Faith Formation & the New Digital Media

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<u>Summer 2010 Issue</u>
Young Adult Faith Formation

This Can Change Everything

"It is the author's job to try to dislocate older media into postures that permit attention to the new. To this end, the artist must ever play and experiment with new means of arranging experience, even though the majority of his [sic] audience may prefer to remain fixed in their old perceptual attitudes." (Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, 1964)

Welcome to the Winter 2009 issue of *Lifelong Faith* with the theme of "Faith Formation and the New Digital Media" or "The New Digital Technologies will Change Everything." Society is fully immersed in the Web 2.0 World: a new era of Web-enabled applications that are built around user-generated or user-manipulated content, such as wikis, blogs, podcasts, and social networking sites. This issue explores the new digital media and the Web 2.0 World and the implications and opportunities for faith formation in churches.

Faith formation in this new decade will need to take place in physical places *and* in virtual spaces. We now have new tools to reach everyone, 24x7. A congregation needs to take advantage of the abilities and resources that the new media afford: websites, online learning, email and texting, Twitter, social networking, and digital devices (iPod Touch, iPad, smart cell phones like the iPhone, etc.). This means that churches can deliver faith formation experiences and resources anytime and anywhere, reaching people wherever they go online (home, work, school, vacation, coffee house) AND, in a Web 2.0 world, invite them to connect with each other, share their faith and insights, create faith formation content (print, video) to share with others, and so many other user-generated activities.

Today, churches can utilize their own online presence (website) as the centerpiece of their faith formation efforts (the Web 2.0 "classroom"), delivering religious and spiritual experiences and resources anytime and anywhere. Churches can use their online presence and new digital tools to extend faith formation from face-to-face learning settings into the virtual world—connecting each face-to-face program or activity with online experiences, communities, and resources to extend and deepen the learning and faith growth.

Web 2.0 and the new digital media have the potential to reshape faith formation. Will we embrace these new opportunities? Remember: this can change everything!

I hope you find the variety of articles in this issue enriching and helpful. You can purchase additional copies by going to our online store at www.LifelongFaith.com. For prices on quantity orders, write me at jroberto@lifelongfaith.com

John Roberto
Editor

Where Two or More Are Gathered . . . on Facebook

Cathleen Falsani

"There is no distance in the Spirit." After nearly 30 years as a believer, I experienced, powerfully and indelibly, the truth of that statement in an unlikely place: Facebook.

Like so many of its 350 million (and growing) members, I signed up for Facebook, the social networking site, a few years ago out of pure curiosity -- to check in with old friends, boyfriends and former colleagues from a safe distance. With its plethora of personal photos, videos and regular "status updates" from members, it was a voyeuristic paradise, not to mention an excellent place to kill time.

I am a journalist, author and blogger and had grown accustomed to sharing glimpses of my life in print and online. Facebook was just another venue to do that, but little more.

That is, until early one morning in April 2008 when I signed on to my account, wiping sleep from my eyes with coffee in hand, and noticed the status update of a friend from college: "David is really sad that Mark died today."

The words ripped a hole in my heart. Our friend, Mark Metherell, a former U.S. Navy Seal who was working in Iraq training Iraqi Special Forces, was gone. He had been killed instantly by a roadside bomb outside Sadr City.

Sitting in bed with my computer on my lap, tears streaming down my face, I sent David an email asking what had happened and how I could help, joining him in prayer for Mark's family and the rest of us who loved him (even if we hadn't seen him in more than 15 years).

In about 48 hours, as news of Mark's death began to spread, dozens of fellow classmates from our alma mater, Wheaton College, joined Facebook to share stories and pictures of Mark. Facebook became the place where we could mourn together and reconnect.

A couple of weeks after Mark was killed, I sent a group email on Facebook asking for responses to a column I was working on. That email started a "thread"—a discussion among a group of people. There were

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20 of us from all over the world—Southern California, Chicago, Hawaii, Spain, New York, Atlanta, Florida, North Carolina and Dubai.

More than 18 months—and almost 20,000 posts—later, the thread is still going. We call ourselves "Wine & Jesus: The Communion of Sinnerly Saints," and our cyber-community is, in a very real way, church for us. Our conversations were mostly about Mark at first, and about faith, loss, God's will and grieving. But they soon turned to the rest of our lives, the mundane and the transcendent.

We brought each other up to speed on what had transpired in the years since we were students at Wheaton. Collectively we are husbands and wives, brothers and sisters (in law and biologically), Protestant, Catholic, Anglican, conservative and liberal, Democrat, Republican, Libertarian, Green Party, vegetarian, entrepreneurs, musicians, stay-at-home moms, married, divorced, widowed, mothers and fathers, adopted and adopters, seminary graduates, pastors, chaplains, writers, filmmakers, artists, lawyers, church members and church-averse and believers all. Some of us were close friends in college, some were acquaintances and some had never met. But we are now, I would dare say, utterly and wholly committed to one another. As Bono said in U2's theological opus, "One," we are one but we're not the same; we get to carry each other. . .

A few of us have even begun to rediscover (or exhume) our faith. If you had told me even two years ago that I would find community—real, authentic, deeply connected, deeply faithful community—online, I would have scoffed. I'm not, by nature, a joiner. Had someone created and invited me to join a group of Wheaton alumni online to talk about faith and life, I would have declined. But this happened organically. And here we are, a year and a half of daily interaction later, with a communion of 20 souls around the world. In the last year, we've walked with each other through sickness and pregnancies, the death of parents and siblings, job losses and career changes, adoption, divorce and even a marriage between two friends who met through the thread.

A few months back, we had a conversation about how hard it has been for some of us to reach out, ask for help and be willing to receive it. "Being merciful to ourselves," is how Shani, the hospital chaplain, put it. In response, Brian, a filmmaker who was in the midst of relocating across the country with his wife, Sara, and their newborn and toddler, wrote: "Sara and I quote Henri Nouwen frequently of late:

'The weakest among us create community.' Somehow, I feel I'm on the receiving end in this thread considerably more often than I am giving out. So thanks to all."

For me, the thread has become what the sociologist Ray Oldenburg, in his book *The Great Good Place*, described as a "third place." Most people have two primary places—home and the workplace. Then there is a third place where they feel part of a chosen community. It might be a bar (illustrated beautifully in the television series "Cheers") or a restaurant, a house of worship, or a bowling alley.

For me, Facebook is that place. One of the persistent criticisms of Facebook and other online social networks is that they provide a false sense of intimacy and community—all of the interaction with none of the commitment. While that may be the case with some folks, nothing could be farther from my experience.

