeper identification with and discipleship to Jesus Christ.

PULSE FINDING

Not too long ago it wasn't uncommon to start out your day by going to the front door, retrieving the newspaper and reading through it while you downed your breakfast and cup of coffee. The newspaper gave you a sense of what was going on in the world, what the weather would be and perhaps some advice on ways you might consider spending your day or weekend. Spending that little bit of time in the paper would help you know how to prepare for the day and enable you to have informed conversations around the water cooler at work. While that kind of morning routine may not be quite as prevalent today I do think we can approach social media in a way that, likewise, enables us to be better prepared for our day and readied to speak to the issues that are on people's minds and may come up in our face to face conversations. Social media listening can enable us to get a feel for the issues, concerns and even delights of the people we are reaching out to and once we know those things we can prayerfully ask the Lord to show us truths He wants brought into the conversations going on around us about those subjects. Consider this a kind of applied digital anthropology that helps us grow in the relevance in our day-to-day outreach.

So how can we do this? Perhaps have a Facebook profile that is specifically for listening and interacting with members of your target audience. Grow a circle of local relationships and join Facebook groups that involve people that you minister among. Identify local social and thought leaders that are on social media and follow them on Twitter or send a friend request. Scan the your social media feeds regularly to find out what's been happening that people are talking about and they are reacting to those things. Additionally, there are various social media listening tools that can help you see what people are Tweeting about in particular locations and show you the trending hashtags. There is a potential hazard of wasting time getting too caught up in trying to always be up on the latest greatest and even gossip but, on the other side, there is much that can be gained by putting a little bit of focused time into this kind of social listening on a regular basis.

As an aside, social media platforms also provide the opportunity locate members of your target audience and determine locations that would be helpful to target for in-person outreach. A helpful paper that shows how Facebook can be used in this way is Mapping the Diaspora with Facebook.

DEEPENING OFFLINE CONNECTIONS ONLINE

Sometimes it can be really hard to spend the time we would like with the people we'd most like to be investing in. While nothing beats face to face time it is wonderful that, when the Lord reminds us to pray for a contact or gives us a word we think He has for that person, we can get our phone out and WhatsApp them to let them know we are thinking of them, praying for them, and perhaps even have a word for them. Similarly, when we look at their wall and see posts sharing concerns and difficulties we can reply with Biblical insights and prayers that we are offering up on their behalf. Additionally, we can note how our various contacts respond to truths we share via social media. Are they commenting or liking to those truths? As we see patterns emerge in reactions (or lack thereof) we may start to get a sense for which contacts may be more open and with whom we should be seeking to invest more time. The opportunity for online interaction becomes especially important in situations where you and your contact are no longer able to see each other face to face, perhaps as a result of a new job, war, or other circumstances as my one co-worker has learned since being forced to flee Yemen's civil war. He is thankful for daily WhatsApp chats and the opportunity to send Bible verses to both encourage and challenge the contacts he left behind there.

How many of you out there have had a significant relationship with someone in the population you are ministering among, felt like a real relationship of openness and trust was developing and then been shocked to find that you had been led wildly astray in some way by how that person was portraying himself to you? If that has happened to you know that you weren't the first and won't be the last to have the proverbial wool pulled over your eyes. It's in situations like this that social media can actually enable us to see the other face of our "in real life" contacts. There may be one face that they show when we talk in person but what is the face they show with their peers and family? Social media is a blessing in this because, while typically we would never be allowed in to see that face, we can now just open their page and see it spelled out right in front of us. A coworker of mine was developing a relationship with a young man in the capital of a Middle Eastern country and things seemed to be coming along wonderfully. The young man sent a friend request to my co-worker who then decided that maybe he would just do a little "cyber-stalking" and check out a bit of who the guy's friends were and what he was posting on Facebook. Come to find out, this young man was actually involved with a jihadi network and it became quickly apparent that my co-worker should probably take a bit more care in his interactions with him.

BROAD SCALE SEED SOWING & DISCIPLE DEVELOPMENT

It is at this level that we are most likely to see larger scale results but this level also requires a the most significant investment of our time and energy from planning, to implementation and follow-up. Everything that was said about the Who, Where and What of social media ministry becomes absolutely essential at this level of outreach. When we approach social media as a key platform for an outreach strategy we need to take care not to view it as a hyped up bullhorn that we can commandeer to push our message out to the masses. While pushing our message out before a great multitude is possible via social media used in this manner there is little evidence to show that blasting multitudes with a message is correlated with movements of people coming to faith and pursuing deeper discipleship with Jesus. On the other hand

Christian media researchers have found that ministries that use social media to identify potential seekers and attempt to, in a focused way, draw them towards Christ by addressing their particular issues and concerns and challenging them to take steps of faith, have a much greater likelihood of seeing not just individuals but even entire groups and movements coming to faith and obedience to Jesus Christ (learn more in [Pull vs Push Media in Movements](#)).

When we post on social media – whether Facebook, Twitter, or some other platform – what we share may be seen by hundreds or thousands or potentially even millions. A smaller percentage, however, will actually pay attention to our post. Fewer still will actually engage with us in a meaningful way. And fewer still will actually “convert”, a marketing term used to describe a customer replying to a “call to action” and engaging at a deeper level – e.g. clicking on a link to learn more, sharing a post with his/her network, purchasing a product, sharing a story, etc. The funnel gets narrower and narrower – from many to few. But with intent-based social media, it is the few that we are usually after. In terms of ministry, we are most interested in finding those who are open to the gospel or eager to learn and grow in their faith. We still care about the many, and hope that everyone with whom we connect will be impacted, but we focus our attention on those who are responsive.

An important paradigm shift for many ministries is to realize that our job isn't necessarily to convince people what to think (telling them what to think) but, rather, to try to get them to spend more time thinking on the things that are important (telling them what to think about). The old adage “we learn best what we learn ourselves” rings true in ministry too. We want to see people spending time considering alternative truths and realities to the ones they've believed and trusted in before, really wrestling through and coming to conclusions that will hold through thick and thin. Simply telling them what and how they should think can work at cross purposes to that goal. Similarly, we want our outreach to lead people to start discussing these new truths and realities offline with their group of significant others- their buddies or best friends forever. Seekers who come to faith in the context of open discussion with their buddy group that are A) the most likely to carry on in the faith and B) most likely to see a fellowship group formed from that group.

An important paradigm shift for those coming into social media from a media background is that content is definitely not king. Strategy is king. Specifically having a well planned follow-up strategy around which you develop the appropriate media. Far too many ministries start with the media they already have available and try to form a strategy around that, something that rarely leads to successfully engaging people where they are at and pulling them down the funnel of deep discipleship. Media should be identified and/or developed to meet the needs of the strategy rather than trying to construct the semblance of a strategy around the needs of the media you have available.

One final thought for those interested in pursuing this level of social media outreach. While it is great to develop online relationships with people and help them take steps towards Christ “from afar”, it should be your goal to help seekers and those who have come to faith to connect face-to-face with a believer from as early a point as is possible. Similar to the need for having your contacts sharing what they are hearing online with their “buddy group”, having seekers and new believers connecting in person with believers is key to successful outreach.

SUMMARY

This chapter is meant to serve as an introduction to thinking and acting strategically when it comes to social media ministry. Doing so requires that you answer the questions who (do you want to reach), what (do you want them to do), and where (are they when they engage with your message). It also asks that you determine the overarching role social media is meant to play in your outreach efforts. This could be simply using social media to enable you to get a better insight into the lives of your target audience so as to be better able to minister to their needs. Alternatively, it could be using social media to grow and deepen face to face contacts you have already developed. Finally, social media could be the platform you use to enable a follow-up focused media outreach strategy meant to identify seekers and see them pulled down the discipleship funnel to deep level identification and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. Seeing that entire courses and books have been made on this subject we apologize for not being able to delve further into the subject but highly recommend your consideration of some of the resources listed below in the “Going Further” section.

GOING FURTHER LINKS / RESOURCES

Much of the theory that forms the backbone of what has been shared in this chapter comes from the [Media2Movements](#) blog, an initiative of Arab World Media/Pioneers and we highly recommend working through the [media strategy blog entries](#) from start to finish.

The [Foundations of Media Strategy](#) course builds upon the Media2Movements’ theoretical backbone and enables participants to really get their heads around foundational aspects of new media ministry through guided readings/viewings, interactive lessons with fellow classmates and instructors, and focused assignments that enable them to put the theory into practical action plans for their outreach.

A couple resources that can help in answering the “Where” question are the Mobile Ministry Forum’s [Digital Ministry Atlas for 40 Least Reached Countries](#) (includes a country research template in the appendix if your country isn’t included) and the [Kepios/We Are Social Singapore’s Global/Regional/Country Specific 2017 Digital Data slide decks](#).

You may find some helpful tools to assist you in using social media as a research tool to get a better feel for the pulse of your people in [Top 15 Free Social Media Monitoring Tools](#).

Cru has a great article on [Searching for Interested People on Facebook](#) and another on [Spiritual Conversations on Social Media](#)

3. GENERAL SOCIAL MEDIA HOW-TO'S

THINGS TO HELP YOU ON ANY SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM, FROM STARTING OUT, SETTING UP YOUR ACCOUNT AND ON TO DOING CONTENT AND ENGAGEMENT WELL

Social media has helped make the world flatter and reduced the degrees of separation, leading to the situation where many can interact with people who, but for this platform, may never have had the privilege to meet or speak with. That is the opportunity social media brings.

Nana Awere Damoah

He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as, in fact you are doing.

1 Thes. 5:10-11

INTRODUCTION

While there are very many social media platforms to choose between there are a number of commonalities in best-practices that we would like to recommend to you in this chapter.

BEFORE YOU START

Human relationships, whether face to face or virtual ones that take place on social media platforms, are precious and require time, prayer and personal investment. While we applaud your interest in pursuing social media as a ministry platform we do want to impress upon you that the creation and building of relationships, something which ministry in general and social media in specific focus upon in a significant way, is both a magnificent opportunity as well as a heavy responsibility that should not be taken lightly. C.S. Lewis, with his probing eloquence, stated:

*“It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree helping each other to one or the other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all of our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal.” (C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*)*

Are you or your team willing to invest yourselves personally in any relationships that develop or ensure that others will? Will you regularly bring contacts before the throne pleading for God’s mercy upon them? If you purpose to do both of these continue on but, if you aren’t so sure that you are willing or able to do them, you should seek the Lord’s face to see whether or not He really wants you to move down this path.

In that same vein, human relationships in a fallen world require much care and caution. We read far too often of pastors leaving the ministry after developing an inappropriate relationship a church member that they were counseling and, similarly, how many times have we heard of a husband leaving their wife after reconnecting with an old flame over Facebook. Our plea to you is that you not enter into any ministry, and especially social media ministry, without both significant prayer backing as well as accountability from peers and spiritual leaders. No one is beyond temptation and the potential snares that can be found on social media are beyond counting out. Our recommendation to any individual pursuing social media ministry is that they, in conjunction with a spiritual and/or ministry leader, create a covenant stating the boundaries that they will not cross as they launch out into this ministry. Areas needing to be addressed include:

1. Relationships with members of the opposite sex
2. Relationships with minors
3. Things that they will not set before their eyes and that they will share with their accountability partner/leader if they view whether purposefully or inadvertently
4. Steps that will be taken should they fail to keep any of the standards set out

For accountability to work, this covenant needs to be reviewed regularly and ministry workers need to frequently be asked if they have broken any of the commitments they agreed to.

Finally, many of us can think of times when we thoughtlessly pulled up our social media page on a whim just to see what the latest-greatest was and found ourselves, an hour or more later, looking up in bewildered amazement wondering where the time had flown. While social media provides many opportunities for ministry it also provides many opportunities to escape our reality and responsibilities. If you already find self-discipline in other areas to be somewhat of a challenge social media ministry may not be the best outreach avenue for you to pursue. This is another area where some form of accountability can be a help in ensuring the hours spent on social media are being invested in outreach rather than entertainment or the fulfillment of idle curiosity.

All this to say, do not consider pursuing social media ministry lightly.

SETTING UP

Once you have figured out the social media platform/s you're going to set up shop on it's time to personalize your account. As you approach this you need to think about the "you" that others will discover when they first come across your/your ministry's profile or account. Realize that, as someone comes across your social media account for the first time they are, within the space of a very few short seconds, going to ask questions like "Who is this?" Is this somebody that seems trustworthy/credible? Is this somebody that seems relatable and relevant? You can increase the chance that they will feel positively about these things by the way you handle the following elements when setting up your account.

PROFILE PHOTO

The first thing most people will notice is your profile photo (sometimes called an avatar), the picture you use to show who you are. Leaving a grey silhouette or whatever the stock placeholder is as your profile photo definitely increases the chances of someone passing you right by without a glance. Here are some recommendations for a good profile photo:

- Choose an image leaves an impression of you as being likeable and trustworthy (smiles usually help with the former but not in all cultures).
- The image you upload should be a decently large size (600x600 pixels or so) in order for those who click on it to be able to see it at a relatively viewable size rather than just the thumbnail size it is typically displayed at.
- Have your face fill the majority of the image as it will usually only be seen as a small thumbnail size image
- Have your face well lit (while not blown out into a ghostly white image by too much light)
- You can use an image other than your face. One Arab-world outreach uses a cartoon image of an Arabic person who appears good-natured and kind. This protects the anonymity of outreach workers and allows for different ministry staff to respond to social media contacts.

One other item to note, if you are setting up accounts on various social media and using the same name, it is advised that you use the same avatar across all accounts. If you are setting up the account to represent a ministry you will need to use branding guidelines your ministry already has or, if none exist, develop some to keep consistency across social media platforms (the name to be used, a particular logo/avatar that should always be used, a color palette, fonts, etc.)

BACKGROUND IMAGE

After your avatar, the second thing most people coming across your account will notice is the image that fills the background of your page. This image is called the "cover photo" on Facebook and LinkedIn and the "header" in Twitter and, according to Guy Kawasaki, it's purpose

is to “tell a story and communicate information about what’s important to you” (The Art of Social Media, p 8). The cover photo, similarly, can be used as a kind of “billboard” which you can switch out occasionally and use to share the things you are currently focusing on as a ministry. While Kawasaki would warn you to make sure and insert an image rather than leave the stock background in I, similarly, would warn you to make sure that any image you used doesn’t distract from the content you are posting and that it doesn’t confuse the image you want people to have of yourself or your ministry. Other types of images you could consider using include things that you or your target audience have a passion for, something that you are promoting, or scenes that your target audience would find beautiful including local cityscapes, nature, folk art or events, etc.

PROFILE

The final, and perhaps most important part of your social media identity, is the profile you fill out describing who/what you are. Be short and sweet here, trying to be relatable to members of your audience (such as being a mother, student, resident of the same city, etc.) while possibly sharing something of what you are passionate about too.

WAYS TO INCREASE REACH & ENGAGEMENT

Reach, for better or for worse, is what most people think about as their eyes go wide while contemplating the potential of social media ministry. It’s the huge number of people that are a potential audience on the particular social media platform. It’s the idea of the viral post or video that is viewed and liked by thousands and hundreds of thousands that sends chills down the spine of marketers and missions executives alike. In the old Gospel song “Deep and Wide” it’s the wide that we’re talking about when we use the word reach. How many followers do we have, how many people are seeing our postings, this is reach. Reach can provide exciting statistics to share with supporters but our hope is that you’re interested social media ministry for much more than that.

“Engagement”, on the other hand, is the deep part of “Deep and Wide”. How much interaction are we having with our audience. Do we have likes, comments, shares, retweets, replies and mentions coming in in response to our postings. These two can be measured and shared and give us a sense of the effect of our efforts but even engagement is only a waymarker on the path towards what I trust is our ultimate purpose of seeing lives transformed and people growing into faith, obedience to and worship of the Lord Jesus Christ and communities being transformed by the Spirit of God.

That said, communications and social media experts have come to see that several variables can have a significant impact the reach and/or engagement of our social media efforts and postings. I’d like to share some of them here as they apply pretty much universally across social media platforms.

BEING SOCIAL

Conversations involve more than one person and there is a big difference between dialogue and a monologue. Social Media is called that because it is meant to be about interaction so we need to take care to make our efforts on social media a lot more than simply broadcasting our message. Tune into the lives and feeds of others you are connecting with. Reply and comment on their updates and repost their content. You may just find that your interest in others leads to a growth in their and others' interest in you and your message. One rule of thumb (Pareto's Principle) would have you look to have an 80/20 ratio of four interaction/community building communications for every one ministry content/call-to-action/invitation/promotional message that your outreach really wants to put forward (this is explained more fully in the book [Jab, Jab, Right Hook](#) which has a wealth of social media insights interspersed with a bit of unfortunate foul language).

STORYTELLING

Everyone likes a good story and it's likely that the story shared in a sermon is going to be better remembered the following Wednesday than the three points the pastor was trying to make. Whenever possible, share things in story form- I and your audience thank you for that in advance!