Rather than satisfying our need for connection and leaving it there, our Facebook community has made us yearn to be in one another's physical company. About five months after the thread began, eight of us got together in Chicago for a long dinner. Some of us hadn't seen each other in almost 20 years, while others were practically next-door neighbors. We were nervous about meeting, wondering whether the connection we experienced online would translate into the "real" world. It took about a minute to realize that it did. Beautifully. When we sat down to dinner, we stopped to pray together. We knew that our friends on the thread who could not be with us in person were with us in spirit, praying with us, sharing in the love and transformative power of sacred friendship (and awaiting updates about the dinner on Facebook).

In July, my family moved from Chicago to Laguna Beach, Calif., so that we could live near several of the members of the thread. David now lives about four minutes from me, and I see him and his family almost daily—we even worship together at the same physical church—but we still connect each day on the thread.

The constraints of Facebook limit the membership of any thread to 20. But I think I speak for all of our members when I say there is a 21st member: the Spirit of God. Jesus said whenever two or more are gathered together in his name, he's there, too. And he is, in all of his glory and grace, right there with us. On Facebook.

A is for App

How Smartphones and Handheld Computers Sparked an Educational Revolution

Anya Kamentetz

Gemma and Eliana Singer are big iPhone fans. They love to explore the latest games, flip through photos, and watch YouTube videos while waiting at a restaurant, having their hair done, or between ballet and French lessons. But the Manhattan twins don't yet have their own phones, which is good, since they probably wouldn't be able to manage the monthly data plan: In November, they turned 3.

When the Singer sisters were just 6 months old, they already preferred cell phones to almost any other toy, recalls their mom, Fiona Aboud Singer: "They loved to push the buttons and see it light up." The girls knew most of the alphabet by 18 months and are now starting to read, partly thanks to an iPhone app called First Words, which lets them move tiles along the screen to spell c-o-w and d-o-g. They sing along with the Old MacDonald app too, where they can move a bug-eyed cartoon sheep or rooster inside a corral, and they borrow Mom's tablet computer and photo-editing software for a 21st-century version of finger painting. "They just don't have that barrier that technology is hard or that they can't figure it out," Singer says.

Gemma and Eliana belong to a generation that has never known a world without ubiquitous handheld and networked technology. American children now spend 7.5 hours a day absorbing and creating media—as much time as they spend in school. Even more remarkably, they multitask across screens to cram 11 hours of content into those 7.5 hours. More and more of these activities are happening on smartphones equipped with audio, video, SMS, and hundreds of thousands of apps.

The new connectedness isn't just for the rich. Mobile adoption is happening faster worldwide than that of color TV a half-century ago. Mobile-phone subscribers are expected to hit 5 billion during 2010; more than

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2 billion of those live in developing countries, with the fastest growth in Africa. Mobile broadband is forecast to top access from desktop computers within five years

As with television, many people are wondering about the new technology's effect on children. "The TV set was pretty much a damned medium back in the '60s," says Gary Knell, CEO of Sesame Workshop. But where others railed against the "vast wasteland," Sesame Street founders Joan Ganz Cooney and Lloyd Morrisett saw a new kind of teacher. "They said, Why don't we use it to teach kids letters and numbers and get them ready for school?" Sesame Street, from its 1969 debut, changed the prevailing mind-set about a new technology's potential. With its diverse cast and stoop-side urban setting, the show was aimed especially at giving poor kids a head start on education.

Today, handheld and networked devices are at the same turning point, with an important difference: They are tools for expression and connection, not just passive absorption. "You put a kid in front of a TV, they veg out," says Andrew Shalit, creator of the First Words app and father of a toddler son. "With an iPhone app, the opposite is true. They're figuring out puzzles, moving things around using fine motor skills. What we try to do with the game is create a very simple universe with simple rules that kids can explore."

For children born in the past decade, the transformative potential of these new universes is just beginning to be felt. New studies and pilot projects show smartphones can actually make kids smarter. And as the search intensifies for technological solutions to the nation's and the world's education woes—"Breakthrough Learning in a Digital Age," as the title of a summit at Google HQ last fall had it—growing sums of money are flowing into the sector. The U.S. Department of Education has earmarked $5 billion in competitive school-reform grants to scale up pilot programs and evaluate best practices of all kinds. Major foundations are specifically zeroing in on handhelds for preschool and the primary grades. "Young kids and multisensor-touch computing are a huge area of innovation," says Phoenix Wang, the head of a startup philanthropic venture fund called Startl—funded by the Gates, MacArthur, and Hewlett foundations—that's entirely focused on educational investing. Google, Nokia, Palm, and Sony have all supplied handheld devices for teaching. Thousands of new mobiles—not just smartphones but also evershrinking computers—have come into use at schools in the United States and around the world just in the past year.

To understand the transformative potential—and possible pitfalls—of this device-driven instructional reboot, you can look at the impact of one machine, the TeacherMate, that is getting educational futurists excited. It has the total package of appropriate design, quality software, and an ability to connect kids with teachers and technologists. And while it will have to leap huge hurdles—systemic, bureaucratic, cultural—to be widely adopted, it does present the tantalizing prospect of revolutionizing how children are educated by drawing on their innate hunger to seize learning with both hands and push all the right buttons.

First Grade, Henry Clay Elementary School, Chicago

When I walk into the first-grade classroom at Henry Clay Elementary School on Chicago's South Side, the lights are off and the room is silent. Three-quarters of the 20 children are plugged into headphones, staring into little blue machines. The TeacherMate, as it is called, is a handheld computer with a fourhour battery life. It runs full-color Flash games on a platform partly open to volunteer developers worldwide, and it can record and play back audio. Julissa Muñoz shyly tells me that she likes this device better than her PlayStation 2 at home. "They have lots of games," she says. "I like the fireman game," where exciting music plays as you choose the right length ladder, which sneakily teaches simple addition and subtraction.

Julissa's teacher, the delightfully named Kelly Flowers, explains that the software on her laptop lets her track each student's performance. Once a week, when she plugs each student's TeacherMate into her docking station, she downloads a record of their game play and generates reports for herself as well as for parents. Then she sets the precise skills, levels, and allotted time for the upcoming week. The programs are synced with the reading and math curricula used in the school—right down to the same spelling words each week.

Most important, says Flowers, the TeacherMate works. She privately sorts her kids into three groups

based on their reading skills—green (scoring at or above grade level), yellow (borderline), and red (underperformers). "This year, with TeacherMate, I started with 11 greens, 2 yellows, and 7 reds. By the middle of the year, I had just 2 reds. I can move a red to a yellow on my own, but this is my first year moving a red directly to a green. I've never seen that much growth in that short a time." Flowers's observations are backed up by preliminary University of Illinois research that suggests that reading and math scores in classrooms with TeacherMates are significantly higher than in those without.