BEING VISUAL

Studies show that social media posts that include images have 180% more engagement than posts that don't. Likewise, memory recall rates for text only sources is only 10% while sources that combine text and visuals have a 63% recall rate. So, if you want your postings to be noticed and engaged with and if you want people to remember what you are posting include visual images with them! Similarly, video engagement rates are way higher than text only posting rates so you should definitely consider the use of videos in your social media postings too. Note that some social media channels autoplay videos without audio unless the viewer clicks to unmute the video. In such cases you should plan on your video being seen without audio/narration and add text overlays that share the message you are wanting to be shared (see [All you need is overlay: 3 great examples of text-overlay videos](#) for some pointers and examples)

ADDING VALUE

While we know that helping come to faith and grow in the depth of their walk with Jesus is supremely valuable we want to show them that we're also interested in the day-to-day needs and concerns that they find value in. If you haven't already created a persona and worked through what your target members' interests and concerns are take a break, go back to the

previous chapter and follow the advice in the “Who” section. Posting about things that will benefit our audience members in the areas they care about will generate greater reach and engagement. Look for things that will bring a smile to your audience’s face, will make their life a little easier, or give them information that they are looking for and then post those things (often times that can be simply reposting others’ content). Your audience will appreciate what you’ve shared and will come back for more, including the deeper posts you intersperse among the others.

USING HASHTAGS & KEYWORDS

One of the ways you can increase the likelihood of a post being noticed is by using a hashtag. Hashtags are keywords that are immediately preceded by the # symbol and hashtag searches can easily be performed on social media platforms like Twitter and Instagram. Knowing which hashtags are being used and searched for by your target audience can help you to post content relevant to the subject the hashtag refers to. See what your target audience members are posting and the hashtags they are using and use what you learn to guide the kind of posts you produce and the hashtags you should tag them with to potentially develop a greater following among them. A way to identify trending hashtags in a certain geographic area is described in the article [Locate Regional Trending Topics on Twitter](#). Posting content along with the associated hashtag increases the chances of your posting then being found and engaged with along with your account being followed.

BEING ACTIVE

You’re much more likely to have people checking back in to your social media channel if you are posting regularly. This may involve locating other’s content/postings that you can repost or, alternatively, require creating a content calendar and producing a number of content pieces ahead of time which can then be scheduled for later posting. One piece of advice is to think through the local “calendar” of important events, remembrances, celebrations and holidays and consider timely imagery/messages you should be creating and preparing to share on those occasions.

BEING BRIEF

Time is valuable and it is given somewhat grudgingly. Respect your audience’s time by not being long winded. [CHURCHM.AG](#) has an excellent post sharing the optimal length in characters, words or minutes for almost any type of social media posting and I highly recommend checking out [The Optimal Length for Social Media Updates \[Infographic\]](#).

MAKING SURE IT WORKS ON A MOBILE SCREEN

In June of 2014 Mark Zuckerberg, the founder and CEO of Facebook, declared that, from then on out, Facebook should be considered a mobile company. Not an internet company, not a media company but a mobile company. Why would he say such a strange thing? Because Mark recognized that more and more of the world's population are doing media first, and often only, on their mobile phone. If you want your social media efforts to have an impact in the parts of the world you are most likely to interact with the unreached, Africa, Asia, the Middle East, you had better make sure your media and postings work well on mobile phone screens because that is the device that is going to mediate the connection you will have with your audience in such places.

FRIENDING & FOLLOWING STRATEGICALLY

While it's great to have any and all friends and followers, in some ways you will find that friending and following certain people will be key to the doors being opened to a greater segment of your intended audience (intimately knowing your Persona/s as mentioned in the "Who" section of the "Developing Your Strategy" chapter helps here). Sleuth around both online and off and find out who the thought leaders, social leaders, "gatekeepers", artists and other important members of your intended audience are and attempt to friend or follow them. As they and their friends/followers start to notice you it is possible to be drawn further into the social web of the community you want to be reaching as they reach out to friend and follow you in return.

TRACKING AND FOLLOW-UP

While many companies have a presence on social media and track the engagement and reach of their efforts far fewer have actually figured out how to track the Return on Investment (ROI) for the money and time they are investing. What effects, if any, are their social media efforts having on their sales and profit margin. Similarly, while I sincerely hope that most ministries aren't looking to see how much social media presence is adding to their profit margin, we should be considering outcomes beyond reach and engagement. Outcomes we are looking for include people coming to faith, taking steps to deeper obedience to and worship of the Lord, and communities being transformed by the gospel.

Some amount of tracking and contact management is required in order to both create as well as measure those kinds of outcomes. We should seriously consider tracking each individual that engages with our social media efforts in any way. As we do this we want to potentially "score" their level of interest/place in the funnel (discussed in the Developing Your Strategy chapter) and determine if follow-on actions/interactions should be taken from our end (see more on this at the [Media2Movements](#) website). This kind of tracking can be done through something as simple as an Excel spreadsheet or as complex (and expensive) as a Salesforce account. A helpful discussion of needs and possibilities for tracking systems like this (often called Customer Relations Management, or CRM, solutions) can be found in this [CRM Meet and Greet](#).

[Notes and Recording](#). As people move forward you can make note of their progress and have good evidence as to the effectiveness of your efforts.

ANALYSIS, EXPERIMENTATION AND ADJUSTMENT

Albert Einstein is attributed with having said “Once you stop learning, you start dying” and ongoing learning, experimentation and adjustment is a hallmark of a healthy social media outreach. Even if you feel like you are hitting the mark with your efforts today the social media platform you rely on may change its system tomorrow and you need to be ready to adjust to accommodate that.

Many social media platforms give you means to both assess your followers as well as their reception of individual postings you produce. Facebook analytics can give you a lot of detail on your follower-ship while Twitter can tell you how many views individual Tweets had and [Twitter’s advanced search](#) function can give you even further detail. With these data points it is possible to assess when it is best to post, how often it is best to post, attributes of posts that are correlated with more or less engagement (length, subject matter, use of certain hashtags, images), etc.

While social media platforms provide some measure of free built in analytics there is a rather large industry that has built up in recent years that, usually for a fee, can dig even deeper provide greater and more actionable details about your followership and the relative success of your efforts. Providers of such services include (listed alphabetically)- Argyle Social, Commun.it, Google Alerts, Hootsuite, LikeAlyzer, PostPlanner, SocialBro, Social Mention, TailWind (Pinterest), TweetDeck, Tweriod.

SUMMARY

In this chapter we have presented what is required to make the jump into social media and given some accountability and covenanting recommendations for those who still believe that the Lord is calling them into such ministry. Additionally we’ve reviewed the concepts of reach and engagement and covered a number of cross-platform recommendations that can help your social media efforts produce a greater amount of engagement and/or have a wider reach. We’ve also started the conversation regarding the use of tracking/CRM tools both to measure outcomes as well as help you help your contacts move forward along the funnel you’d like them to be traveling. Finally we’ve taken a look at the importance of analysis, experimentation and adjustment in our social media efforts in order to increase its impact among our target audience.

GOING FURTHER LINKS / RESOURCES

Cru's look at [9 Tips for Making Your Social Media Content Awesome](#) or [Social Media is Weird: A How-To Guide on Using Social Media for Ministry](#) (64 pg)

The US Agency for International Development's (USAID) [Social Media Guide for CSOS](#) (84 pg)

[How to Develop A Winning Social Media Content Strategy](#)

[The 21 Social Media Conversations You're Going to Face: How to Master Them All](#)

[How to Use Built-In Social Media Analytics to Uncover Hidden Insights](#)

[6 Fundamental Tools for Social Media Success](#)

4. USING FACEBOOK & TWITTER AS A SOCIAL MEDIA PRIMER

CONNECTING WITH THE WORLD THROUGH FACEBOOK, TWITTER AND OTHER TOOLS

Can you imagine doing ministry the last five hundred years and getting away with 'Sorry, I don't do books'? Can you imagine doing ministry in the next five years and getting away with 'Sorry, I don't do Facebook'?"

Leonard Sweet

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 5:14-16 (ESV)

INTRODUCTION

Social networking was not created by Mark Zuckerberg (creator and CEO of Facebook). But just as brands like Xerox became synonymous with photocopies and Coke with sweetened carbonated beverages, Facebook has given definition to how people think of social media. With nearly two billion monthly active users - almost 25% of the world's population - understanding Facebook is essential. There are some regional differences where platforms like Twitter or WeChat (China) are very popular. LinkedIn is big among business professionals.

What is important about these major social platforms is how they give people a voice and a presence. We can easily and quickly connect to people right next door as well as on the other side of the world. For followers of Christ who take seriously the Great Commission, using social media provides God's people with unprecedented opportunities to be salt and light.

This primer uses Facebook and Twitter as a model for how social media platforms can be used as effective ministry tools. Even if you don't use these two, the principles in this chapter can be applied to other platforms.



FACEBOOK

With Facebook being the most widely used, we are going to use it as our starting point for this primer. Along with being the biggest, not surprisingly, it is also the most complex and presents security challenges. Nonetheless, it presents the Church with the greatest opportunity to reach into the lives of people in towns, villages, and cities throughout the world. There are a variety of ways it can be used for ministry.

FACEBOOK PROFILES: RELATIONAL SHARING

Personal profiles on Facebook are all about sharing life together - our happy moments, our personal struggles, our successes, the things we find interesting, educational, informative, or just plain funny. For many, it is a great way to stay connected and know about what is happening in the lives of those you care about. As of March 2017, the average Facebook user spends 50 minutes per day updating his/her status, liking and commenting on what others have posted, and sharing (reposting interesting things that others have posted). This presents God's people with an amazing opportunity to point people to Jesus.

The best way for God's people to share is to simply be themselves and allow their "friends" a window through which to view their relationship with Christ. Be authentic, yet conspicuously spiritual. One of the very best ways to do this is to answer the question, "How has the gospel been good news *to me* today?"

While it is possible to use a personal profile to overtly preach the gospel, the highly social nature of Facebook emphasizes authentic, relational sharing. The more people see the real you - your successes and failures, your gifts and flaws, your triumphs and your struggles - the more they will be able to relate to you and want to know more. In the following example, the woman posting is very honest about a struggle, but uses it to show the hope she finds in Christ. It doesn't sound "preachy", like she is trying to convince others to think a certain way, but rather natural and genuine. She ends with a Bible verse, which give weight to what she is testifying to.



In other posts, this woman shares things that are humorous and lighthearted, as well. When you post on Facebook, try to do the same. Let your posts reflect your unique God-given personality. Your posts should parallel your life.

Another approach to use on Facebook, as well as other social media sites, is to promote active engagement by asking questions in your posts. This stimulates people to think about their lives and encourages them to participate in a conversation. In the above post, the author could have followed up with a comment like, “Anyone else facing a struggle today? Let me know how I can pray for you.” Whether your questions are lighthearted and fun, or designed to make people think deeply, many people are looking for invitations to open up and share. As ambassadors for Christ, let’s use Facebook and other tools to extend those invitations and point people to Christ.

FACEBOOK STORIES: A NEW WAY TO SHARE

Facebook continues to evolve, which means the need for ongoing learning, but it also creates new opportunities to share in creative ways. The latest feature, which can be accessed on your Facebook profile, is called Facebook Stories, and is just beginning to roll out (March 2017) to the masses. Trying to keep pace with the wildly successful feature developed by Snapchat, Facebook Stories are collections of photos and videos that you create (wacky filters optional) and share with your friends. They can be viewed only twice by each “friend” before disappearing for good after 24 hours, making room for new content each day. You have the option of sharing stories privately with one or more friends or sharing them on your News Feed as well for a broader audience (based on your privacy settings). It is unclear how successful this will be, but any time a new feature like this is released, it can create a “first to market” opportunity for those who are able to be among the first users. Even if you are not among the first, there will likely be some creative ways to use Stories for ministry. To learn more about getting started, see Buffer’s [“Facebook Stories: Everything You Need to Know About Facebook’s Latest Feature.”](#) Snapchat and Instagram are both already offering this feature, so consider exploring how they are being used to help you think through possible uses for Facebook Stories.

FACEBOOK PAGES: EXTENDING YOUR INFLUENCE

Unless you are new to Facebook, you’ve most likely seen or liked one or more “Pages.” Pages are for brands, businesses, organizations and public figures to create a presence on Facebook (*Profiles represent individual people*). People who like a Page and their friends can get updates in News Feed.” Anyone with an account can create a Page or help manage one.

Whereas profiles are the place for connecting within our personal social networks, Pages are for connecting more broadly. They are ideally suited for any broader ministry strategy that seeks to reach outside the confines of an individual’s personal network. A couple of examples illustrate this.

Launched in 2009 as a hobby by Dr. Aaron Tabor, who wanted to find a way to encourage people, the [Jesus Daily Facebook](#) page quickly grew in popularity. While not the most “liked” page on Facebook (as of early 2017, it has over 30 million “likes”), by 2011 its simple posts were garnering more likes, comments

and shares from around the world (even in Saudi Arabia) than any other page, beating out perennial social media giants Lady Gaga and Justin Bieber. While the approach taken by Jesus Daily is not necessarily the best model for everyone to follow, its success makes clear that there are many people around the world who are drawn to Jesus and the words of scripture. Furthermore, reviewing its posts and how interaction takes place can serve as a good model for what is working well in many places around the world.

A more recent and specific example is that of a team working in a Muslim country that is closed to missions work (*details withheld for security reasons*). Discontent with seeing Muslims dying far faster than they were entering the kingdom of God, they felt God calling them to make use of Facebook to counter the perception that to be “X” (name of local ethnic group with a high identity in Islam) is to be Muslim. “The Messiah for X” Facebook page was established in the local language to accomplish this by talking openly about Jesus. In just over two years, the page has received over 20,000 likes and has put the team in contact with numerous Muslims who have demonstrated a sincere desire to know more about Jesus. These contacts are followed up with face-to-face, and many have chosen to follow him and be baptized.

Running a successful Facebook page requires planning, effort, and time. An individual can manage a page, but he or she will need to commit to putting in the time to plan, create and share content and engage with those who respond. See “For Further Learning” below for some helpful resources to get you started with a Facebook page.

With pages, get organized by planning and scheduling your posts in advance (leaving room, of course, for spontaneous posts). This can be particularly useful based on events that are known about ahead of time - holidays, celebrations, etc.

FACEBOOK GROUPS & FRIENDS LISTS: GO DEEPER WITH A FEW

Facebook Groups are a way for you to go deeper with a specific group of people. You can organize groups around Family & Friends, Teams & Clubs, Organizations or School and Work. You can use them to share information, post photos and links and stay in touch. You can discuss, plan and collaborate easily and without distractions.

They can be public or private to accommodate the level of visibility they have, a feature that is ideally suited in some regions where privacy is an issue. For a bit of Facebook-crafted inspiration on how others have benefitted from Groups, view their [promo video](#). (*Note they use Facebook Stories to talk about Groups*).

What makes Facebook Groups so convenient and powerful is that everyone - well, nearly 25% of the world’s population anyway - is already on Facebook. This makes it an ideal place to connect with smaller groups of people who share a particular interest. Facebook has also released a dedicated app called, rather creatively, Facebook Groups, which significantly eases the ability to connect with your group without having to use the more cluttered Facebook interface. The app even allows you to create app icons on your mobile’s home screen that will take you directly into a specific group (groups can also be accessed through your Facebook profile on your mobile device or on a computer).

Closely related to Groups is the Friends List feature. Look for this in the left column under the “Explore” header. You can create multiple Friends Lists, then use them to share posts with specific subsets of friends. Lists can be created based on geographic locations, shared interests, etc. - you have full power to choose what lists to create and which of your Facebook friends to add to them.

MINISTRY POTENTIAL

There are a variety of ways to use Facebook Groups for ministry. They are an excellent way to bring together groups of people with shared interests and promote community. Small churches may wish to use groups as an easy way to share news, prayer requests, and other information with one another. Private groups have been used effectively for discipleship, even in countries where censorship is high.

FACEBOOK LIVE

Facebook Live and Facebook Live Audio are two newer features that are covered under the Live Video section.

FACEBOOK ADVERTISING

With nearly two billion people now actively using Facebook, finding the relative thimble-full that might meet fit the profile for your target audience might seem like finding a needle in a haystack. Thanks to the power of Facebook advertising, however, reaching your desired audience now is anything but impossible. Better yet, it is incredibly affordable, especially in most of the countries that are home to the world’s unreached peoples (costs vary by country).

Advertising can be used for a variety of purposes: increasing the reach of your posts, making more people aware of your Facebook page, driving people to an evangelistic website, and more. Is it easy or effective? We have an example of how an investment of \$12 for ads and 30 minutes of time were used to pinpoint Muslims from a people group in India and share the gospel with 90 of them in their own language ([see story](#)).

Given the low cost and effectiveness of Facebook advertising, it can be a worthwhile way to extend the reach of your ministry. To learn more, see “Advertise to Boost Reach and Engagement” (chapter 9).

FACEBOOK EXAMPLES

Reaching Out to People in a Closed Country

A worker in the Middle East had to leave the field for family reasons. He was wondering how he could impact Arab Muslims with the gospel. God led him to Facebook. Using Facebook's powerful search features, he was able to identify a vast number of young Arab Muslim men on Facebook who spoke English and lived in one of a handful of key cities. One by one, he reached out to these men with an introductory message asking if they would like to dialogue about spiritual matters and learn more about Jesus. Many didn't respond. Many said no. But for those who accepted the invitation, he began a dialogue with them! In fact, interest was strong enough that he made periodic trips into that country where he met individually with these men face-to-face to share with them further. Without diminishing the importance of traditional on-the-ground ministry and relationship building, this man was able to accomplish more in this country in weeks and months than many missionaries accomplish in years.

Continuing a Conversation with Someone You Meet

Here is another example of how you can use Facebook to continue an in-person conversation. A woman came to an event here in the United States. It was there she came in contact with a believer who later initiated a conversation via Facebook as a follow-up to the event. There seemed to be an initial sensitivity towards spiritual things. Each conversation ended with asking how to pray for her. Over the years prayer was talked over 200 times!

In a later conversation, the believer used the phrase "Isa al Masih" to refer to Jesus. The woman responded very positively to the use of that name. She later asked for some words of Jesus. This opened the door for various scripture to be shared. Eventually verses turned into longer Bible stories and some probing follow-through questions. Questions like "What did you learn about God? What did you learn about Man? How do you think God wants us to obey Him? Who are you going to tell?"

After the study of Abraham, she went out and slaughtered a lamb and gave the meat to the poor. After a study of David, she posted Psalm 31 on Facebook, and many of her friends responded in delight to this unknown poet, but when they discovered it was one of their prophets, they were delighted.

As this story began to get posted it led to a connection being made with someone who lives in her country. Somewhere along the way, she came into the Kingdom. She has since shared her story with others who are also being connected to other believers.

Over the years there have been more than 4000 Facebook messages since 2011. Skype and Telegram are sometimes used (because it uses less bandwidth), but the conversations stay away from spiritual things as Skype is not as secure. Tools that allow progress to be tracked are used. This level of contact would be difficult to do in country but Facebook has opened this door.

FACEBOOK AND SECURITY

Facebook has long been a challenge for everyone concerned about security, and for good reason. It has a vast array of settings that impact what is tracked, what is known about you and by whom, who can see your posts, etc. And to make things more challenging still, Facebook periodically changes how it handles all of these things. You need to regularly review your account settings to make sure everything is in alignment with your wishes. Whether you're an existing user and haven't thought much recently about Facebook's privacy settings, or if you're preparing to set up a new account, take a few minutes to review [Facebook's own page on privacy](#) (after doing so, take advantage of the included privacy checkup tool found at the bottom of their help page).

The added challenge of Facebook is that it knows more about you than you think. Its use of cookies to track your web activities ([learn more](#)) coupled with its use of data mining algorithms, enable it to develop a growing profile on all of its users. Even those who do not post regularly or who log in infrequently have a growing profile. One easy way for Facebook - and Facebook users - to gather information about you is by looking at your friends and page likes. Although difficult to know for sure, it is believed that this information is used to identify Christian workers in closed countries. Another way Facebook builds its profile of you is through what others share about you. Anytime someone mentions you by name in a photo or text, even if they do not specifically tag you, more can be known about you - who you know, who you associate with, what you like to do, places you visit, etc. Facebook also continues to develop its facial and place recognition tools so that even if you are not explicitly mentioned, it might be able to glean information about you by matching your face in photos that others post or your location in photos that you share.

Given these challenges, security on Facebook needs to be thoughtfully managed. While not an exhaustive list, here are some things to consider:

- Review the above links to learn more about securing your Facebook account.
- Diversify your "friends" and liked pages to make it more challenging for Facebook to create a strong profile of your connections and interests.
- If you live in a sensitive country and want to create a Facebook page, use an alias account, or, better yet, find someone who lives outside of the country to establish the page. He or she will then be the owner of the page but can make you an administrator to give you full rights to manage it.
- Periodically review your Facebook privacy settings and make adjustments as needed.
- If you are a field-based missionary, clearly advise your family, friends and supporting churches who follow you on Facebook regarding what to say or not say when sharing with or about you.

FACEBOOK BEST PRACTICES

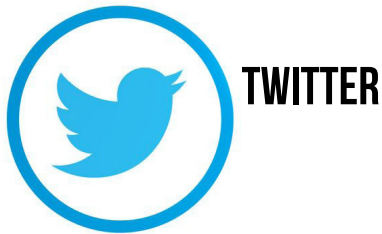
- Pray. See your use of Facebook as a spiritual activity. Ask God to direct you.
- Be conspicuously spiritual. Let it be known that you love God and have a vibrant, personal relationship with Him through Christ. Reflect this in your posts to let people see your faith.
- Be authentic. People are fairly astute when it comes to recognizing when people are being genuine and when they are not.
- Be social. This applies to your use of all Facebook features. Do not merely use Facebook as another tool to broadcast a message. Instead use it to interact with people.
- Be visual. Research shows that visual posts get more attention and higher levels of engagement (likes, comments, shares) than do posts that are only text. Images are a great place to start, but the preference for video is soaring.
- Be consistent. Post every day as you are able. Based on research, the optimal number of posts to maximize engagement is two times per day. Respond to comments quickly.
- Be organized. Use Friends Lists and Groups to segment your contacts. Plan your posts on your pages.
- Be relevant. Be mindful of holidays and other local events, and look for trending news stories and topics among your audience.
- Consider using Facebook Hashtags. They are defined in the Facebook Help Center. But also do a Web search on “Facebook Hashtags” to get current information.
- Be visible. If you are running a Facebook page, consider spending a small amount on targeted advertising to attract for followers. Also consider “boosted posts”, another form of Facebook advertising that can make individual posts more visible.
- Be an ongoing learner. Stay up on news related to Facebook - security issues, new features, etc. - and periodically review popular profiles and pages among your audience.

FOR FURTHER LEARNING

[TechBoomer's mini-course on Facebook](#): 18+ tutorials to help you learn the pros & cons of Facebook as well as how to create and configure your account, share photos and videos, like pages, join groups and more.

[Cru's Facebook learning page](#): a collection of helpful resources on getting started with using Facebook for ministry.

[Making the Most of Facebook](#): a 1-hour video presentation on how to be “salt and light” on Facebook.



Twitter is a popular text-based social networking tool that limits users to sharing with one another in 140 characters or less. While used far less than Facebook, it boasts 313 million active monthly users (March 2017). 79% are outside of the U.S. and 83% of world leaders maintain an account. It has become increasingly visual with the option of including photos or a video along with the text message. The use of visual images has become increasingly important on Twitter for anyone wanting their posts to be seen and read.

While 140 characters - about 2 brief lines of text - may not sound like much, it is consistent with what people around the globe have become accustomed to through the use of SMS (text) messages, and the format is ideal for creating and consuming on mobile devices. Adding to the appeal and effectiveness of Twitter is the ability to include a hyperlink as well as images or a video (visuals are not part of the 140-character limit). Twitter became still more appealing when it added the ability to incorporate live video through the use of Periscope (see the section on Live Video to learn more on using Periscope for ministry).

Because Twitter requires users to be brief, it is best used as a tool for brief conversations as well as sharing informative, helpful, or provocative content and inviting people to respond. Peter Guirguis (www.notashamedofthegospel.com), demonstrates this well in his [@petenaotg](https://twitter.com/petenaotg) Twitter account:



UNDERSTANDING & USING TWITTER

Twitter is rich in features and is far less complicated to use than Facebook. Anyone with access to the Internet can navigate to www.twitter.com and begin to browse tweets, which are presented in chronological order. Once you have an account, you can choose to follow people or organizations who interest you, and others can begin to follow you. When logged in via a web browser or app, you will see an ongoing stream of tweets posted by those you follow, and your tweets will appear in the timelines of those following you. If your account is set to public, anyone can choose to follow you (when this happens, you will receive a notification) or view your profile complete with a list of all of your tweets (i.e. it is not necessary for someone to follow you to see your tweets). Your tweets will also be included in search results, and anyone seeing your tweets can choose to “retweet” them (share them with their followers), which can rapidly increase the reach of your tweets exponentially.

SECURITY

Twitter provides a variety of ways to address security. At the most extreme level, you can choose to simply consume tweets from public accounts, which does not require an account. To post tweets and interact with others, you will need an account, but you may choose to use an alias and/or a dedicated or secondary email account that is distinct from what you use from most of your email activities. If your account is private, you will need to approve anyone who wants to follow you, and any tweets you post while your account is private will be accessible only to your followers. Direct messaging (“DM” for short) is another way to communicate securely. Direct messages are private, visible only between the sender and recipient.

MINISTRY POTENTIAL

Twitter is being used in a variety of creative ways for ministry, including sharing the gospel with unreached peoples.

1. Grow your list of followers from among your target audience, and post tweets that engage them. The more specifically you’ve identified your audience, the easier it will be to select or create content worth sharing. For practical insights on how to use Twitter for ministry, consult “General Social Media How-Tos” (chapter 2).
2. Use appropriate hashtags to connect with those you do not (yet) follow you. Hashtags are commonly searched for by people interested in a particular topic. There is no magic formula for the number of hashtags to use, but a general guideline is to use an average of three relevant hashtags per post.
3. Consider developing your own set of custom hashtags that are used frequently, and occasionally tweet to encourage others to use them for relevant content also. For example, the Mobile Ministry Forum uses #mobmin, but also uses #mobvid (video), #mobsec (security), and #mobsm (social media).
4. Avoid using Twitter simply as a tool to broadcast content. Instead look for ways to engage people. In your tweet, or even in an attached image, consider asking provocative questions

or including a call to action.

5. Advertise on Twitter. If Twitter is a platform being used heavily by those you seek to reach with the gospel, advertising is a great way to increase your reach.

TWITTER BEST PRACTICES

- Be visual. As with other social media platforms, the more visual your posts are, the more likely they are to get noticed.
- Post regularly. While there is no magic formula to determine how frequently to tweet, research suggests that three tweets per day is optimal.
- Use hashtags wisely.

FOR FURTHER LEARNING

- [TechBoomers' mini-course on Twitter](#): 13 tutorials to guide in you setting up your account, creating tweets, sending direct messages, sharing videos, and more.
- [Tweeting Church: How Christians Can Use Twitter to Spread the Gospel and Connect Communities](#) by Paul Clifford (available in both print and Kindle versions)
- [The Ultimate Evangelism Social Media Swipe File](#), a collection of evangelistic resources ready to share on Facebook and Twitter (use as-is or to help stimulate ideas for original content contextualized for your particular audience)

OTHER GENERAL SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS

Facebook and Twitter are not the only general social networks to consider using for ministry. There are a plethora of others that have a unique niche based on geography or other demographics. Space doesn't allow a detailed investigation of these, but it is worth being aware of them. Go to the list of social media networks in chapter one or visit the [Wikipedia listing](#). Scan the list and see if there is a network that is a high priority in your regional focus or your intended target audience (e.g. LinkedIn for business professionals or QZone in China). Many of the principles and examples shared in this guide should provide worthwhile insights on how to begin using these networks missionally with other networks.

SUMMARY

As our opening quote said, “*Sorry, I don’t do Facebook*” doesn’t work if you want to reach new audiences today. If you are still in doubt, take a look at the most recent video from [Erik Qualman](#).

As Qualman says at the beginning of the video we don’t have a choice about doing Social Media. The only choice is how well we do it. Done in the right way, exciting new ministry opportunities can be opened. But a word of warning as well. Don’t feel as if you can “dabble” or just play around in social media. To be effective you need to employ some good strategies and thinking. This chapter is an introduction to the power of what social media can accomplish. Subsequent chapters will give you some additional specific tools and ideas to maximize your effectiveness.

POWER TIPS (ACTION POINTS)

- Think of social media in a way that is in line with what the phrase implies - being social. Use it to interact, be vulnerable, show your heart and engage.
- No one likes a one-sided conversation. Be proactive about two-way conversations.
- Start with the question of what role Facebook should play in your ministry or organization. If it’s a popular choice for your region and audience, the time you invest in learning it can be well worth it.
- Talk with others or do an online search to find out what might be some very popular social networks.
- Come up with a plan and then regularly stop and evaluate your progress.
- Be visual...make your conversations more colorful by pictures, quotes and other attractive approaches.
- Take the principles of this primer and apply them to other regional or target audience specific social networks.

5. INSTANT MESSAGING/CHAT APPS

THE FASTEST GROWING SEGMENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA TODAY

*The first rule of social media is that everything changes all the time.
What won't change is the community's desire to network.*

Kami Huyse

*Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every
opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with
salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.*

Colossians 4:5-6

INTRODUCTION

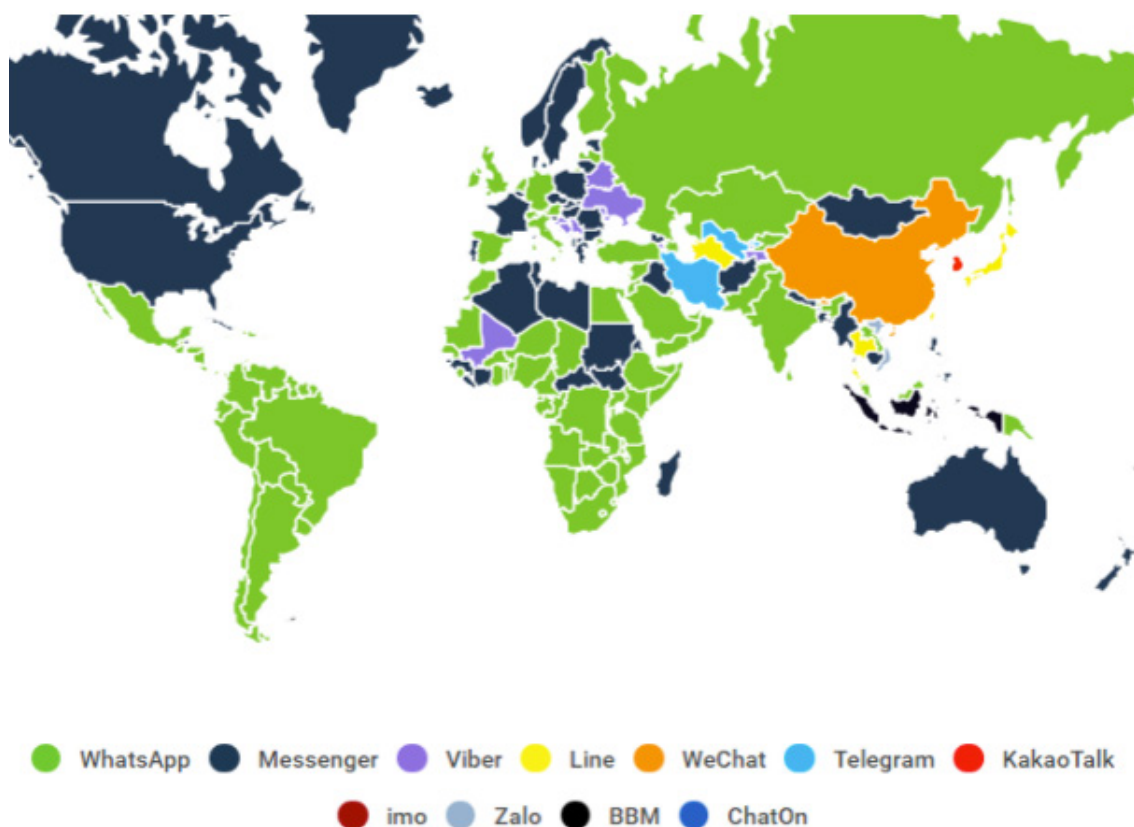
The ability to connect with individuals is faster and easier than ever before in the history of our world. This is in part attributed to the rise of development and popularity of instant messaging/chat app services (to be referred to henceforth simply as chat apps) over the last five years. WhatsApp, introduced only three years ago, now has over one billion monthly active users. Chat apps, in general, are now installed by nearly two-thirds of all smartphone owners. Additionally, the innovation that is occurring with chat apps far exceeds most other areas of the mobile and social media world.

Not only do chat apps allow us to connect with individuals, but there is also a number of growing services and companies that have found ways to use chat apps to better connect with their existing and potential customers and improve their brand experiences. In this chapter we'd like to look at the various chat apps and consider ways ministries can potentially leverage them for Kingdom purposes.

IT'S ALL ABOUT LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

In real estate a property's value is most affected by its location and when it comes to chat apps, your audience's location is one of the most important determinant of what chat apps you should consider.

The following global map graphic indicates what the most popular Android chat app is by country, measured as a function of the total number of downloads and current as of the beginning of 2017.



Map from <https://www.similarweb.com/blog/popular-messaging-apps-by-country>

Chat app usage patterns will change and country-wide overviews may not match the reality on-the-ground in a particular region finding up-to-date, local data or simply keeping your eyes open and asking around to see what is happening locally is important. The chart below gives the latest statistics for total monthly active users for the largest chat app platforms and includes the iOS only iMessage platform.

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_instant_messaging_clients
- <https://www.androidpit.com/whatsapp-vs-facebook-messenger-vs-telegram-comparison>¹

App	Users	Reach	Regions
 WhatsApp	1 billion +	global	The leading chat app in 109 countries (South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Oceania)
 Facebook Messenger	1 billion +	global	The leading chat app in 49 countries (Dominant in North America and Australia).
 QQ	877 million	regional	China
 WeChat	846 million	regional	China
 iMessage	450 – 500 million	global	Countries with a higher portion of iPhone users will have a higher portion of iMessage users.
 Viber	249 million	global	The leading chat app in 10 countries (eight in the Balkans and Eastern Europe)
 Line	217 million	regional	Japan, Taiwan, Thailand and Indonesia
 BBM	100 million	regional	60 of BBM's 100 million monthly active users live in Indonesia
 Telegram	100 million	regional	20 of BBM's 100 million monthly active users live in Iran. It is also popular in Iraq, Uzbekistan, Russia, Italy and Brazil.