Flowers says the kids like the TeacherMate because it gives them a feeling of freedom. "It doesn't feel like homework," she says. "They can choose from a whole list of games. They don't know that I decided what [skills] they'd be working on." And during the time her class spends with TeacherMates each day, Flowers can devote more focused time and attention to small groups of students.

TeacherMate is the brainchild of a bearded technology lawyer turned social entrepreneur from Evanston, Illinois, named Seth Weinberger. TeacherMate, which debuted in 2008. currently sells for $100, bundled with games customized to match each of the major K-2 reading and math curricula.

Weinberger can't stop talking about the TeacherMate's untapped possibilities. It seemingly has a solution for every educational buzzword out there: differentiated instruction, English-language learners, class size. It can let a Spanish-speaking parent help a student with his homework in English. (In addition to Spanish, software is being developed in Arabic, Hebrew, and Tagalog, with a goal to get to 100 languages.) It can help a teacher track exactly how much reading is going on at home. And it can allow a math whiz to speed ahead several grade levels.

While the TeacherMate doesn't yet sport wireless connectivity, that should be coming within the next year or two. Weinberger envisions porting the software to the iPod Touch and iPad and then a next-generation of more-sophisticated machines running Android, Google's open-source operating system. Content could expand to include science-experiment demos and immersive historical environments for social studies.

While his organization has put significant resources into developing the TeacherMate,

Weinberger says his true investment is in the concept. What matters is the development of new teaching and learning practices built around an idea: affordable, portable machines paired with constantly updated, collaboratively designed, open-platform software. "It's about the system," he says, "not a device."

At the same time, even as he's careful to note that the TeacherMate is just one stage in an ongoing, deliberate process, Weinberger can't restrain a tone of geeklike glee at what his team has produced—a convergence of compelling features, a reasonably affordable price, and demonstrated results—which is winning converts under its own momentum. "There's no stopping it," he says. "These devices are just too freaking good."

Mixtec and Zapotec Children, Baja California, Mexico

Late on Thanksgiving night, I'm in a van bumping over gravel roads in Baja California, Mexico, with Paul Kim, the chief technology officer of Stanford University's School of Education; a field team of four students; and two boxes of TeacherMates. Stray dogs prowl in front of roadside taquerias, their eyes glowing red in our passing headlights. Noah Freedman, a 19-year-old Princeton sophomore, is on his laptop in the front seat doing some last-minute debugging of an interactive storytelling program, while Ricardo Flores, a Stanford master's student, translates the software's directions into Spanish—giving a new meaning, Freedman jokes, to "mobile development."

We spend the next two days meeting with Mixtec and Zapotec children at campos, farm workers' camps with rows of corrugated-steel-roofed barracks set on packed mud. We roll into the compounds in the back of a truck driven by a local missionary and hand out bags of rice and beans to the mothers, who tell me that the youth here—clad in the international uniform of hoodies, jeans, and sneakers—are struggling with borderlands issues of drugs and violence on top of rural poverty and isolation. And though schools here are supposed to run in half-day sessions, we find schoolhouses empty and locked both morning and afternoon.

Kim is devoted to using cell phones to provide poor children with the basics of education and with access to all of the world's information. "Kids love

stories," he says. "In places with no TV, no Internet, no books, when they are given these devices, these are like gifts from heaven." He has long dreamed of a machine that is cheap, powered with a solar or bicycle charger, and equipped with game-based learning content—a complete "Pocket School." For the past four years, he has been testing phones from a dozen different manufacturers, but the TeacherMate, which he discovered in March 2008, comes closer than anything to the Pocket School ideal.

The Mexico trip is one of a whirlwind of small user-testing and demonstration projects that Kim has undertaken in the past 12 months. He has personally brought TeacherMates to Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, India, South Korea, Costa Rica, the Philippines, Palestine, and several sites in Mexico, in most cases working with local not-for-profits, trying them out for a few hours and on a few dozen children at a time. He brings along programmers, like Freedman, so they can get feedback and tweak the software accordingly. In South Korea, Mexico, and the Philippines, schools and community centers continue to use the devices and collect data.

Kim's TeacherMate strategy, like Weinberger's, is to let the kids figure it out by themselves. In Baja, I watch children aged 6 to 12 pick the machine up and within a few minutes, with no direct instructions, they're working in groups of three, helping one another figure out the menus in English by trial and error, playing the same math games as the students in Chicago, and reading along with stories in Spanish. The children agree that the TeacherMates are bonitas—"cute." An 11-year-old named Silvia asks me hopefully, "Son regalos?" ("Are these gifts?") I have to say that they are only for borrowing. The missionary, Pablo Ohm, will keep the TeacherMates at the community center he runs in the town of Camalu, but access won't be regular.

One of Kim's inspirations was George Washington Carver, who brought a "movable school"—a horse drawn wagon full of agricultural exhibits—to poor black communities in rural Alabama in the 1920s. Kim is targeting especially the kids whose circumstances make it impossible to attend school regularly: refugees, migrants, the homeless. "Unesco reports that there are 150 million street children and another 250 million who will never see a book," he says. "Donating books is great, but think about it. When you mail a book from here to Rwanda, the shipping will cost you way more than the cost of the book, and maybe nobody there can read the book."

Whereas Weinberger wants to improve teaching practices at existing schools, Kim focuses overwhelmingly on empowering kids to teach themselves. He sees technology as a liberating force, helping kids in rich and poor countries alike bypass schools, with all their waste, bureaucracy, and failures, entirely. "Why does education need to be so structured? What are we so afraid of?" he asks. "The more you expect from a kid, the smarter they're going to get."

As I watch him kneel in the Mexican dirt, surrounded by eager kids, his face wreathed in a broad smile, he seems to delight in the way that the TeacherMate puts the kids in charge. "That's a phenomenon I've found even in Rwanda—where only 1% have electricity," he says. "With these devices, what the kids pick up in two minutes, the teachers need two hours to learn. The kids explore by themselves and figure it out. When you work with those kids directly, no matter where they are, they're so innovative."

A Fundamental Shift

What's at issue is a deep cultural shift, a fundamental rethinking not only of how education is delivered but also of what "education" means. The very word comes from the Latin duco, meaning "to lead or command"—putting the learner in the passive position. Rabi Kamacharya is an MIT engineering grad who returned to his native Kathmandu from Silicon Valley to found a software company and started OLE Nepal, the network's most established branch, in 2007. Kamacharya talks about technology putting "children in the driver's seat"—to overcome the limited skills of teachers: "Even in urban areas, teachers who teach English, for example, do not know English very well. Children are at the mercy of the teachers, who may not be motivated or have sufficient materials to work with. We want to enable them to go forward with self-learning and assessment."

This idea, common among these tech-driven educational entrepreneurs, imagines a new role for teachers. "The main transformational change that needs to happen is for the teacher to transform from the purveyor of information to the coach," says Weinberger of Innovations for Learning. As Rowe puts it, "Up until very recently, most

communications were hub-and-spoke, one to many. The Internet is a many-to-many environment, which is in the early stages of having a major impact on education. It involves a fairly major change in the concept of what education is, which is one of the reasons we use the term 'learning' as distinct from 'education.' It's student-centered and student-empowered."

The challenge of putting such ideas into practice—and getting the kids into the educational driver's seat—is so daunting it's almost laughable. Still, when you've seen a tiny child eagerly embracing a device that lets her write, draw, figure out math, and eventually find an answer to any question she might ask, it's hard not to feel the excitement of the moment, or its revolutionary potential. We're talking about leapfrogging over massive infrastructure limitations to unleash what Kim calls "the only real renewable resource"—the inventive spark of 1 billion children. "They're creative, these children," he says, "no matter where they are."

CNBC Interview with Anya Kamenetz

"The Real Revolution in Education" with author of "The Real Smart Phone Revolution," Anya Kamenetz, *Fast Company* magazine.

www.cnbc.com/id/15840232?video=1454628212&play=1

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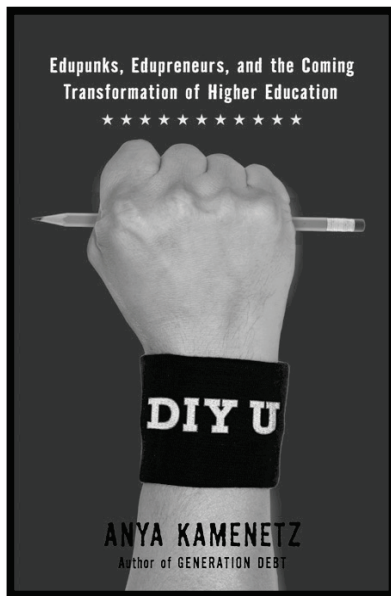
DIY U: Edupunks, Edupreneurs, and the Coming Transformation of Higher Education
Anya Kamentz (Chelsea Publishing, 2010) [$14.95]

Nine out of ten American high school seniors aspire to go to college, yet the United States has fallen from world leader to only the tenth most educated nation. Almost half of college students don't graduate; those who do have unprecedented levels of federal and private student loan debt, which constitutes a credit bubble similar to the mortgage crisis. The roots of the words "university" and "college" both mean community. In the age of constant connectedness and social media, it's time for the monolithic, millennium-old, ivy-covered walls to undergo a phase change into something much lighter, more permeable, and fluid. The future lies in personal learning networks and paths, learning that blends experiential and digital approaches, and free and open-source educational models. Increasingly, you will decide what, when, where, and with whom you want to learn, and you will learn by doing. The university is the cathedral of modernity and rationality, and with our whole civilization in crisis, we are poised on the brink of Reformation.

WE-ALL-LEARN
The World is Open: How Web Technology is Revolutionizing Education

Curtis J. Bonk

Do you have a favorite place to visit for a vacation? I know of a place more than a billion earthlings have already visited and vow to come back to. I am wagering that you already have been there and quickly became engrossed in the stunning landscapes that surrounded you. A casual tourist, perhaps? Or maybe you are an expedition leader or field guide on a return visit. No matter what your role or purpose, it is a place you want to come back to again and again for nostalgic reasons as well as for the exciting and timely new explorations that are possible.

Most readers will already recognize that what I am talking about is the "Web of Learning." It is a somewhat magical or mystical place where teaching and learning never end. Unlike traditional stand-and-deliver classes, the sun never truly sets in the world of online learning. Fortunately, the hearty explorer will find that the lights rarely flicker or fade in the Web of Learning.

Sure, you can assume the role of teacher or learner when in the Web of Learning. But you can also be a learning escort, concierge, coach, media designer, planner, or anything you really want to be to facilitate your own learning or that of others.[1] And if such responsibilities do not fit your style, there are hundreds of additional roles or avatars to select from or personally create. So why not partake in it? It is a gigantic learning party that is happening each and every day. And this is one party you do not want to miss! Most of the time, you do not even need an invitation; instead, the invitation to learn exists at a mouse click.

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The Web of Learning

Once you arrive, you will discover that you are not simply using the Web of Learning; instead, like the Borg in the television show *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, you are now a part of it. Your actions—contributions, reactions, comments, and designs—have been assimilated into the corpus or being of the Web of Learning. What you do there has a chance to influence any learner or education professional anywhere on this planet, and someday in this century, with the arrival of interplanetary coaching and mentoring, your contributions will be felt far beyond planet earth. If you post your learning activities or practice tests to the Web of Learning, learners in other geographic regions of the world can use them in preparing for their examinations or in checking their understanding on a topic.

Language and culture are, of course, valid concerns. As machine translation devices increase in accuracy and usability, though, your resources can be quickly converted for those not familiar with your particular language. In addition, they can be modified and adapted by a savvy instructor teaching learners who are younger, older, or less or more experienced than your own. Equally important, opportunities to bridge cultural differences arise when instructors share their ideas with other instructors. But is this Web of Learning spinning out of control? Some would say definitely yes. Others might further contend that Internet technologies need extensive revamping and upgrading to be ready for the proliferating uses in education that now appear on the horizon.

When I ask audiences where online learning is beneficial, a common response is "everywhere." Although one would not exactly call this an intellectually deep answer, there is some merit to it. The branches of the "Web of Learning" extend into all types of learning settings, both formal and informal. My friend Jay Cross, who coined the term elearning, has written in depth on the informal learning avenues that are not only more available via this Web of Learning but are now required to survive.[2] Learning can be a spontaneous, on-demand decision in a community of learners who are making daily pilgrimages to the Web of Learning for casual insights. It can also be more thoughtfully and purposefully designed.