¹ Android user data only. 187 countries surveyed

CHAT APPS SECURITY

Of the chat apps listed above, the more secure ones are WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger with Telegram being a distant third. The [Signal](#) chat app, by Open Whisper Systems, is considered to have the best encryption implementation and would be our highest recommendation for a secured chat app. That said, Signal is not one of the more highly used chat apps and you or your contacts' use of it could increase governments' interest in your activities. On other point, during political and civil unrest some governments choose to block access to messaging services so relying on them for your communications during such situation can be problematic.

CHAT BOTS: WHAT THEY ARE & WHY THEY MATTER

Chatbots are kind of like virtual assistants - sort of customized versions of Apple's Siri or Amazon's Alexa that work within messaging apps. They sit in the background ready to automatically respond to your audience's questions and comments. While they might sound too impersonal and too complicated for you to bother with, they are spreading like wildfire and will soon be integrated with all sorts of apps and websites that involve social media, messaging, e-commerce and more. As they continue to become a more significant part of how we live in the digital realm, there will be more and more potential ministry applications. An example of a chatbot created for ministry purposes is the @ASLBibleBot. Chatfuel is a service that provides coding-free tools to help you create your own chat bots.

MINISTRY CASE STUDIES

We're at an early point in the uptake of chat apps by ministries and marketers alike so how-to's and best practices are few and far between. That said, we'd like to share with you some case studies that were shared from ministries in various parts of the world:

Using WhatsApp in Central Asia

As part of a CP team, one challenge has been to get people to read and interact with the Bible for themselves on a daily basis. With this goal in mind, we decided to start doing evening Bible study on our WhatsApp group.

Each morning, the other leader or I copied the passage into the group. Of course, most people have the Bible on their phones anyway, but we felt that having it actually download into the group would be an added impetus to read it. Then each evening for a half hour the group went 'live' with members sharing their insights or asking questions about the chapter for that day.

Usually people responded by text, but we also exchanged voice messages. This was helpful when someone had a lot to say (which would take too long to type) or when the group language was not their mother tongue.

We found that with a group of about 15-20 people, 6-8 were 'active'. Of those 4-5 would be more interactive while another 4-5 were 'lurking', but not actually contributing. They were able to listen to the insights, questions and answers, while at the same time reading the passage for themselves.

Using WhatsApp in Africa

Monday was one of those random days in which I was stuck at home due to illness. A message pops up on our Facebook page from a student who was part of our circle of influence a few years ago. He had left the country but is now back in touch and wants my WhatsApp details. I check his profile and see that he has posted something about forgiveness. I wonder what he thinks of forgiveness? The post about forgiveness is in poor English text and could be from the Bible or Quran, I just can't tell. But I can start a conversation based on this and I know what direction to take it. I'm excited!

Our WhatsApp chat begins like any other social interaction with the normal greetings on health. I test the waters by sending out a short video clip on happiness. He likes it. I look for something on forgiveness. Nothing suitable springs to mind. I make a note to hunt online and check further into my resources. Before I get a chance to find something my friend responds. He tells me about being in a foreign land and his desire to meet someone face to face. I try to wrack my brain for people I know close to him.

The more I use WhatsApp, the more I am invited to be a member in groups that my friends are in. Some are political, some are immature, one or two have turned frightening. You can sit on the fringes and soak up the way that your friends are sharing, learn what is normal before saying anything yourself. Or you can invite folks to breakaway groups. You can also completely opt out if things get weird. But unless you have seen what your friends do and how they interact in this format, it is a challenge to know how best to use this medium.

Creating a meaningful group is my next challenge. Many of my contacts are happy to receive Christian materials and to interact one-to-one, but no-one so far wants to be a part of a group where we discuss these things. I've had a small select group of men reading Scripture on a regular basis. I had hoped that they would settle into a WhatsApp group, but that has not happened yet.

More on Using WhatsApp

Tech Boomer's 14 part tutorial series on [How to Use WhatsApp](#)
Cru's [How to Use WhatsApp for Ministry](#)

Using WeChat in East Asia

As I walk around looking for someone to start a conversation with I get tired of smiling and saying hello to people without engaging anyone. So I sit down at a local coffee house and pull out my phone and use WeChat to try and start conversations with those around me.

I can use an option in WeChat called "discover people nearby". I see 20 people within 200m of where I am. With the end goal being a house church, I am to first start a Bible study by

engaging people around me. So I send these 20 people all the same message, something like “what do you think are the biggest problems facing the youth today?”

I try and ask a question that most people have an opinion on and are most likely to engage with. Usually about 30% respond to me. Then as I sit in a comfortable chair in the coffee house drinking a latte I discuss with them these issues of life and the deeper problems of society. I talk about when I was young and some of the things I did, then I share my own story of faith. This is all a dialogue over WeChat. After an hour or so, several people are no longer chatting with me but one or two still remain engaged. I then invite those remaining to join me over coffee where we can continue discussions face to face.

Occasionally I'll try this around 9:30PM in a residential area because I can find more potential people to potentially engage with. A larger group of 50 or so may start, then I can head home and continue chatting from there. Over the next few weeks I try and see if I can meet anyone for coffee and share Christ with them face to face, eventually finding enough in that area so that a core group of people with spiritual interest can form a fledgling church.

Any messaging platform strategy needs stepping stones to help move conversations further along. Based on the topic of the conversations I'm having, I will send a video or link to an article. I keep it friendly and say something like “it was great talking with you, I came across this video and thought it might help answer some of what you were asking me (insert link here)”. A day or two later I will send another message asking their thoughts on the material I sent. In person I'll engage in small talk for a while then say “what did you think about that video I sent?” This gets the spiritual conversation started again.

More on Using WeChat

[WeChat Ministry of a Christian: a WeChat Group Equals A Pasture](#)

GOING FURTHER LINKS / RESOURCES

The Tow Center for Digital Journalism's [Guide to Chat Apps](#)

The Mobile Ecosystem Forum's [The Future of Messaging Guide](#)

Marketing Week's [Using messaging apps without being creepy](#)

OneSheep's [The Bot Evangelist](#)

6. VISUAL MEDIA-BASED CHANNELS

A picture is worth a thousand words.

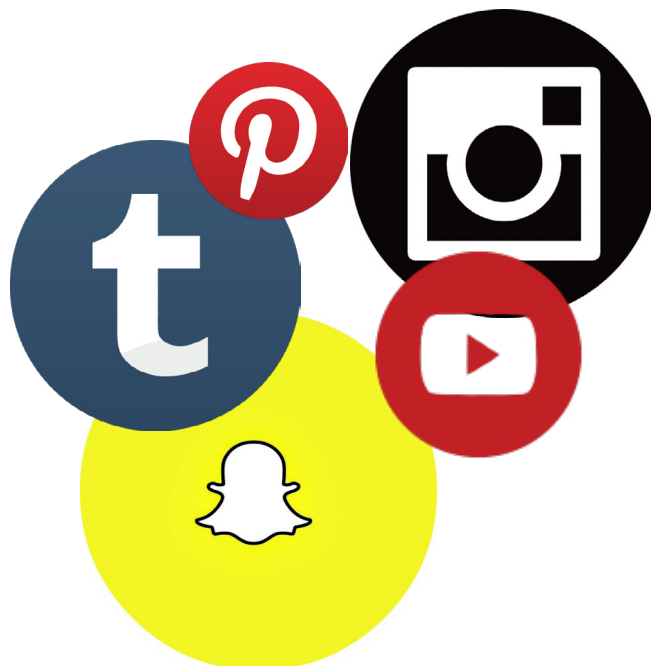
English idiom

If a picture is worth a thousand words, a video is worth a million.

author unknown

If you've spent any time on social media over the past several years, you've undoubtedly noticed one key trend: everything is going visual. Twitter prides itself on those precious few 140 characters of text, but it is images that get tweets noticed and retweeted. Facebook has evolved from a longer form of text-based sharing into one that is similarly focused on visuals. All of the media trends point toward the growing prominence and soaring popularity of still images, animated GIFs and videos.

Research on how our brains work lends credence to these trends. Our brains are said to process images 60,000 times faster than text. Just as significantly, images have immense power to tell a story, transcend language, trigger an instant emotional response, change our attitudes, stir long-forgotten memories, and even help us visualize our lives in a different light. For many around the world today, visual media is rapidly becoming the preferred and most influential mechanism for communicating. While most, if not all, social networks are becoming increasingly visual, the following networks specialize in the use of visual media for social connecting.





When Instagram launched in 2010, it was intended as a fun and easy way for photographers to show off their images. It blossomed into so much more. Today Instagram is known around the world and is used not only by photographers, but teenagers, parents, community activists, big brands, and even world leaders. As of January 2017, it had more than 600 million active monthly users.

The core of Instagram is fairly simple. Create an account, post pictures or videos, add captions (optional), and include hashtags (keywords preceded by the '#' sign) to allow more people discover your posts. The pictures you post appear chronologically in the timeline of anyone who follows you, and anyone with access to your photos can like them and/or comment on them (anyone can view public accounts from a mobile device or computer, but you must have an account to like or comment on an image).

One of the things that helped catapult Instagram to prominence was its built-in editing tools. After shooting a photo from within the app, or importing an existing photo, users can choose from several simple-to-use filters to give an image a unique look. Editing tools allow you to adjust brightness, contrast, and other aspects of an image. Instagram also gained a following due to the unique square aspect ratio it originally required for images and videos (square is no longer mandatory, but it remains the most preferred aspect ratio). Video has long been a part of Instagram, but clips are limited to a maximum of 15 seconds, a length that is ideally suited our increasingly brief attention spans. Filters can be applied to videos just as can be done with images.

While visual media is the core of Instagram's content, it is no less social than rivals like Facebook and Twitter. In fact, studies suggest that Instagram far surpasses both of these social media titans in terms of engagement. The social nature of Instagram consists of followers, likes (you can like both posts and comments), comments, and occasionally sharing (posts can be shared with a small number of followers, but not reposted as can be done on Twitter or Facebook without taking a screenshot or getting permission from the original poster). Direct messages (DMs) are also supported and do not require an image). The social nature of Instagram has even fostered face-to-face gatherings of instagrammers in what are called InstaMeets, and photo walks are a way to organize groups of people for relationship building while capturing the sights of their hometowns or sites of interest.

Like most social platforms, Instagram continues to evolve to retain and grow its user base and encourage greater engagement. In 2014 it launched [Hyperlapse](#), a free iOS app for creating time lapse videos (Microsoft Hyperlapse is a good alternative for Android users). In 2015, it launched [Boomerang](#), an add-on app accessed within Instagram that allows you create fun, looping micro-videos that accentuate action. In 2016, Instagram began offering two new features: live video and [stories](#). Live video allows anyone with an account to livestream. Anyone with notifications enabled will get a message at the top of their Instagram feed (and in their phone notification) alerting them when someone they follow has gone live. Stories are collections of user-selected video clips and images that play as a slideshow. They can be

embellished with stickers, filters and text for added impact. A key feature of stories is that they appear in a row at the very top of your Instagram feed, giving them added prominence. To learn more, see CRU's "[How to use Instagram Stories, it's easier than you think!](#)"

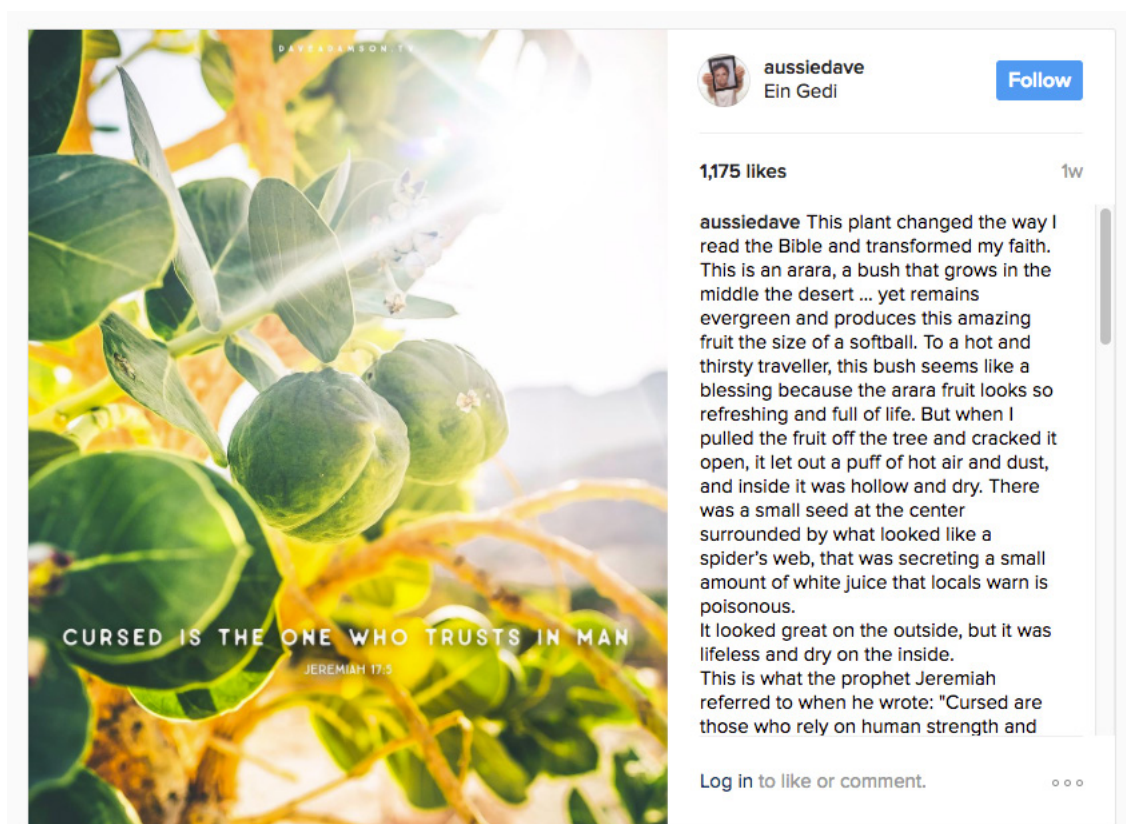
Tip: InstaPic makes it possible for Windows 8/10/RT users to quickly edit & share images with captions from the comfort of a computer (larger screen and full keyboard!).

Helpful tools: See the Resources(?) section for apps & tools to help you create more effective images.

Ability to block comments based on user-defined keywords.

Ability to zoom into images (I wonder if this can be used creatively to get people to interact with an image more - e.g. a hidden word that you can ask about in the caption or comment section).

[@AussieDave](#) is a pastor and photographer who uses compelling images to share brief devotional content via extended captions. Each of his captions ends with a question to provoke people to think about what he's shared and to respond. In the [following post](#), he talks about how prone we are to concern ourselves with outward appearances while neglecting our inner life.



He ends with this question: "What are you doing today to ensure you are healthy on the inside?"

Not surprisingly, the post had more than 80 comments (replies). While he doesn't respond to all of them, he does reply to some as a way to further minister to people.

MINISTRY USES

- **Visual texts:** Use of text overlays on images has been popular since Instagram was launched. Since many Instagram users scan their feeds quickly, captions are often ignored. Visual texts solve this problem. Scripture verses or poignant quotations are popular choices. Use a simple colored background, a textured background, or even an image that helps catch the eyes of those who are quickly scanning. Also keep in mind that since most images will be viewed on a mobile phone, keep the text brief and use larger fonts that will be easily readable on smaller screens. There are many apps that make it easy to create visual texts. For mobiles, consider Over (Android, iOS), Rhonna Designs (Android, iOS), Phonto (Android, iOS, Windows), or even the built-in image tool included in YouVersion's Bible app (Android, iOS, Windows).
- **Sharing Life:** Instagram is a social tool, and personal accounts should get personal. Share thoughts and events from your everyday life, and use the caption to share reflections that draw on Scripture or your personal relationship with Christ. Be conspicuously spiritual, but authentic.
- **Comments:** There is a strong tendency to use Instagram merely as a platform for broadcasting our content for others to see, but it is a social tool. Be intentional about liking and commenting on the images that others share. When using Instagram, ask God to lead you to people and posts that will provide opportunities to serve as an ambassador for Christ. Ask for wisdom in how to respond to them. Post comments to encourage, empathize, celebrate, or even point people to Jesus. One cross-cultural worker in SE Asia shared how her efforts to continually like and comment on another person's posts made that person feel affirmed, valued, and loved. When they bumped into each other in real life, a fruitful relationship was jump-started because of the positive interactions begun on Instagram.
- One way to proactively use Instagram comments for ministry is to search for posts with particular hashtags. For example, people will frequently use Instagram and other social tools, to share how they are hurting (#lonely, #afraid, #feelinghopeless, etc.). These can provide opportunities for us to point people to Jesus the healer, transformer, hope giver, and lover of their souls.
- Another proactive way to use Instagram is to pray over the people you encounter there. Let the Holy Spirit guide you to those in need of prayer. Explore their recent posts, then pray for them with insight. Consider commenting on a recent post to bless them - or even to share that you prayed for them.

Beyond use of a personal Instagram account, you can create an account that is theme-based. Here are a few ideas:

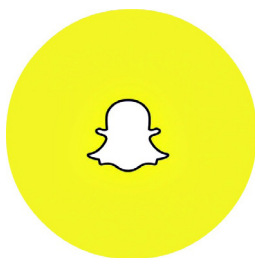
- Highlight and honor local places of beauty or business. You can use this approach to also meet the business owners or others who work at those places. Honor them and share their stories or something interesting or admirable about them.
- Comment on local news in ways that encourage people to look to Christ or Christ-honoring principles or practices.