The Web of Learning impacts younger and older learners. Sometimes this happens simultaneously, as when retired workers and nursing home residents mentor primary school children, or vice versa, when well-wishing youngsters send hellos and encouragement to those in fairly lonely nursing home care. Though still controversial, there are applications of online learning that illustrate its relevance with extremely young children in preschool and primary school settings involving reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. And in college and university settings, there are millions of freshmen in biology and chemistry courses conducting online experiments, senior students in accounting preparing for chartered examinations with online resources, graduate students in law school debating court cases, and music majors across a range of course levels practicing their music, hearing how instruments sound as they age, and listening to historical recordings of experts. At the same time, professionals in the workplace, such as engineers, human resource personnel, accountants, and customer service representatives, are continually upgrading their skills when needs arise and when time permits. And they are choosing to do so online.

The Web of Learning is part of a personal as well as professional lifestyle. Brothers can share the results of their online learning with brothers, sisters with aunties, and moms with dads. Sure, some of it may be strange and curious facts or funny stories, but there are learning lessons in there nonetheless. Personal and professional friend networks pop up in Facebook, Bebo, MySpace, and LinkedIn, to share one's ideas, connections, and current events. What is clear is that this Web of Learning extends to all age groups, all walks of life, and learners in all corners of the world and beyond.

If the Web of Learning had existed in 1950 to enhance the learning possibilities and ultimately the competencies of just one learner on the planet, we would have still considered it transformative, albeit in an extremely small way. This one learner would likely have been paraded around as some type of learning prodigy or spectacle. He or she would have been *Time* magazine's Person of the Year.

But the Web of Learning has done much more than that. The cat is truly out of the bag. During the past decade, millions of people have taken and completed at least one online course. Millions more are enrolled and participating in an online course at this very moment. The Web of Learning has

changed the learning potential of those in every country of the planet from Antarctica to Zambia. There is no denying that your own learning potential has dramatically changed with access to it. And with this sudden opening of potential come new learning accomplishments, jobs, success stories, and goals. We are witnessing a massive uncovering of human potential.

What will someone find in this Web of Learning? At first glance, there are tools for learning at deeper levels as well as skimming or browsing possibilities. With some resource guidance and support, you will quickly come upon a sea of educational tools, resources, and objects, each vying for your attention and later use. Some pop up to smack you squarely in the face, whereas others take more subtle routes to getting your attention, but may do so repeatedly until it happens. Notices of podcasted events on nearly any topic imaginable, online conferences and virtual meetings, lifelike simulations, intriguing virtual worlds, and online games are soon found. But there is more. There is always more! There are cultural and historical databases and timelines of information related to long since departed civilizations. There are links to digital resources from online museums and libraries documenting the birth and death of such cultures. And there are portals of learning resources and centers devoted to these particular cultures and people. Further, community-developed resources—such as wikis, which any person on this planet could design or contribute to—can further support, extend, and even transform what is known about that culture. What a diverse array of resources—and each of them can be thoughtfully integrated into a particular course or across a series of them.

Utilizing the Web of Learning

Given these possibilities, what is simultaneously mind-boggling and yet understandable is that many education and training professionals are stymied when entering this Web of Learning. Why the trepidation and hesitation? Well, in comparison to academic courses and other learning experiences of just a decade or two ago, when one good textbook and a supplemental reader or study guide may have sufficed, today there is an endless stream of announcements related to educational resources for one's courses and programs. These announcements typically add to the dozens of learning portals and

resources already found and utilized in a course. There are a fast-growing number of discussions, collaborations, explorations, and assessment tools, as well as thousands of resources that might find their way into online course activities. Given this array of instructional possibilities, it is not surprising that many simply choose to ignore the Web of Learning altogether or incorporate it in the most minimalist fashion. This book can help the hesitant or resistant by offering a model or framework for reflecting on what is possible and organizing or compartmentalizing such activities.

Gone are the days when the lecture was the dominant mode of course delivery and deemed the essence of a successful course experience. My own research during the past decade in postsecondary education as well as corporate training shows that online lecturing is a minor component of a total online course experience. It is true that although online formats allow and, at times, even encourage lecturing, it is just one of many instructional choices at one's fingertips, and a minor one at that. In contrast to its dominance in face-to-face settings, of which those reading this book are all too aware, lectures and direct forms of instruction might account for less than 10 or 20 percent of an online class.

The instructional approaches of choice in online environments are more collaborative, problem based, generative, exploratory, and interactive.[3] There is more emphasis on mentoring, coaching, and guiding learning than in the past. My memories from secondary or even college training would be vastly different if my learning had been one of discovery, coaching, collaborating, and being personally guided. There was, of course, some of that, but it was too intermittent to radically alter the authoritative lecturing approaches that were dominant at the time.

Clearly, there is a need for instructional approaches that are more active and engaging and in which learners have greater control over their own learning. Words such as "ownership," "control," "engagement," "relevancy," and "collaboration" are among those shaping the learning-related dialogue of the twenty-first century. And these are also the key principles or components underlying effective online instructional activities and events. Those involved in professional development or the training of adults in the workplace will readily recognize the above list of words because they are embedded in the adult learning lexicon. They almost beg the

question of why anyone would want solely to rely on face-to-face instruction when working with adults.

Understanding the ramifications of the Web of Learning is still very much a work in progress. Not all technologies foster engaging and cognitively rich information processing and networking. Technology by itself will not empower learners. Innovative pedagogy is required. And the approaches will vary with the type and age of students. In postsecondary spaces, online communications and interactive tasks and events between and among students and instructors, trainers, or tutors are often referred to as the heart and soul of online learning, especially in higher education. In contrast, corporate training, until recently, has tended to rely more heavily on self-paced and preselected materials. Primary and secondary learning often utilizes a combination of approaches, such as relying on self-paced materials and practice examinations when students are home and interactive online experiences when at school. And military training might place an emphasis on real-world embedded training, games, and simulations—the focus being on carrying out some action followed by bouts of reflections on such actions.

Because the Web of Learning contains opportunities for all such approaches, emphatic statements about which ones it is best suited to support are naive and, at times, quite silly. It is a space that is evolving. It is such a new and interesting place for learning delivery that the experience base of any one person is not enough. No one knows the entire space and all the educational possibilities and resources that reside within the Web of Learning; this would be impossible. But one can test out and gradually master strategies for harnessing its energies and resources.

In some respects, the Web of Learning is effectively a monster with thousands of heads and tentacles, each possessing its own knowledge nuggets and with a great appetite for consuming, as well as making available, more information. And though some of those tentacles might be severed, or perhaps even a few heads might be chopped off entirely, new ones sprout up in a few days or perhaps just a few seconds. This is one monster worth looking at and exploring! Certainly some of the information found inside is incorrect (witness Wikipedia vandalism and trolling) or exists only at the surface level of learning. But much of it is educationally relevant and continually evolving. There are games, 3-D worlds, online conferences and professional meetings, podcasts on nearly every education topic imaginable, world and city maps, virtual museum tours of famous exhibits, and countless visual records of human history. So many resources can be embedded in online courses and programs. Granted, such resources are not the same as physically touching or directly viewing the real object or event, but they can be useful approximations of it, functioning in the same way as a picture in a book or a drawing on a marker board.

The Web of Learning, therefore, becomes a place where learners are empowered; they are entrusted with choice in their learning paths or journeys. Perhaps above all other aspects of Web utilization, the power of choice is what sets the Web of Learning apart from other forms of learning. With opportunities to make personal decisions related to their explorations and potential online discoveries, learners develop a sense of ownership and self-directedness or self-determination. They are finally free to learn, seek knowledge when needed, and are able to express in creative ways what they have learned, as Carl Rogers repeatedly advocated in his *Freedom to Learn* books way back in the twentieth century.[4] Of course, there are constraints related to the relevancy and accuracy of the information found online, but for a change, learners are taking control of their own learning paths.

The Web 2.0 Learning Environment

The evolution we have all experienced during the past decade from the Web 1.0 to the Web 2.0 has made each citizen of this planet aware of the vast educational possibilities now available for all ages of learners. We see it daily in the news we encounter or the communications in which we engage. First intended as an interconnected web of knowledge and artifacts, the Web is not unlike the content storage and retrieval business plan of the ancient library at Alexandria. Today, however, the goals of the Web extend far beyond the mere digital existence and interconnection of knowledge. Donald Tapscott and Anthony Williams argue that "[t]he Internet is becoming a giant computer that everyone can program, providing a global infrastructure for creativity, participation, sharing, and self-organization."[5] As they accurately point out, we have moved from the initial stages of the Internet as a

gigantic newspaper to a place where you can easily connect with the authors, editors, or readers of such articles, and contribute your perspective or resources. We have shifted from a culture that passively received content from the Web to one that actively participates in it by adding content.

Like Tapscott and Williams, Thomas Friedman (*The World is Flat*) alluded to an assortment of technologies—including Skype (a tool for to talking over the Internet for free using "Voice over Internet Protocol" or VoIP), Wikipedia, blogs, Web searching tools, and collaborative software—that are making an impact in educational arenas from highly developed to Third World countries. With such technologies, the world has definitely become more free, open, deep, rich, and personally empowering for those attempting to learn or relearn something. And there are countless reports of additional technologies specific to the education world.

Those in Generation X and Y who are entering colleges and universities as well as the workplace are known for being savvy about such technologies. Without a doubt, they are pushing corporations and institutions of higher learning to raise the bar of the possible to allow employees to have a greater voice in strategic planning and students to have greater control over their own learning. Certainly, most educators and trainers today have witnessed such individuals boldly carrying their MP3 players and mobile phones, while satisfying addictions to e-mail, Web browsing, and instant messaging. We have also seen the growth of for-profit colleges and universities offering degrees and special services online. What's more, places such as Stanford University are furnishing students with their own wiki about campus life and activities as well as posting popular lectures to Apple iTunes.[6] A few miles down the road, San Jose State University has designed a virtual glimpse of campus life for potential students using Second Life. To the north, the University of California at Berkeley has decided to make its course lectures available for free in both iTunes and YouTube. And this is clearly just the start of what is to come.

Emerging educational technologies and resources are allowing for a more learner-centric focus in education where the learners are active instead of the more passive mode of instruction that has existed for centuries. During an invited presentation at MIT on December 1, 2006, John Seely Brown argued that in this new participatory educational climate, learners become engaged in a culture of building, tinkering, learning, and sharing.[7] When I talked to him during a conference at Rice University in Houston a few months later, Brown reiterated these points. The combination of free and widely distributed educational resources with tools that enable learners to add to or comment on such resources or build entirely new ones begins to redefine what learning is—it becomes production or participation, not consumption and absorption.

A week after Dr. Brown's talk at MIT, *Time* magazine published an article by Claudia Wallis and Sonja Steptoe related to bringing schools out of the twentieth century.[8] These authors argued that innovation and creativity, communication, interpretation, synthesis, collaboration, problem solving, and interdisciplinary insights are the types of skills that need to be emphasized. The ability to creatively combine, weave, and interlink knowledge is more vital than restating sets of facts, names, and dates. Among the key required skills of our time include the ability to work collaboratively with people from different countries or geographic regions. Students need greater sensitivity to different cultures and languages, including more exposure to such languages as Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, and Korean. They need to build such skills through real-world experiences and projects. And thoughtful use of new and emerging technologies is one way for this to happen.

In their article, Wallis and Steptoe remind us of a wry joke that often circulates among educators. They note that Rip Van Winkle could suddenly find himself in the twenty-first century after sleeping for a hundred years and would be taken aback by massive changes found everywhere in society except in schools. Schools, he would quickly recognize. As Wallis and Steptoe point out: "American schools aren't exactly frozen in time, but considering the pace of change in other areas of life, our public schools tend to feel like throwbacks. Kids spend much of the day as their great-grandparents once did: sitting in rows, listening to teachers lecture, scribbling notes by hand, reading from textbooks that are out of date by the time they are printed. A yawning chasm (with an emphasis on yawning) separates the world inside the schoolhouse from the world outside."[9]

However, schools do not have uniform curricula or philosophies, and many are in the midst of transformative change, with Web 2.0 technologies being part of the reason for such changes.

Two weeks after the article by Wallis and Steptoe, *Time* magazine brilliantly followed up that article by naming "You" as the "Person of the Year."[10] It recognized the shift to an age where users generate and contribute ideas to the Web instead of simply paging through content submitted by others. The realization that users or learners were important was no longer lingo to be reiterated by the education community but was being widely accepted by society as a whole. Everyone participating in society as a digital citizen in any meaningful degree had come into contact with emerging Web 2.0 technologies that granted them a voice and a vote, and turned up the volume on their contributions.

In effect, the year 2006 signified the trend toward empowering technology users with Web 2.0 technologies that allow them to generate ideas online instead of simply reading and browsing through someone else's.[11] We now use the "read-write" Web, not just a Web from which one passively consumes or reads information. Included in the new Web were wikis, podcasts, blogs, online photo albums, and virtual worlds such as Second Life. Web 2.0 tools and resources bring people together to share, collaborate, and interact. Web technologies can now network individuals to accomplish more than any one person could alone. With a new blog appearing every second and a world that is seemingly filled with wikis and subscription podcast shows, "we" are now the Web; each of us is the Person of the Year.