- Create a faith-based group account and use the posts to communicate with members. This can be used by small groups, campus ministries, or even Discovery Bible Study groups (the account can be set to private if security is an issue; this will require the account owner to approve anyone “follow” requests). For an example of this in action, see [“How to Start a Movement on Instagram.”](#)
- Focus on a particular hobby or activity or interest. For example, if you live in an area where doors or gates are unique, you could share those, but periodically include a biblical reference to doors/gates in your post (e.g. Rev 2:20 - Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.”).

In choosing how to orient your posts, consider what might resonate with those you are seeking to reach. What are their interests? What are their struggles? What do they take pride in? What would honor them? What aspects of God’s character might most effectively speak into their lives? The possibilities with using Instagram for ministry are limited only by your imagination and creativity!

POWER TIPS

- Use the caption strategically. Be creative. Consider asking a question that encourages viewers to comment. Don’t be afraid to use longer captions, but be sure to capture attention in the first sentence as this may be all this visible without viewers clicking on the “more” link to see the full caption.
- Hashtags are incredibly useful for getting your posts noticed by those not yet following you. Be sure to post them in the local language, or in multiple languages as appropriate. Pay attention to what hashtags are being used by others in your audience. Feel free to create your own, new hashtags, especially if you want to begin a series focused on a particular topic, or post about an event you are hosting,
- Develop your own, consistent look with images that oversaturated, overexposed, use a particular filter, are shot from a particular perspective, include a recurring object or background, etc.
- Grow in your image editing skills. Many people don’t realize that Instagram not only provides a list of preset filters for styling your images, but also allows you to adjust a variety of settings. Another option is to learn to use external apps such as Snapseed or VSCO.
- Spice up your posts with the use of videos, animated GIFs, and Boomerangs (looping microvideo that works well with quick motions).



SNAPCHAT: IT'S NOT JUST FOR TWEENS AND TEENS

Among the fastest growing social media tools, especially among teens and young adults (63% of users are 18-34 year olds), Snapchat is probably the least used thus far for ministry. While it is still known for its disappearing, private, visual messages, Snapchat continues to innovate and has grown to such prominence that it is now a key tool for marketers in the secular arena.

Snapchat is a cross between instant messaging, Instagram, and Facebook. It provides people with a quick, organic way to share life using text, images, and brief videos. "Snaps", or messages, are shared with one or more individuals, and teens will pride themselves on [Snapstreaks](#) ("streaks" for short), the number of days they've gone sharing a snap with a friend daily within a 24-hour window. Images and videos can be embellished with a variety of filters as well as text and doodles, a feature that lends to the creative nature of Snapchat and keeps younger users highly engaged.

[Snapchat Stories](#) were introduced in 2016 and are different from basic "snaps." They are an accumulation of videos and images that tell the story of your day, or to be more precise, the previous 24 hours. Once an element in your story (an image or a video) is 24 hours old, it automatically gets dropped to make room for new elements. As Snapchat themselves describe it, "The end of your Story today is the beginning of your Story tomorrow." While basic snaps are private, Stories are visible to all of your followers, thereby offering the opportunity for greater reach and influence.

Due to the way Snapchat limits the viewing time of photos and videos to a maximum of 10 seconds, it demands the attention of your audience. This makes the message seem important and fleeting, which can lead to people either taking action or interacting more than they might on other platforms. Sending individual snaps (photo, video, or text messages) to your contacts is a great way for the message to seem personal and not a general call to action or announcement. However, if you want a message to last for a 24-hour span and reach more people, posting to your story is a more effective way to share. Try to avoid constant calls to actions or announcements as your audience will eventually get annoyed and potentially start ignoring your snaps. Conversely, to increase engagement, consider using popular topics and styles of snaps such as live coverage of events, behind the scenes exclusives, exciting activities, a day in the life of, or, if you're artistic, creating drawings over pictures. Each of these forms of storytelling will be an effective tool to help any calls to action or announcements to stand out. Ultimately, Snapchat is a tool for short form storytelling and the more creatively you can share your story or message the more interaction you'll gain.

There are a few downsides of Snapchat to be aware of. First, Snapchat makes it challenging to discover fellow users in your contacts list whom you may want to follow. For this reason building your personal network can take time. To avoid talking to an empty room, share your Snapchat scan code or username on other social networks and encourage others to follow you. Growing an audience with Snapchat is definitely less intuitive than other social media channels but the individual interaction often outweighs the initial struggle to grow in views. A second downside is the darker side of Snapchat, particularly among youth. Click [here](#) for information about some of the negative influences they may be exposed to. Finally, be aware that while

snaps and stories disappear after seconds or hours, they may not be truly gone. Users in the early days of Snapchat quickly realized that while they couldn't easily share or save snaps, they could capture a screenshot which could then easily be saved or shared. Snapchat continues to look for ways to safeguard your privacy. It will now alert you when someone takes a screenshot. However, if another camera is used to capture an image or video of a snap, there is no way for the app to know that has happened. Be aware that it is possible for anything you share on Snapchat to be captured and shared by those you are sharing with. It is also possible that since content passes through Snapchat's servers, content could be archived, at least temporarily, and subject to interception by authorities.

FOR FURTHER LEARNING

Hootsuite's ["How to Use Snapchat: A Guide for Beginners"](#)

[CRU's guide to getting started with Snapchat and Snapchat Stories](#)



Pinterest launched in 2010 and has become a big player in the social media game. It is highly visual and allows registered users to organize boards based on themes where they can also repin other user's pinned content. Most of its users are female, educated and affluent though male use is increasing. Users love collecting and sharing ideas, products, recipes, infographics, and more.

To learn more about using Pinterest for ministry, see CRU's ["Pinterest 101"](#) and ["8 Ways Churches are Using Pinterest"](#) by Margaret Feinberg. See also AdWeek's ["The Large Untapped Opportunity with Pinterest"](#) for helpful insights from a secular perspective.



YouTube, the ubiquitous video sharing platform, needs no introduction, but it might be helpful to consider a few key facts. In 2011, YouTube became the second most-used search tool on the planet behind its parent, Google, and it continues to be ranked as one of the most used websites in most, if not all, countries to this day (it certainly doesn't hurt that Google can prioritize YouTube content when delivering Google search results). It is YouTube that made "viral" (or "gone viral") a household word. It is synonymous with the the word "video", and with

the meteoric rise of video content, that makes YouTube a very, very big deal. In February 2017, YouTube announced that a new milestone had been reached: 1 billion of hours of YouTube content are being viewed daily. In sharing about where people in his country now go to have their religious questions answered, one cross-cultural worker in the Middle East commented, “We live in the age of i-everything - iPhone, iPad, and now even the iSheik. Instead of going down the street to the local mosque, Muslims here simply pull up YouTube on their mobiles.”

Clearly YouTube presents the Church with an enormous opportunity for sharing the gospel with the world in creative, relevant ways. This can take two forms:

- Creating and posting videos on YouTube. Any video that can be leveraged in some way for ministry, barring copyright restrictions, should be posted on YouTube. YouTube itself is a destination where people around the globe actively go to be informed and entertained. When posting a video, you have the option of allowing comments, which creates the option of social interaction. However, many posters disable commenting, using YouTube to simply host videos. Within the video description, or even through a call to action in the video itself, video creators can direct people to a website, email address, social media account or other media form where viewers can learn more and/or interact with others. A few ideas of original content to consider include:
 - a. original, dramatic films (short films or feature-length films)
 - b. Bible story videos (anyone can learn to use free tools to create simple but effective still-image-based videos that combine images, story narration, and local music)
 - c. scenic videos with background music
 - d. music videos
 - e. teaching videos including sermons, Bible teaching, etc.
 - f. worship in a local context
- Sharing YouTube content. While YouTube is a destination itself for media consumption, one of the most powerful ways of using YouTube content is by sharing it. YouTube makes it easy to embed videos on other websites, as well as share direct links on other social networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), via email, and in other creative ways. This allows you to wrap any available YouTube content with your own message - a question, a story, a testimony of God's work in your life, or even something fun and lighthearted.

Indigitous offers some helpful insights in their post, “Making YouTube work for you”. And, of course, the best source for learning how to grow in your video creation and sharing skills is... YouTube!

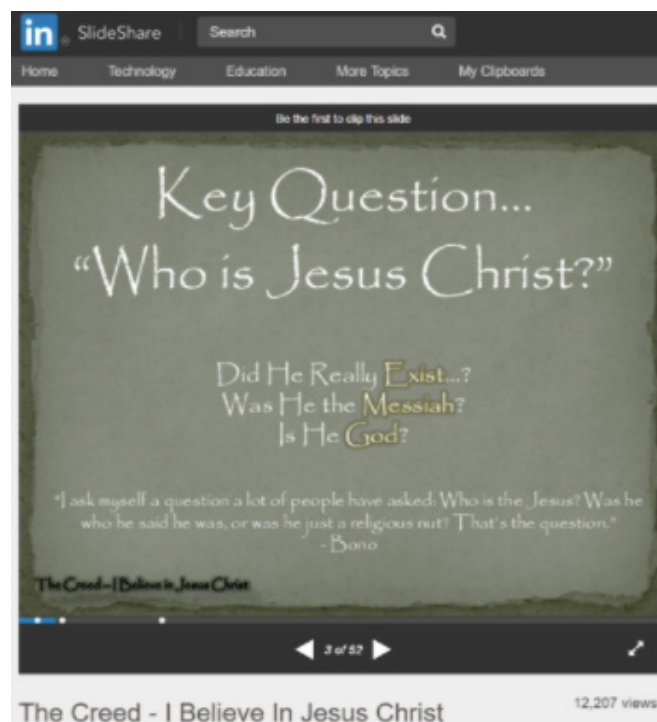
YOUTUBE SECURITY & PRIVACY

YouTube offers three levels of security for video content: public, unlisted, and private. Public content is visible to everyone and will be indexed and included in web search results. Unlisted content does not get indexed, so will not be included in web search results, but anyone with the URL can view the video and share it with others. Private videos can only be viewed by those given explicit permission via email to do so. Attempts to access the video URL without permission will result in an error message.

SLIDESHARE

SlideShare, owned by LinkedIn, is highly used in academic and professional communities and is the place to “share what you know and love through presentations, infographics, documents and more.” Over 18 million resources have been shared on SlideShare, and there are more than 70 million monthly visitors, most of those coming from outside of the U.S. The Mobile Ministry Forum, which has a multi-platform digital presence, commented, “We are now firm believers in SlideShare. We frequently share presentations on YouTube or on our blog, but on a whim, we loaded some SlideShare. We were shocked when we later saw the stats and realized that our content was having far more reach on SlideShare than any of our other platforms!”

One benefit of SlideShare is that it requires minimal effort compared to many other social platforms. Simply create an account and start posting your presentations, infographics, or documents. If you are already creating meaningful content in these formats, this is a simple, free, and effective way to extend the reach and influence of that content. Built-in tools allow users to easily share content via email, Facebook Google+, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Content can also be downloaded.



MINISTRY POTENTIAL

SlideShare is all about the content. Consider touchpoints in your particular socio-religious and cultural context. Create and share content that will speak clearly your particular audience. Consider content that will promote the idea that Jesus is for them. Use appropriate communications forms such as stories. As able, present content in the local language. Refute common myths or misperceptions about Jesus and the Christian faith. Honor the people and culture. Avoid anything that is demeaning or derogatory or might otherwise provoke a negative response. Keep your presentation visual, but use visual images that are appropriate in your particular cultural context. Use the “Notes” feature to include explanatory notes to accompany your slides. Consider including on the final slide some call to action - what it is that you want viewers to do in response to have they’ve just seen and read. For example, encourage them to visit your website, view a follow-up presentation, download a related resource such as a Bible, a video, or an audio story. Be sure to respond, as appropriate, to comments people leave on your SlideShare page. Create an appropriate profile with contact details that can lead interested viewers to people and information sources that can address their questions or desires to dig deeper.

SLIDESHARE SECURITY

Due to its somewhat limited social features, security risks associated with SlideShare are low. Creating an account requires only an email address. Unless you have a public profile that you don’t mind associating with your SlideShare account, consider using an alternate email address - even creating a new, dedicated address - that cannot be easily tied to you. If you live on the field in a region where security is a significant issue, consider having a friend or colleague outside of your country use his/her email address. Craft your SlideShare profile with security in mind. For example, do not provide your phone number or other personal information that might be used in any way against you.

POWER TIPS

- Be visual. Appropriate visual images capture attention and are memorable. Use of some text is more appropriate on SlideShare since viewers don’t have the benefit of hearing you present, but try to keep your text brief. Use the notes section to provide details.
- Be compelling. Your title slide should be visually appealing and attract attention. Use a provocative or descriptive title that makes your potential audience want to see what you have to share. Back it up with a description that further draws them in.
- Be brief, but not too brief.
- Be social. While the focus is on content, SlideShare is community-oriented, and the more you participate, the greater your influence will be. “Like” and comment on content that others post and consider sharing it as well. This will help get you and your content noticed, viewed, and shared.
- Be informed. Follow SlideShare on Twitter, Facebook, and Google+ and read their blog to keep up with new features, tips, and other helpful resources. A growing number of resources are available to help learn.



Tumblr is a visual-based microblogging platform that was launched in 2007 and was acquired by Yahoo in 2013. With nearly half of its users based in America, it may not be the ideal place to reach unreached peoples with the gospel, but as of January 2017, Tumblr boasted 550 million users with the vast majority of those under the age of 25. It has become known as a place where you can say pretty much anything you want without while remaining fairly anonymous (not surprisingly, pornography has more a small presence on Tumblr, though the site does try to minimize what is visible without users taking intentional steps to discover it). Social features include the ability to follow other Tumblr users, like and repost Tumbls, and ask questions and leave comments. Should Tumblr be used for social media ministry? It clearly is not for everyone, but apparently there are at least 550 million reasons to consider doing so. Here are a few resources to help you get started:

- [wikiHow's "How to Use Tumblr"](#)
- ["How Tumblr can boost your youth ministry" \(2015\)](#)
- [The New Evangelization on Tumblr \(2012\)](#)

EMOJIS AND EMOTICONS

No talk of visual media could be complete without mention of one of the biggest trends in social media today - the use of emojis and emoticons. While easy to dismiss as silly and childlike, these tiny graphics have gone heavily mainstream to the point of impacting engagement levels of our social media posts. They have become so ubiquitous, in fact, that most voice-to-text services on our computers and phones now automatically replace terms like "smiley face" with a corresponding image. A growing number of studies reveal the effectiveness of the pint-sized pictographs. Here are a few resources to help you learn more:

- [Emojipedia.org](#) - your most comprehensive source for finding and using emojis
- ["7 Reasons to Use Emoticons in Your Writing and Social Media, According to Science"](#)
- ["This is Why You Should Use Emojis to Boost Engagement in Social Media Ads"](#)
- ["Here are Rules of Emoji You Didn't Know You Were Following"](#)
- ["How to Use Emojis" \(Bing search results\)](#)

By the way, is it "emojis" or "emoticons"? Apparently there is a difference. Emoticons stem from the earliest images used to express a feeling (happy, sad, angry, etc.). Emojis are pictographs that represent an object or activity - food, people, dancing, sports, etc. While emojis seems to have emerged as the preferred catch-all term, the important thing is learning to use them. The best way to get started is by simply observing how they are being used on whatever social networks you are using, then to follow suit.

MICRO-VIDEOS

Micro-videos are a particular type of visual media that can be used across the spectrum of social media. They are ideally positioned to capitalize on what Google has dubbed [“micro-moments”](#), a new trend in consumer behavior brought about by the mobile revolution.

Micro-videos are brief video clips or animated images. While you are limited in terms of what you can communicate in such a brief segment, micro-videos are popular because they don't take long to watch and the files are small. It can be argued that animated GIFs were the original micro-videos, and their popularity has seen a resurgence with the rapid growth of visual media. Instagram and Vine (now defunct, but resurrected as Vine Camera) helped popularize micro-videos on social media with their 15- and 6-second video limits. The format has caught on and has gained renewed and growing interest as a result of Snapchat, a tool that encourages messaging through the use of micro-videos. Snapchat's model has proven so popular that other networks have since mimicked Snapchat with their own versions: Facebook Stories, [Instagram Stories](#), Messenger Day, and WhatsApp Status. YouTube has also picked up on this trend, and challenged attendees at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival to [tell stories with 6-second videos](#).

7. LIVE VIDEO CHANNELS

Broadcast to the largest audience in the world with the camera in your pocket.

Facebook Live tagline

INTRODUCTION

The ability to broadcast live video has been around for several years now, but with technology continuing to improve around the globe, live video is now beginning to go mainstream. With little effort, it is possible to find people broadcasting everything from personal ramblings to family celebrations to major breaking news stories. The ability to get a real-time glimpse into what is happening in random places around the world is amazing, but social media is helping to drive the popularity of live video. It is no longer simply about one-to-many broadcasting. Today's live video services allow viewers to interact with broadcasters in real time with comments, questions, and emojis showing their emotional reaction to what is taking place.

The best way to understand live video is to experience it. While it is designed for mobile use, it is easy to browse and watch available Facebook Live broadcasts. Simply visit www.facebook.com/livemap/, then click & drag the map to find an area of the world you are interested in. Each blue dot represents a live broadcast.