With enhanced bandwidth, reduced storage costs, increased processing speed, and the growing acceptance and expectations of rich multimedia, emerging Web 2.0 tools and resources such as YouTube, Second Life, Flickr, MySpace, Facebook, and Blogger are increasingly popular and integrated into the culture. And as such participatory technology becomes easier to use and thus more widespread, more people have found a venue in which to contribute their unique talents, with the possibility of their ideas and insights being recognized and utilized not only locally, but also publicly and internationally.

Clearly, many of the same technology trends that Friedman documented are having a significant impact on the world of learning today. Without a doubt, the increases in bandwidth, reductions in storage costs, continued enhancements in processing speed, and ubiquitous access to multimedia and hypermedia learning formats have radically transformed education and training during the past decade, and especially during the past few years. As the technologically advanced Japanese and Korean cultures demonstrate, there is now ubiquitous access to learning with personal multimedia players, mobile phones, and other such devices. Of course, as such participatory technology becomes even easier to use and increasingly accessible around the globe, education environments across sectors will continue to shift and transform. Ideas of one learner or instructor may be shared with anyone anywhere on this planet and at any time. As this occurs, educational information and resources will no longer be local but global.

In an *Educause Review* article, Bryan Alexander notes that many resist the shift to the Web 2.0 due to the lack of clear definitions, differences in determining exactly what qualifies a tool to be labeled as Web 2.0, and the seemingly temporary or fleeting nature of the field.[12] However, he further argues that we need to look beyond questions and concerns related to such labeling, especially given the many powerful implications already appearing in different educational sectors that are directly linked to Web 2.0 technologies. Actual projects, practices, and conceptual implications trump problems in labeling.

For Alexander, initial educational uses of the Web, or the Web 1.0, were for making available pages of content for learners to browse or read. The Web 2.0 relates to microcontent or streams of revisions to a Wikipedia document or daily blog postings and hyperlinking that can be saved, shared, copied, and quoted. In our time-crunched society, it is much easier to start a wiki entry or compose a blog summary of an event, than it is to write an article or a book. And when posted, there is some immediate sense of personal empowerment or identity. Whether we will become a society of writing dabblers as a result is difficult to predict. At the same time, simple writing attempts in one's blog could expand into magazine articles, speeches, and books.

Learning technologies will continue to appear to stimulate our thinking. The Web 2.0 is also in the land of open education where human beings participate in their own learning quests. These interactive technologies have brought hundreds of millions of us to the realization that we will always be learning. Soon the entire planet will recognize this need. When it does, there will be declarations

that the world is now open for the education of all the citizens of this planet.

Now We All Learn

We are experiencing ten key learning technology trends across the planet that are opening access to both formal and informal education. As these trends proliferate, they nudge us into a culture where knowledge sharing is the norm. Open source software is, naturally, one of these key trends. But this is no longer exclusively a discussion about how Apache or Linux can help corporate servers run more cost effectively. Instead, the conversation has shifted toward access to free and open educational resources that can have a direct impact on learners and teachers. For instance, when colleges and universities, such as Berkeley, MIT, the India Institutes of Technology, and the Open University in the United Kingdom are sharing their course materials with the world, it is time to stand up and take notice.

Fortunately, such events are not limited to English-speaking countries; ambitious people in other places are simultaneously translating such knowledge and making it available for millions, if not billions, of potential learners in their own cultures. Learners are now collaborating with peers from around the planet, as well as being mentored by experts and practitioners from other countries or regions of the world. It is a time when learners can catch up on their studies or personal interests while sitting at a bus station, commuting in the subway, or resting outside a lecture hall on a warm, sunny day. In effect, educational resources are available faster than ever before and in larger doses. And such resources are often free to access, build upon, and share with others.

While learning is being opened up to masses of people that previously did not have access, it is also opening up in new forms to those who already did. Learners of all ages are increasingly engaged in formal as well as informal learning, which is highly mobile and often ubiquitous. In such a world, each of "you" will need to continue learning in order to stay employed. Given that every education professional today can swiftly access these amazing learning resources and events, there are thousands, if not millions, of examples that could be provided and stories that could be told of how the world of

learning has become opened up in revolutionary ways.

The ten educational openers form a first-letter acrostic or handy mnemonic for the ten openers is WE-ALL-LEARN. This memory aid can help us better understand the possibilities of the Web of Learning.

Ten Openers
(WE-ALL-LEARN)

1. **W**eb Searching in the World of e-Books
2. **E**-Learning and Blended Learning
3. **A**vailability of Open Source and Free Software
4. **L**everaged Resources and OpenCourseWare
5. **L**earning Object Repositories and Portals
6. **L**earner Participation in Open Information Communities
7. **E**lectronic Collaboration and Interaction
8. **A**lternative Reality Learning
9. **R**eal-Time Mobility and Portability
10. **N**etworks of Personalized Learning

Some of the openers relate to creating or finding information and resources and making them available on the Web. Other openers concern the infrastructure for locating, selecting, and using such resources and generating ways to access them. And still other openers involve participating in and personalizing these resources. Of course, there is overlap across these openers. The framework provided here is just one attempt to categorize or make sense of the seemingly infinite resources, tools, people, and activities found online. The acronym WE-ALL-LEARN was purposefully chosen to denote my rising optimism for learning and education. During the coming decade, other more innovative frameworks and schemes will be designed and hopefully extensively used by learners, instructors, trainers, and anyone entering the Web.

The emergence of the Web and enhancements in bandwidth offered by Internet2 capabilities is a given. In fact, all ten openers utilize Internet technologies and the associated bandwidth. The first opener, however, is perhaps the most directly linked to Web capabilities and technologies. It is, in fact, two openers—the proliferation of Web access and the availability of digital books and online documents. Even without lightning-fast access to

the Web, there are enormous learning opportunities that were not possible a decade or so ago.

As the WE-ALL-LEARN framework indicates, we are no longer participants in Aristotle's world where one could conceivably read from every book or document written. In the twenty-first century, no one can know all. However, we all can learn. And the vital signs of intelligence in this century are related to access and use of knowledge when needed. Knowing where to look, how to access, and what to focus on are the powerful strategies of today.

As with Thomas Friedman's flattened economic world (see *The World is Flat*), there are three larger trends that provide a superstructure for discussing the ten educational openers. These converging macro trends are:

1. The availability of tools and infrastructure for learning (the pipes)
2. The availability of free and open educational content and resources (the pages)
3. A movement toward a culture of open access to information, international collaboration, and global sharing (a participatory learning culture)

The convergence of these three macro trends has put in motion opportunities for human learning and potential never before approached in recorded history. Of course, all three components are needed. First, the pipes must be in place. These pipes—Internet access and bandwidth, preferably free and ubiquitously available for the highly mobile—provide the infrastructure for the management, supply, and distribution of free and open educational content. The first, third, seventh, and ninth openers most directly relate to such infrastructure issues.