MINISTRY POTENTIAL

Live video, especially the more social-oriented services that allow real-time interaction, is fairly new. This presents gospel workers with a unique opportunity to easily capture people's attention simply by being among the "first to market." Both Periscope and Facebook Live, and perhaps other services, allow people to easily find live broadcasts based on geography. As more people have the bandwidth to view live video, and learn of its availability and ease of use, the more popular live video content will become. And if you're ready to think ahead, keep your eyes open for Facebook to roll out [Live 360](#) to the masses in 2017. This will allow the world not only a window into your world, but allow them feel like they are experiencing it with you through the immersive power of 360-degree video. In the meantime, here are a handful of ideas on how to begin using live video for ministry:

Broadcast your own live event

Live video streaming provides unique opportunities for people to have a window into your life for a brief period of time - to see the world through your eyes - and to interact with you as you

do so. Often times livestreams are very casual with very little planned. Other times they can be highly planned and structured. Some potential ways this can be used for ministry include:

- Bible studies or other teaching/training times
- Group coaching/mentoring
- Virtual prayer walks or group prayer times (e.g. a team on the field could invite supporters back home to join them for a live prayer time).
- Sharing worship services, celebrations (e.g. baptisms), etc.
- Demonstrations (how-to type videos)
- Sharing cultural events or showing where you live, work, or are visiting
- Sharing what it's like to “walk in your shoes”, a “behind the scenes” look at your life or how you do something.

Use it as a way to experience and learn another culture

If you are preparing to visit another country, consider looking for live broadcasts from that area to begin to get an insider's look at the local culture.

Interact with others in a live broadcast

When you open a live broadcast, you may see a chat box with the ability to join in the conversation. Engage the presenter, and the rest of the audience, in a kind and respectful manner, but also in a way that might motivate them to learn more about Christ.

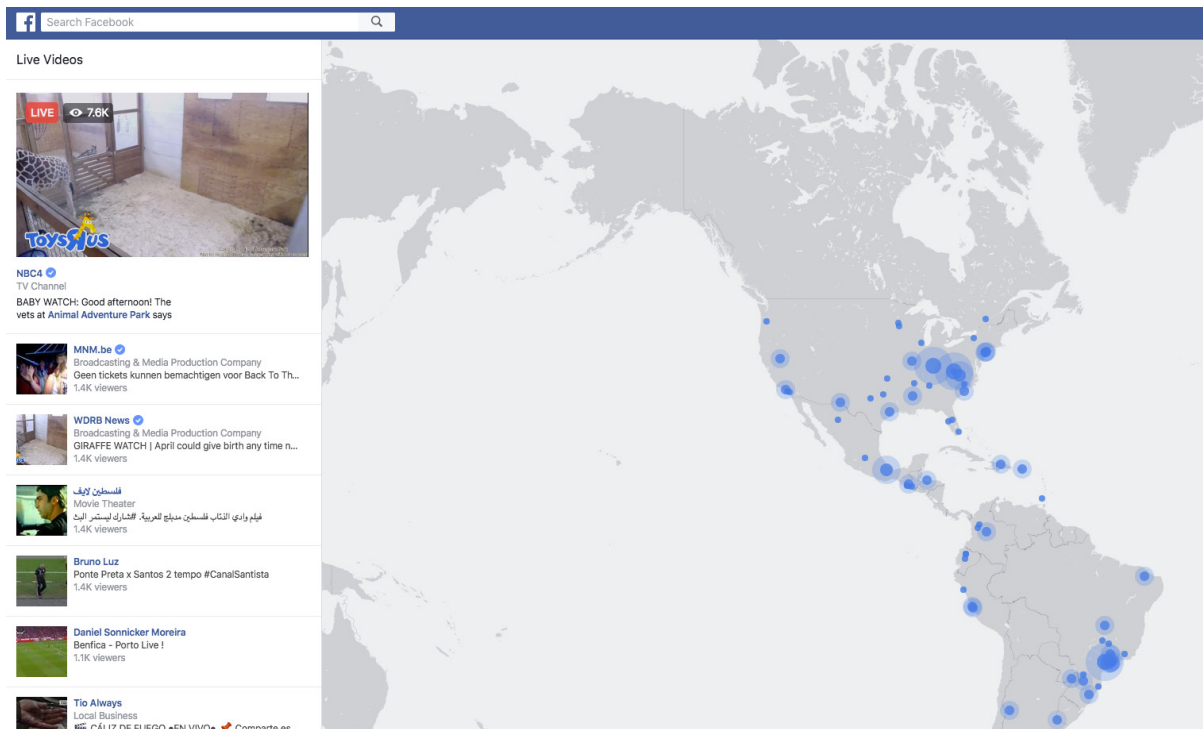
LIVE VIDEO TOOLS

Facebook Live

Facebook Live launched in early 2016 and is ready to capitalize on the base of nearly 2 billion active Facebook users around the world. Because it integrates directly into Facebook (live video for anyone you follow will appear in your timeline), Facebook Live has a huge advantage over other live video services. Anyone with a Facebook account and a mobile phone or other device with a camera and internet connection can begin sharing a live video simply by tapping on a button within Facebook:



While broadcasting video with Facebook Live was designed for use on a mobile device, Facebook began rolling out the ability to broadcast from a computer in March 2017, a feature that should allow for more creative, higher-quality broadcasts. Whether on a computer or mobile device, browsing available Facebook Live videos and viewing them from your computer is easy to do. Live video from anyone you follow will be available in your news feed. Alternatively, there is a “[Live Video](#)” link under the “Apps” section of the menu panel (left side of the screen) when viewing Facebook in your browser.



Each blue dot represents a live broadcast. Basic navigation tools allow you to pan around the globe to see what is available. Use the +/- buttons on the map to zoom in or out (zooming in will likely reveal far more live broadcasts than first appear when you are zoomed out). To change locations, simply click and drag the map left, right, up or down. To view a broadcast, click on the blue dot on the map (simply pointing at it with your mouse will bring up a live preview).

For a good example of someone using Facebook Live for ministry, see the Facebook page for Isik Abla, a Turkish evangelist, who has begun actively broadcasting live video to reach Muslims.: <https://www.facebook.com/isikablatv>.



PERISCOPE

Periscope is Twitter's live video tool and integrates nicely with Twitter, though it is a separate mobile app. Building on the success of Meerkat, and with the power of Twitter behind it, Periscope has become a popular tool. If your primary audience has a significant presence on Twitter, than Periscope should be strongly considered for your livestreaming. Anyone following you on Twitter will see a message in their Twitter feed indicating when you go live, and, of course, you can alert your followers ahead of time when you plan to go live. Your livestream is archived and available for replay for 24 hours after you end, and can be saved to your device's camera roll if desired, allowing you to extend its life much longer. So what is Periscope all about? In their own words,

"Periscope was founded on the belief that live video is a powerful source of truth and connects us in an authentic way with the world around us. We are fascinated by the idea of discovering the world through someone else's eyes. What's it like to see through the eyes of a protester in Ukraine? Or watch the sunrise from a hot air balloon in Cappadocia?"

"While there are many ways to discover events, movements and places, we realized there is no better way to experience something than through live video. A picture may be worth a thousand words, but live video lets us explore the world together."

The ability to interact in real time with people of interest has been a real draw for Periscope users. The tool was quickly adopted by well-known Twitter "celebrities", including influential Christian leaders such as Michael Hyatt. Interactivity on Periscope includes the ability to "heart" (like) what is being shared at any given moment as well as the ability to comment. Anyone can view public periscopes, but to interact with the presenter, viewers must be logged into their Periscope account (which, for ease of use, can be tied to a Twitter account).

Periscope now offers users the ability to create broadcast-quality live streams through its new Periscope Producer tool. Use of this tool will require some advanced video skills, but it may be of interest for ministries wanting to leverage the power of Periscope but offer content with much higher quality. Learn more: [Periscope Producer](#).

To better understand how your Scopes are being received, the app provides you with some basic stats including number of live viewers, number of times a video is replayed, and the number of hearts (likes) it receives.

Periscope offers some basic features to help you address security concerns. Scopes can be made private or public, allowing you to broadcast to a select few or to the world. Location sharing can help others find your livestream, but can be turned off if that is a potential risk. If you

do choose to share your location, Periscope no longer shows your exact location, but instead shows a more general area.

Some may argue that the initial popularity of Periscope usage is beginning to wane now that Facebook Live, Instagram, and others are making their presence this felt. While this may be true, consider where your audience is spending its time, then “fish where the fish are biting.” [See 11 Smart Ways You Can Use Periscope for Your Church Communications](#) to stimulate your thinking about how Periscope might be used in your ministry.

YouTube Live Streaming with Super Chat

In YouTube’s ongoing battle to remain the top purveyor of video content, Google announced in January 2017 that YouTube is going to begin supporting live video with interactivity. The feature is rolling out first to accomplished YouTubers with large followings, but it should be available to everyone sometime around summer of 2017. It will boast a “super chat” option that allows viewers to pay to pin their comments to the top of the chat screen for up to 5 hours.

YouTube is already synonymous with video, and given its backing by Google, it is likely that it will quickly become one of the most popular tools for live video. See [“How to Broadcast with YouTube Live”](#) for a good primer on getting started.



SKYPE

Skype was one of the early pioneers of online video chatting. Now owned by Microsoft, it continues to evolve and innovate, though its future, in light of a plethora of new, more social tools, is uncertain. In addition to messaging apps like Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, and Telegram, other similar services now include Google Hangouts and Zoom. However, Skype has an established base of users around the world along with mobile apps for most platforms, and people have found creative ways to use it for ministry. One organization pairs believers with groups of ESL learners or online ESL training. The provided curriculum helps create opportunities for the teacher to have group or private discussions about faith-related topics. One worker, who had spent several years in Central Asia, has made use of Skype in a similar way. The ability to view one another in real time enhances the personal connection that people experience. Skype allows people to connect for live interaction (text, voice, and/or video) as well as message one another. It also allows for files to be shared.

Other Options

Live video is just beginning to gain traction, and there are sure to be more and more options available. Other tools to consider right now include:

- Instagram
- Google Hangouts
- LiveStream

SECURITY

Today, almost anyone anywhere in the world is capable of broadcasting and receiving live information. This same connectivity creates great new risks for those broadcasting and those receiving alike. The standard methods of communicating online or via mobile can leave a trail that is easy for skilled individuals to monitor. These digital trails can not only put you at risk, but may endanger your contacts and colleagues as well. Be sure to get the permission of those who might be recognizable in your live videos, and be aware of how other content appearing your videos might disclose information about you or others.

SUMMARY

While the world hasn't yet seen a mass migration to live video streams, it brings together the power of video and real-time communications at a time when technology is beginning to make such a genre feasible. Expect to see rapid growth in live video in the near-term, and begin planning for how you can best capitalize on this trend.

ACTION POINTS/POWER TIPS

As with anything, practice makes better, so the best way to learn is to start doing. These power tips should help you get off to a strong start.

- Keep in mind that these livestreams are social. They are not one-way broadcasts, but are intended to be interactive. Encourage interaction along the way. Acknowledge people by name (their screen names will be visible when they comment) and respond to their comments and questions while you broadcast.
- Be prepared. The organic nature of live video can be part of the appeal (consider how reality TV shows have become so popular), but that doesn't mean you shouldn't take time to think about what you what are going to share - or even going a step further by practicing before you go live. If you expect an audience to stay on with you, plan how you can keep them engaged.
- An important part of any good video is audio quality. Consider investing in a mobile-friendly mic that will capture your voice, or other audio source(s), cleanly.
- Give thought to how to capture the best video. Think about how to position your camera or mobile device to provide the best perspective, how to improve the lighting, etc.
- Timing: Consider when your intended audience is most likely to be available and able to view your live video. Replays may be possible, but much of the value of this type of content is the interaction that can occur when people are viewing live. Also, be sure to let your audience know ahead of time when you'll be live. Use your various social media accounts to

do this, and encourage your followers to spread the word.

- Increase your reach: To attract more viewers, choose a compelling, descriptive title. Also consider targeted advertising (see section on advertising) or using some sort of promotion (e.g. “I will give away 5 copies of my new eBook if we reach at least 100 viewers!” or “Join my livestream at 3pm for a chance to win a \$25 Starbucks gift card!”). Also

FOR FURTHER LEARNING

- CRU’s [“Tips on Hosting a Facebook Live Video”](#)
- E4e’s [“Facebook Live is an Easy Ministry Tool”](#)
- [“How Your Business Can Capitalize on Facebook Live”](#)
- [“5 New Facebook Live Video Features for Marketers”](#)

8. SOCIAL GAMING & GAMIFICATION

SOCIAL INTERACTION THROUGH GAMES AS A BRIDGE FOR THE GOSPEL

I long for games to be inviting spaces where college students will able to explore facets of life following Jesus, and for this exploration to be an initial on-ramp toward following Jesus with the rest of their lives.

[Bret Staudt Willet](#)

Missional gaming is not simply playing games and believing in Jesus. It's seeing gaming as an opportunity to reach out to others in love, to fulfill the Great Commission even in our recreational gaming time.

[Andrew Fallows](#)

LET US PLAY

Sharing faith at work, over meals, or even preaching to people while they sleep in a pew – these things are not new. Neither is the idea of reaching out to people while playing games. Even if the playing field is something that's changing. Bret and Andrew quoted above work with Intervarsity's [Ministry in Digital Spaces](#) initiative and have been exploring missional gaming.



My own introduction to a gamified church was in 2004 when I was asked to be a guest preacher in the Church of Fools. The church was a strange place. People wandered in and out and typed along to worship in a weird form of reverse karaoke.

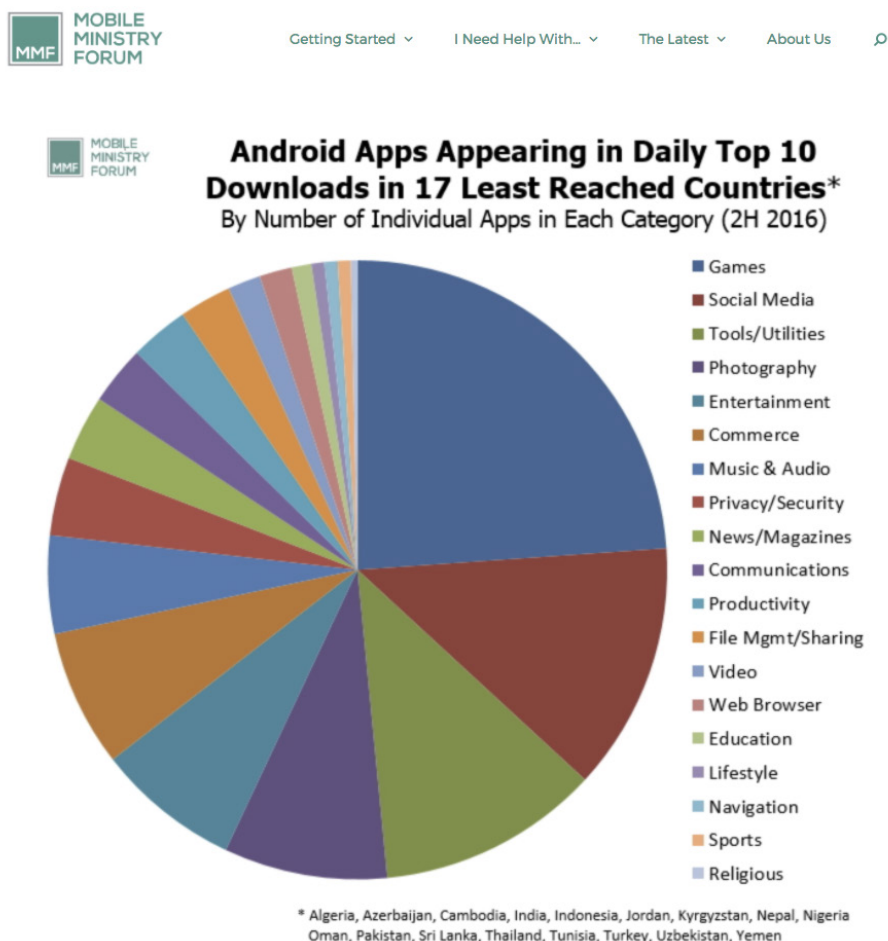
Suffice to say, the online world is a place where church has been happening for much of this century. Interaction takes place in Christian chat rooms, social media channels and in a wide variety of gaming environments.

Sometimes people will specifically engineer Christian games or game like environments such as the virtual churches, or community elements of online Bibles and discipleship apps. Other encounters happen in ordinary games (but be aware of the context - no serious gamer wants you putting them off their game to talk about Jesus any more than a sports player or fan wants you to interrupt in the middle of the game.)

This is not a detailed 'how to' section of ministering in specific gaming environments just a heads up that it is worth exploring and some a few things to think about to help you quickly get to the next level.

GAMES ARE POPULAR EVERYWHERE

Worldwide, mobile gaming active users has now hit 2 billion individuals ([The Numbers Article for Mobile in 2017 - All the Statistics You Could Ask For](#)). The Mobile Ministry Forum's [research on app use in 17 least reached countries](#) shows that games are a huge part of the app market in all parts of the world.



As a family we play Clash of Clans - a game that is hugely popular around the globe including in 17 least reached countries. We play as part of a clan of mostly Christians and occasionally in the chat boxes we encourage one another about real life things. It's not a serious game but like most games some people take it seriously and can find parallels to life outside the game ([see Clash of Syrian Clans: How an Online Game Reflects the Syrian Conflict](#)).



MANY PLATFORMS, MANY PLAYERS

My first computer came with 1k of memory where games were typed up from magazines and saved on cassette. My son has access to Wii, X-box, Nintendo 3DS, Android, and a range of PC games and online options. There are many more platforms (platform can refer to technology, software and environment). Some may be more popular in some countries and amongst different types of players.

If considering games as a tool for mission decide how much you are going to reach out within the games that you play or whether you are going to explore what is being played by the people you reach. Both may be valid.

GAMES AND GAMIFICATION

Games and gamification (game-like things used in non-gaming environments) have been used by the church long before computers and mobile phones came along because play is a part of every culture. Games can be used to teach and reinforce behaviour, to build social skills, and to relax. At times people have focused on the Christian work ethic, and forgotten to develop a theology of play.

Think of some examples of how games and game elements have been used in your own Church. (You can give yourself 5 points for each example)

When there are things you have to do (or want to do but need extra motivation) adding a game element (even as simple as giving points) can make them more fun or somehow competitive. Simple example would be a progress bar to encourage you to fill in more of an online profile, or some levels, rewards, and opportunities to chart your progress, against friends when you learn a new language in [duolingo](#).* As language learning is often a connection for people working cross culturally Duolingo itself might serve as a game like environment offering bridges to conversation.

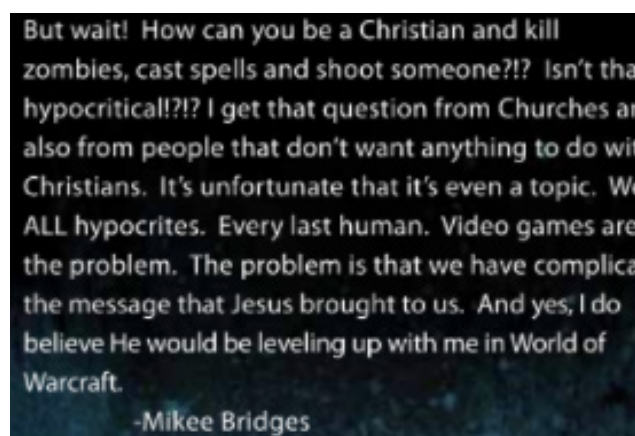
Think about some of the non-game apps and websites you use today and think about how they use game elements to draw you in and keep you engaged. 10 bonus points for each example

you spot and 250 points if you are using gamification in your own ministry. (any thought on how to make use of [tinycards](#) in which you can make your own sets of fun flash cards for teaching any subject?)

As with games themselves some elements of gamification may work better in some contexts and cultures than others. Have another 50 points if you google #ethnogamification, and 1000 points if you use the term yourself in a blog, tweet or academic paper.

GAMES ARE NOT (ALL) BAD

Gamechurch.com is a group of people who love video games and love Jesus. They are careful not to condemn people for the games they play, but if you can avoid being judgemental of others it's worth thinking through what you think Jesus would play himself. (Perhaps different to David, Samson, or Deborah)



You may decide St Paul would apply “all things are permissible” to video game genres but be aware that he’d also possibly say “not all things are beneficial”. Jesus might not condemn people for playing violent or demeaning games but there might be times when he’d also say “Go, play no more”.

Whether or not you are working cross culturally, be aware of what the local church and community thinks about the games you believe are okay.

There is definitely a range of opinion on games especially violent or fantasy type games. This may relate to spells, bullets, how much blood and gore there is, and how sexualised female characters are. ‘cartoon violence’ is different to graphic gore of some first person shooters. I suspect there are also different levels of ‘magic’ - is a spell just about ‘zapping’ something at a or about trying to harness occult power?

For a discussion starter on what is acceptable within your own family, church or ministry try a round of [“What would Jesus Play?”](#) in which people are simply encouraged to think about a game and rate it “Let us play” or “Go, and game no more”

SOME PEOPLE WHO PLAY GAMES ARE NOT NICE

Parents and children should be watchful for strangers online who are making friends with vulnerable people to lure them into unhealthy relationships. If you are online you need to be accountable for your own actions and motives and to be above suspicion. Also recognise that some parents would view an evangelist almost as suspiciously as any predator. How would you feel if someone was trying to convert your child to another faith?

Adopt similar standards to if you were interacting with people face to face. Maintain a level of accountability in terms of your online interactions for your own safety as well as for that of others.

HOW TO DECIDE WHICH GAMES CAN BE HELPFUL IN YOUR MINISTRY

- What are people playing? / What am I playing? - Who do you want to reach out to and are you playing what they are playing.
- Can I play it? - You don't have to be the best but if you are chatting to people while playing, it helps if you can play.
- Should I play it? - Perhaps you might like a game of What would Jesus Play to help you think through this.
- Does it allow for meaningful interaction? - Is there text or voice chat? Does the pace of the game allow for conversation.
- Does the game itself provide openers for discussion? - Jesus often spoke in parables, and used illustrations from the things around him. What can you see in the game that provides a natural discussion starter?
- Recognise games, as an opportunity for community. It's actually okay if every interaction doesn't turn into an opportunity to discuss life or faith. It's okay for games to be a time of rest but the benefits of such rest go down after the first three hours of play.
- Does the game have strong messages you disagree with? - What are you being encouraged to do through the game? How are women depicted?
- Think outside the box. For example, Pokemon Go has been used as a way to gather people together face-to-face for gaming, allowing for time to intentional conversations about life.

SAME GAME, DIFFERENT CULTURES



(image CCO from <https://pixabay.com/en/not-ludo-game-board-glass-cone-1745964/>)

With the added anonymity of some online games it is easy to assume that if you are playing the same game you are playing by the same rules and with the same ideas. When interacting with people from different cultures (or even from your own) recognise that they may have different experience, views, assumptions and expectations.

- [Granny's Bible Dojo](#) (available free on web, IOS, and Android) is a fun game to help kids and people who were once kids learn the order of books of the Bible. Book titles appear on wooden boards and granny must karate chop them in the correct order. As you progress you win rewards in the form of artifacts collected on Granny's travels. For many people this is quirky and innocent but some people have commented that some of the trophies have spiritual significance for some cultures. Might it offend some people? Might it encourage some to think that religions can be blended together?
- Working in one Asian country I was surprised by how much some people in the local church were opposed to Pokemon (this was before Pokemon Go when people started using Pokemon to attract people to churches). For me Pokemon is far enough removed from my real world experience to be just a game (and not one that interests me), but for some people the game embodied religious beliefs they were trying to stand against.
- Games have been used effectively in health education for a long time but serious games expert [Mohina Dutta](#) learned the hard way that not every game crosses cultures. A workshop on combating Malaria was going great until she brought out the dice. Within the local culture dice was always associated with gambling and gambling was seen as sinful. Suddenly all respect was lost. Mohina and her colleague retrieved the situation but learnt a valuable lesson.

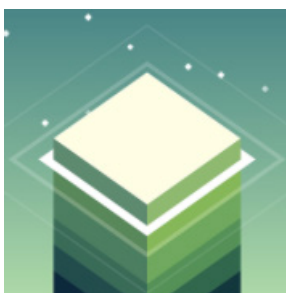
ONLINE AND OFFLINE

Your ministry may include social media but that doesn't mean all your interaction will be online.

Face to face meetings may continue via online discussion and online discussion may result in face to face meeting.

Take time to think through how online and offline contact may differ in terms of safety, security, potential for greater communication, potential for greater miscommunication.

GAMES AS CONVERSATION STARTERS



Some games can be used to spark conversation eg a game like [Stack](#) simply requires you to click when sliding layers overlap (try it). It's an example of how easy it is to do the right thing - for a short while - but that none of us are perfect and will eventually miss the target. With the ability to screen cast from a phone to a TV you can also use phone games as crowd pullers at an event.

RESEARCH WHAT PEOPLE ARE PLAYING

Method #1 - talk to people

Method #2 - look around - what games can you see on people's phones or advertised on sale locally.

Method #3 - use the web. Within a country to find the top games are simply look at the Google Play store. From outside a country you can also use sites such as AppAnnie to discover what is popular.

LESS GLOBAL GAMES?

Some of the top games are popular throughout the world (sometime with versions translated, localised, and 'culturalised' for the local audience). It may also be worth looking to see if anyone is developing games specifically aimed at the people you are trying to reach.





[Moraba](#) is a combination of a traditional African game plus a quiz on relationships aimed to reduce gender based violence. What other issues could be addressed through games?

SUMMARY

- Games can provide a valid arena for ministry, take some time to reflect on your own attitudes to play and discuss with others the boundaries you wish to establish.
- Think about the kind of games you enjoy and whether they can be useful in reaching others.
- Research your players. What do the people you are trying to reach play? How do they view games and play?
- Explore differences between your own culture and the culture of the people you wish to reach - how does this effect what and how you play, and how you engage with others?
- Establish Accountability. Set yourself limits and stick to them. Discuss your plans with someone else and make yourself accountable.
- Pray before you play - however playful, Christian ministry is not a game. Even in a virtual world you are involved in real spiritual warfare.

GOING FURTHER LINKS & RESOURCES

[Games as Scripture Engagement](#). An introduction for those not quite sure if games and missions go together

InterVarsity's [Ministry in Digital Spaces](#)

[GAMECHURCH](#), an active community of people passionate about both video games and God

GAMECHURCH on [7 Great Games About Immigration](#). Games can be places where you not only meet people from other cultures but, also, where you put yourself in the virtual shoes of another and explore issues from a different perspective.

[Christian Game Developers Conference](#)

[Games Christians Play](#), a growing list of some of the games Christians play

[Games4Change's Let the Games Begin: A Toolkit 4 Making Social Issues Games](#)

[The MindShift Guide To Digital Games And Learning](#)

9. ADVERTISE TO BOOST REACH AND ENGAGEMENT

GREEN LIGHT IDEAS TO MAXIMIZE YOUR BUDGET

People influence people. Nothing influences people more than a recommendation from a trusted friend. A trusted referral influences people more than the best broadcast message. A trusted referral is the Holy Grail of advertising.

Mark Zuckerberg

INTRODUCTION: DEFINING REACH AND ENGAGEMENT

If I run out onto the pitch in a Champions League game with a banner that reads “Messi is the greatest player that ever played!” I may have “reached” 80,000 people with my message but I’ve not engaged them. If I can get even 1% of those fans to enter a dialog about who they consider to be the greatest player and I’m able to present my rationale for saying it is Messi, then I’ve engaged them.

Both of these concepts get a bit complicated though because even though your “reach” may have been 80,000, your banner only faces half the crowd. So now you’re down to 40,000. And if security tackles you quickly when you run out on the field, then maybe only 20,000 had a chance to see you.

So which is more important to focus on - “Reach” or “Engagement”?

It depends on your outcome. If you have a concept that can be captured in a short phrase or marketing slogan, then your “reach” is crucial. But if you have time to build a person’s trust, then engagement is needed to bring people along to gain their trust.

FREE ADVERTISING

This chapter was originally titled “Advertising to Boost...” but we changed it to “Advertise to Boost...” Dictionary.com definitions seem to confirm that when we use the phrase “advertising” our minds naturally associate the term with paying for a service or opportunity. Yet the definition of “advertise” serves us so much better by reminding us that you don’t have to pay money to advertise something.

Advertising: the act or practice of calling public attention to one's product, service, need, etc., especially by paid announcements in newspapers and magazines, over radio or television, on billboards, etc.:

Advertise: to announce or praise (a product, service, etc.) in some public medium of communication in order to induce people to buy or use it:

One of the big mistakes people seeking to is jumping to the conclusion that you need to spend money to boost your reach and engagement. Although it often is the case that paid advertising will take you to new heights, that's not the place to start.

This chapter will continue with a brief introduction to some of the key ideas for both free and paid advertising.

PROGRESSIVE STEPS TO CONSIDER

Three Free Quick Things to Do

We are assuming you are on Facebook and Twitter. If not, go back to the beginning of this guide and start over... Then use these three tips to boost your reach and engagement.

- Include Photos and Videos. Studies have shown that there is a substantial increase in people seeing and reading your posts. Even a simple picture with a statement is a great place to start. The Canva website is a great place to go for help creating beautiful graphics to enhance your post.
- Ask an either/or question. The selection of a thought provoking or interesting question can also be a way to increase your exposure and reach. Be careful to not make it too controversial or polarizing.
- Get advice. When you are about to venture into a new direction or launch a new product, ask your users for advice along the way. This accomplishes a few things. 1) It gives you some great feedback, 2) It build anticipation for the product, and 3) it shows you value their input which is part of the trust building process.

Work on your timing and words and actions

- What's your best time to send? The key principle here is that you are trying to post at a time that gets the most response. This may vary based on what your focus is. There are key times to reach men, women, youth, different ages, etc. Just use a search engine to search on ideas like "Best time to post on Facebook to reach teenagers." You'll get a lot of articles that will pop up. Spend a little time skimming them to try different ideas to find what works best.
- What about frequency? The general rule of thumb is that it should be at least once a day. But don't post so much that people stop following you because you're filling their newsfeed.
- What words really connect? Pay attention to which words you use in your posts that seem to best connect and then use those words often. Try to develop a list of about ten keywords that you come back to often.
- Stay focused. What do you want them to do? Give them a reason to take action and be clear what it is.
- Vary your content. Don't simply promote something with every post. Spice things up with

posts that are related to your overall theme.

Working with Others

Another great way to get free publicity is to work with others. Here are some things you can do.

- Partner with other people by offering ideas that are a benefit to them.
- Do a guest post on somebody else's blog. Make sure that your post is of value to them and not just a post about your product or ministry.
- Jump on top of hot news items or keywords
 - For example, at a Willow Creek leadership summit or other major event, you can make comments on the event's Twitter feed back to something on your site. Don't over do it but a couple of comments during the day, mixed with other non-linked tweets is fine.
 - You can also go to news stories that allow for comments and if you can make a relevant, appropriate comment as coming from your site or recognized persona, it again increases awareness of your ministry activities.

Ideas for Spending Money Wisely

Once you get into the realm of spending money, there are a few ways to do it.

- Hold a contest. While still doing some of the free things above, now put some money into a reward or prize.
- Offer something of value for those who take an action.
- Paid Advertising

GETTING THE MOST FOR YOUR MONEY

Now that you've absorbed some tips how to achieve results without spending a lot of money, it's finally time to spend money! Spending for reach and engagement can be valuable, and even necessary, to see your desired results.

We'd like to refer you to Hootsuite's [A Beginner's Guide to Social Media Advertising](#) as an introduction to paid advertising. The company behind the article, Hootsuite, offers a social media dashboard with the ability to manage all your social networks and schedule messages for future publishing. As you read the guide keep in mind that that Hootsuite's aim is to get you to subscribe to their service. You may not need Hootsuite. In fact, the platform is best suited for larger Small and medium-sized enterprises ([SMEs](#)), Marketing Agencies, and Enterprise. We find that the platform adds the most value for scheduling and listening but can be a bit overwhelming for those just starting out. Many of you will be better served by a simpler post scheduling tool such as [Later app](#) and most advertisers would be better off using Facebook's and other native (built-in) advertising tools.

Facebook Advertising Tips

As the world's most pervasive social media platform, Facebook is a great option for advertising. While Hootsuite provides a nice overview, we want to offer a few tips from our experience that can save you time, headache, and hard-earned cash. To help you prepare your first campaign, we offer the following as a parallel guide to the article [A Beginner's Guide to Social Media Advertising](#). You may also want to refer to [Creating Facebook ads in Ads Manager](#) and the contextual links below.

STEP 1: CHOOSE YOUR CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVE

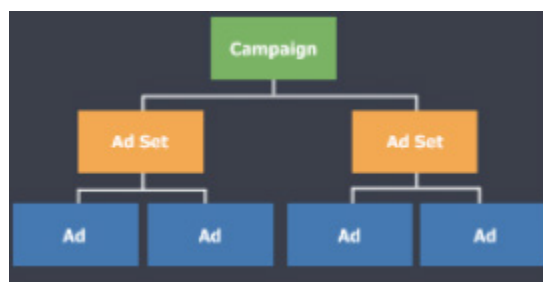
With so many choices, how are you to [choose the right campaign objective](#)? For starters, we highly recommend you check out the [Facebook Ads Guide](#) before selecting a campaign objective and refer back to it often. It describes the purpose of each Campaign Objective and gives you detailed specs and previews of what ads look like for each channel. Campaign objectives and layouts change regularly in Facebook, so be flexible and alert. Your campaign objective should align with your overall strategy. Note that a strategy could be multi-phased. For example, you may start with a Video Views campaign which feeds into a Lead Generation or Offer Claims campaign.

Tip: *Keep in mind that you won't be able change your campaign objective, so choose wisely.*

Campaign structure works as follows:

- Campaign (Objective of your advertisement, overall campaign spending limit)
- Ad Set (Targeting, budget, channel selection)
- Ads (Ad design and copy)

Tip: *Create one ad set and all ads in the set, review, then use the duplicate tool to copy this ad set as many times as desired adjusting for your targeting preferences.*



STEP 2: CREATE YOUR AD ACCOUNT

This may seem backwards but choosing to create your first ad is what triggers the creation of your ad account.

Tip: *Pay attention to the small print and **get the Currency and Time Zone correct**. You won't be able to change it without creating a new ad account.*

Tip: *Now's also a good time to think about [adding other users to your ad account](#).*

STEP 3: TARGET YOUR AD (SET)

This section will blow you away once you dive into it.

Targeting tip: *Create a persona for your ideal campaign targets. We won't waste space here, just [hop over to HubSpot](#) and get going. Once you have your personas, target and exclude ideal audiences based on Location, Interests, Behaviors. For more reading, see [Facebook's Reach the audiences you care about](#) and [Ad Targeting Options](#).*

Placements: Most of you will want to focus on “**Facebook feeds (mobile and desktop)**”. If your audience is particularly active on Instagram or on Apps (Audience Network), do some homework about those platforms and continue. Facebook recommends “Automatic Placements” but we're hoping you know your audience better than they do and we can take a guess why they want us on all placements.

Using [Connections](#) is another powerful way to achieve higher conversion rates by connecting with folks who are already connected to you or who have engaged with you. We highly encourage the use of targeting Fans (yes, you will need to pay for this), Friends of Fans, and other connections.

What's a good Audience size?

Look at the estimated size of your audience and estimated number of users who will see your ad daily. Make an assumption of what frequency (number of times each user will view your ad) is desirable and then do the math to see how well you will reach this audience.

Tip: *As you get some data, **Relevance** is a key metric to understanding your ad and campaign performance. The Relevance column is viewable from your ad's performance reports after receiving 500 impressions. “If you have a low relevance score (less than 6), try updating your audience or changing your advert's creative to be more appealing to the audience that you've created.”*

STEP 4: SET YOUR BUDGET

How much should I spend? Work backwards by starting with your objectives. How many people do you want to view your video? What is your targeted number of website clicks? Then find your estimated **Combined Ad Set Reach** (Ad Set 1 + Ad Set 2 + Ad Set X) to see if your budget is reasonable. Remember that budgets are set at the Ad Set level, so you must combine your Ad Sets to calculate total spend or limit this with a Campaign Spending Limit.

Tip: *Choose **Lifetime** if you want to set the budget for the entire period. Choose **Daily** if you desire to spend a set amount every day. We tend to find ourselves using Lifetime budgets primarily. Lifetime budgets also unlock the ability to use [advanced scheduling](#) to run your ads on a specific day and time.*

STEP 5: BUILD YOUR AD

Think like a user. Create ads that **grab mobile users attention** and would cause them to **take the desired action**. Always **use the Mobile preview first** (even though it's not selected by default).

Video Ads are essential. Video ads are incredibly **cheap and efficient ways of creating awareness and capturing attention** as many users have them set to play automatically. One of our partners in Asia started to run a few video ad campaigns in 2016 and routinely sees cost per video view of \$0.001 or less with high numbers of views. **Prepare your videos with text captions to be viewed and easily read without sound.** Videos in Facebook are also great in that they [can be used for effective retargeting](#).



Tips: As you create images and headlines, refer back to [The Facebook Ads Guide](#) To find the right image for your ad type and text length. It's always a good idea to abide by the 20% Text Rule / Guideline using Facebook's [Image Text Check Tool](#) to check your ad images before uploading to your campaign.

Tips for advanced users:

Consider using **Power Editor** if you plan to use multiple Ad Sets with multiple Ads per Ad Set. The Power Editor offers time saving copy tools for ads and ad sets, hidden / dark posts for ads, and some level of offline editing.

Buried in the Ads Manager Menu is the **Audience Tool** which is your ticket for creating and editing [Lookalike Audiences](#) and [Website Audiences](#). Once you have hundreds of fans, Lookalike Audiences become a must. The more relevant the audience, the more rewarding the results tend to be.

For those with a website: Before you launch your campaign, we suggest you [Install your Pixel](#). Follow the instructions or get some help to implement this techie piece. This technical piece is a must for optimization and measurement for those integrating a campaign with a website. Why add your pixel? Facebook describes the pixel:

"When someone visits your website and takes an action (e.g. buys something), the Facebook pixel is triggered and reports this action. It will then try to match this action to someone on Facebook. This way, you'll know when a customer took an action after seeing your Facebook advert. You'll also be able to reach this customer again by using a Custom Audience."

Our favorite resource for advanced Facebook Advertisers is [Jon Loomer's blog](#). Check out his [Facebook Ad Campaign Process: Build Audience, Leads and Conversions](#) guide.

SUMMARY

Social Media can be a powerful means of getting your word out to an ever growing audience. Used rightly, it can connect you to many people who can benefit from what you have to offer. There are many free and paid ways to boost your engagement through advertising. Plan well and you'll succeed often. But stay alert! Paid advertising can get away from you quickly if you're not careful. It can be an exhilarating experience to see the names of new people joining your ranks after you run an ad or make a free post.

POWER TIPS (ACTION POINTS)

- Learn about the free options for advertising and make sure you are using those to their full advantage.
- Use Facebook as a starting point for paid advertising. They have good training materials and helpful set up ideas. They are the biggest player in the field so doing well with them is crucial.
- Realize that things move quickly in social media. Define your goals clearly and understand what success is. Set limits on advertising so that you don't spend more than your budget. Tweak and adjust to get it right. Don't set and forget. Stay keenly involved.

GOING FURTHER LINKS / RESOURCES

[Comparison Chart for Choosing Between Top Social Media Sites for Marketing](#)

[The Difference Between Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, YouTube, & Pinterest](#)

10. SOCIAL MEDIA SECURITY

RECOGNIZING AND RESPONDING TO THE RISKS INHERENT IN THE DIGITAL WORLD WE LIVE IN AND IN SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH IN PARTICULAR

If security were all that mattered, computers would never be turned on, let alone hooked into a network with literally millions of potential intruders.

Dan Farmer

I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.

Matthew 10:16

INTRODUCTION

Much of what we do in life is determined on the basis of risk versus reward. The risk of a heart attack later in life versus the reward of biting into the juicy, mouth watering hamburger sitting on the table in front of you. The risk of crossing a busy street versus the reward of getting to the store on the other side. Sometimes there are options available to us to reduce the risk while maintaining the reward- options like choosing the grilled chicken burger instead or crossing down the street at the light rather than directly across from your destination. At other times the alternatives that would make the risk worth the reward just aren't available or worth the effort (the doctor just told you your cholesterol levels are off the charts and your arteries are nearly blocked off with plaque/it's an eight lane highway with loads of traffic and no place to cross for kilometers in either direction) and you have to just say, "maybe it wasn't meant to be".

Ministry decisions are sometimes made on the same risk versus reward basis and anyone considering social media ministry needs to spend a bit of time considering the potential risks versus rewards involved with it. Time needs to be taken, as well, to examine the various options that could minimize the risks while still allowing for the most reward possible. We hope this chapter will help you in assessing potential risks, identifying appropriate potential risk reduction tools and strategies, and implementing a social media outreach that maximizes the potential for ministry impact while minimizing security risks to yourself and those you are ministering among.

RISK MANAGEMENT PLANNING

You would have had to be living under a rock to miss the digital hacking disasters that have hit major countries and corporations over the last few years. Whether it was WikiLeaks or Edward Snowden, Home Depot or Yahoo (a BILLION accounts compromised), it seems that no one's digital information or accounts have been safe from being plundered. When faced with such threats it is easy to respond with either cynical abandon, failing to act at all since "nothing you do can protect you anyways" or, at the other end of the spectrum, pulling the plug on any and all digital outreach efforts since "it's too dangerous to do anything on such an insecure platform". The first response is patently untrue and puts outreaches at risk. The second response, while valid in some cases, doesn't recognize the myriad of ways that digital outreach can be handled responsibly and with a good measure of security.

QUESTIONS NEEDING TO BE ASKED

In each of the cases mentioned above the country or corporation was targeted for a reason. Each hack was not random but, rather, guided by a particular intent on the part of the attacker. If we or our ministry want to be prepared to face the security threats we may face we will need to start by asking serious questions about who might target us and for what reasons. Questions that need to be asked include:

- Who might find our ministry of particular interest/a potential target? Who might find the people we are ministering to of particular interest/a target?
- To whom might we or our ministry be considered a threat? Who might find the people we are ministering to a particular threat?
- What information would those parties be interested in obtaining? What information do we have that, if in the hands of the wrong people, could be potentially harmful to ourselves, our ministry, those we minister to and those we minister alongside? A question you might want to ask yourself here is, "What information about our ministry or the people we are ministering to would we not want shared on the evening news?"
- What are the potential/likely consequences of our online activities being compromised? In terms of the ongoing viability of our ministry? In terms of our safety? In terms of the safety of those we are ministering to? In terms of consequences to other ministries and individuals with whom we have some form of relationship?

Once those questions are answered a second set of questions need to be raised:

- Who has access to the information that we desire to protect (in the case of social media outreach it could be as wide as everyone who has joined a chat group, etc.)?
- Who needs to have access the information that we desire to protect?
- What are online means by which that information can be accessed?
- What and where are physical locations/devices where that information can be accessed? What are the potential outcomes of information at any of those locations/on any of those devices being accessed maliciously?
- How likely is it that information we want to protect could be accessed by someone we don't want seeing it either online (considering, for instance, the chance of being targeted

with malware or the potential for those we are ministering with to leave their social media account up giving others the chance to review what is on it) or via a physical location or device (the likelihood a ministry worker's phone getting lost or stolen or someone you minister to having their mobile examined by a family member or security service member, etc).

DEVELOPING A SAFETY PLAN

At this point you should be able to list out potential risks and score them for their likelihood and the relative severity of their occurrence. The result of this scoring can give you a good idea of which issues require the greatest/most urgent focus. At this point you have yet another set of questions you will want to be asking as you consider each of those issues:

- How can this threat be eliminated? What would the cost be (not just financially but also in terms of effect on ministry efforts, ongoing time investment, etc)? Could there be any "side-effects" to our efforts to eliminate the threat (such as the possibility of increasing a government's interest in you because you are encrypting your communications)?
- How can this threat be reduced? And again, what would the costs be? Could there be any "side-effects" to our efforts to minimize the threat?

What can we do to minimize the harm should the threat actually takes place (secondary prevention- minimizing the effects of an event).

Answers for these questions can be something as simple as setting up alternative social media accounts, de-friending contacts from back home whose social media identity/postings potentially raise questions about your identity/purposes, etc. Alternatively, answers to these questions could be as complex as needing to purchase and install physical and software "firewalls" to keep intruders away from your information, creating a new ministry model that segments users so that a breach in one segment only reveals the details of those users, not the rest, etc.

It is possible that, upon reflection upon the benefits versus severity of risks for social media ministry in your setting, the decision could be reached to pull back from social media ministry involvement entirely. That said, ministries need to recognize that such a decision in no way guarantees their security. A deep risk analysis would show that ministry members' simple possession of a phone (not even a smartphone necessarily) can provide a level of access to information that most ministries would prefer kept secret. Phones' microphones can be turned on remotely enabling the recording of conversations and phones' locations can be tracked (whether via cell towers or GPS) which also enables logging of which phones/individuals are gathered together at various times. Similarly, any internet use or social media involvement by staff, volunteers, supporters and those we minister among can potentially threaten a ministry, even if we are avoiding the use of social media for direct outreach purposes.

THREAT MANAGEMENT

General Digital Security Recommendations:

1. Have unique and strong passwords for each social media account as well as device (phones, tablets and computers). Check out [7 Password Experts on How to Lock Down Your Online Security](#) for an up-to-date and approachable overview of how to do passwords right. If you are worried about how you're going to keep track of all those passwords consider using a service like [KeePass](#) that can safely store passwords, allowing you to only have to remember one password to access the rest.
2. Enabling "2 Factor Authentication" for your accounts is advised by most experts with the important side note not use authentication that relies on SMS text messages as it has been shown that such authentication can be hacked relatively easily (see [So Hey You Should Stop Using Texts for Two-Factor Authentication](#))
3. Keep all computers and phones updated with the latest software and operating system patches and updates. Allowing your software and operating systems to become out of date/ unpatched leaves you vulnerable to hackers who now know the vulnerabilities that had to be patched by those updates and patches.
4. Use antivirus and firewall programs and keep them up to date. [Tom's Guide's Antivirus Software Purchasing Guide](#) is an excellent introduction to making decisions about which anti virus program you should use.
5. Trust no one or at, least, don't trust links that anyone sends you. Any account can be compromised and malicious links can be sent from friends, colleagues and social media contacts' accounts. Such malicious links can appear to be for a video, document, PDF, etc. but, instead (or additionally) launch a virus or other piece of malware on your device. Similarly, e-mail addresses can be spoofed to appear to be coming from legitimate business and personal contacts and malicious links can be disguised to appear as legitimate links meant verify account activity, view updates, etc. Clicking on such malicious links can either infect your computer or bring you to a website which, appearing to be legitimate, will ask you to enter log in or account details. Should you proceed to enter those details the keys to the kingdom will now be in an enemy's hands. Two approaches towards dealing with this issue are:
 - a. Contacting the sender via a different means than the account you received the link through and verifying they did, indeed, send the link.
 - b. After receiving a link, rather than directly clicking on it, copy the link address out and either place it in a Google search window to see if it is legitimate or, alternatively, place it in the web browser's address bar and see if it matches what the hyperlink you received said it was.
6. Security-in-a-box offers some other excellent basic security advice for [Android](#) (phone), [Windows](#), and [Linux](#) users and there are further resources available in the "Going Further" section at the end of this chapter.

SOCIAL MEDIA SPECIFIC SECURITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Recognize that when you log into a social media platform you are leaving the freedom of the internet behind and entering a space that is governed by the desires of its owner. Privacy may be enabled by the platform but that “privacy” only protects your information from other users of the site rather than from the platform’s owner. Your data is available to the owner and they can choose how they use it and to whom they might sell or share it with. For an overview and rating of most social media service’s terms of service visit [Terms of Service; Didn’t Read](#).
2. Check your privacy settings often. Make sure to tailor the settings so that only the people you want seeing your information and postings are allowed to. Recognize, too, that platforms like Facebook have been known to change their privacy policies without warning or sometimes even without notice and that you need to check back regularly to see if any changes have been made.
3. No matter what your privacy settings, recognize that privacy and security on social media platforms is relative. Some would say to act as if anything you post on social media were like a post card, possible to be read by unintended audiences, etc. Anything you post even in a private group can be reposted elsewhere by others in that group or by anyone that hacks the account of one of the group members.
4. That said, the Signal and WhatsApp messaging services have excellent and very good message encryption respectively and the services cannot decrypt and share messages you share even if ordered to by a government. WhatsApp has the advantage that it is so widely used by the general public that your use of it should not raise any eyebrows but, on the other side, it has a setting that enables man-in-the-middle attacks (see [Whats Up with the WhatsApp ‘Backdoor’ Story](#)). WhatsApp’s terms of service also allow governments to request and receive listings of the members of your WhatsApp groups whereas Signal will never hand that information over. Signal has the absolute best encryption/security implementation but, as it is much less widely used by the general public and is often used by activist organizations, your use of it may increase a government’s “interest” in your activities.
5. Have very clear criteria on who you will accept friend requests from and how you will ensure that the individual that appears to have sent the request really did send it (in other words, how you will ensure the request isn’t from an impostor).
6. Turn off geo-tagging options that log where you are posting from. Similarly, ensure that photos you take on your smartphone, etc. are not geotagged and giving away the exact location where they were taken when uploaded and shared via social media.
7. Be aware that social media platforms like Facebook have VERY advanced facial recognition technology running so take great care about posting (or allowing others to post) pictures of individuals or groups as it is very difficult to keep anonymity when Facebook can identify everyone in a picture by their real names.
8. Make sure you are logged out of your social media accounts when you are not using them
9. When creating a group, joining a group, inviting people to a group and/or making a posting in a group consider the following:
 - a. What information are you revealing about yourself if you create or join a group/what will people infer about you if they see that you are in such a group?
 - b. What information is being revealed to social media onlookers if someone were to join a group you invite them to/what will people infer about the person if they see the person has joined the group and/or see the people in the group that the individual is now relating to.

- c. How might the answers to the above potentially put you or the other individuals at risk? Are there ways that those risk could be minimized (such as by using a different/encrypted social media service, etc.) or should use of such groups be avoided in order to protect yourself and the individuals you are ministering to.
10. While Facebook gives you the ability to create a “secret” group, it’s worth noting that all the information shared in such groups is shared not only between members but also with Facebook and whoever has access to their data, which can include state agencies or other third parties who request it. Helps on how to use Facebook Groups safely can be found at [Facebook Groups: Reducing Risks](#)
11. Consider creating a “harmless” social media account you can show to authorities, etc. if requested upon detention, entry to a country, etc. This account should back up and not contradict any answers you would be likely to give in such situations. Make sure to avoid any cross-linkages between that account and your ministry account by not friending/following any of the same individuals. You should update the account on occasion to support its legitimacy.
12. Don’t rely on any social networking site as the primary host for your content or information. Such sites may remove content that they believe host governments may find objectionable in order to avoid censorship and it is very easy for governments to block access to social media sites if they decide that their content is too objectionable.

GOING FURTHER

A helpful tool to assist in conducting risk assessments is found in pages 25-34 of Internews’ [SaferJourno: Digital Security Resources for Media Trainers](#)

The Centre for Investigative Journalism’s [Information Security for Journalists](#)

Security-in-a-Box’s [Tactics Guides](#) and guide to Social Networking Platforms

For an incredibly deep dive into how to use the web securely check out [HowTo: Privacy & Security Conscious Browsing](#)

If you think that you may have already had a security breach/been hacked you should check out the Digital Defenders Partnership’s [Digital First Aid Kit](#)