All ten openers are clearly indicative of the second macro trend related to the proliferation of online content. For instance, the first opener also concerns the second converging trend related to the availability of online content such as digital books. In effect, although piping is important, online educational resources must be available, useful, and needed. Still, the second macro trend is most symbolized by the fourth and fifth openers with freely available online course contents and gigantic portals of rich educational content. With these two openers in place, each of us now has access to an endless sea of online portals that contain links to billions of pages of educational content.

The laying of the vast technological pipes with an overflowing store of educational content is only part of the story. In effect, though people can perpetually explore online content and materials to learn, a final ingredient is needed to truly open education for more democratic participation and personalization. That component has to do with culture and psychology as much as technology. Thus, the third macro trend electrifying all of humankind today is the creation of a culture that collaboratively builds, negotiates, and shares such knowledge and information: a participatory learning culture. If the resources and infrastructure are in place but the education community, as well as society as a whole, fails to maximize their power, then millions of unique learning possibilities will be lost. The sixth, eighth, and tenth openers highlight this trend more than the others.

The people, ideas, and technologies opening up the world of education have something to say to each of us. We all learn in this wonderful Web of Learning. We are entering an age where the use of WE-ALL-LEARN will help us all learn.

Endnotes

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Podcasts by Curtis J. Bonk

- http://educause.mediasite.com/mediasite/SilverlightPlayer/Default.aspx?peid=b718b05e52224357b32a96d07d591720
- iTunes University: type Curtis J. Bonk into search

Curtis J. Bonk Website & Blog
http://travelinedman.blogspot.com
http://worldisopen.com

The World Is Open: How Web Technology is Revolutionizing Education
Curtis J Bonk (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2009) [$29.95]

Whether you are a scientist on a ship in Antarctic waters or a young girl in a Philippine village, you can learn whenever and whatever you want from whomever you are interested in learning it from. As technologies have become more available, even in the most remote reaches of the world, and as more people contribute a wealth of online resources, the education world has become open to anyone anywhere. In The World Is Open, education technology guru Curtis Bonk explores ten key trends that together make up the "WE-ALL-LEARN" framework for understanding the potential of technology's impact on learning in the 21st century: 1) Web Searching in the World of e-Books, 2) E-Learning and Blended Learning, 3) Availability of Open Source and Free Software, 4) Leveraged Resources and OpenCourseWare, 5) Learning Object Repositories and Portals, 6) Learner Participation in Open Information Communities, 7) Electronic Collaboration, 8) Alternate Reality Learning, 9) Real-Time Mobility and Portability, and 10) Networks of Personalized Learning. In addition, this important resource contains compelling interviews that capture the diverse global nature of the open educational world from those who are creating new learning technologies as well as those who are using them to learn and teach in new ways. Using the dynamic "WE-ALL-LEARN" model, learners, educators, executives, administrators, instructors, and parents can tap into the power of Web technology and unleash a world of information

An Online Resource Guide for WE-ALL-LEARN

This Resource Guide provides a variety of examples illustrating the Ten Openers from Curtis Bonk's book, *The World is Open* (see the book for more examples.) Follow the web links to learn about each of the Ten Openers and their potential for transforming learning and faith formation. This Online Resource Guide also includes a list of faith formation web sites that incorporate Web 2.0 features.

Ten Openers (WE-ALL-LEARN)

1. **W**eb Searching in the World of e-Books
2. **E**-Learning and Blended Learning
3. **A**vailability of Open Source and Free Software
4. **L**everaged Resources and OpenCourseWare
5. **L**earning Object Repositories and Portals
6. **L**earner Participation in Open Information Communities
7. **E**lectronic Collaboration and Interaction
8. **A**lternative Reality Learning
9. **R**eal-Time Mobility and Portability
10. **N**etworks of Personalized Learning

Opener #1. Web Searching in the World of e-Books

Web search, digitization, and the creation of content to search for is the first opener. There are overlaps with the other openers, but this is where WE-ALL-LEARN begins—one must search and find content. And powerful content is now available to each of us. We now live in a world filled with digital book content. Increased access to electronic books and other Web documents and objects has an opportunity to transform education.

Examples of e-Book "Libraries"

- **Google Books: http://books.google.com**
  Google is building an enormous online library for online reading and research by scanning books from partner libraries and public domain books: fiction, non-fiction, reference, scholarly,

textbooks, children's books, scientific, medical, professional, educational, and other books of all kinds. As of April 1, 2010 there were 157,600 books in the Religion category alone, available for full viewing. You can also create your own library and bookshelves to organize your collection.

- **Internet Archive: www.archive.org**
  The Internet Archive includes texts, audio, moving images, and software as well as archived web pages in their collections. The Internet Archive has been scanning books and making them available for researchers, historians, scholars, people with disabilities, and the general public for free on archive.org since 2005. As of March 31, 2010, The Internet Archive had 2 million free digital texts online.

- **Open Library: http://openlibrary.org**
  The goal of Open Library is to create one web page for every book ever published. As of April 1, 2010 they have gathered over 20 million records from a variety of large catalogs as well as single contributions, with more on the way.

- **Global Text Project: http://globaltext.terry.uga.edu**
  The project creates open content electronic textbooks that will be freely available from their website.

- **WikiBooks: http://en.wikibooks.org**
  Wikibooks is a Wikimedia community for creating a free library of educational textbooks that anyone can edit. Wikibooks has grown to include over 35,109 pages in a multitude of textbooks created by volunteers.

- **Flat World Knowledge: www.flatworldknowledge.com**
  Flat World Knowledge offers college textbooks free online with low-cost print-on-demand and self-print options. Their books are open for instructors to modify and make their own (for their own course—not for anybody else's). Their books are the hub of a social learning network

where students learn from the book and each other.

Bibles Online
- Bible Gateway: www.biblegateway.com (multiple versions)
- Biblica: www.biblica.com (multiple versions)
- Unbound Bible: http://unbound.biola.edu (multiple versions)
- Bible.Logos.com: http://bible.logos.com (multiple versions)
- New Revised Standard Version (NRSV): http://bible.oremus.org
- New American Bible (NAB): www.usccb.org/nab/bible
- New International Version (NIV): See Biblica, Bible.Logos.com and Bible Gateway websites
- English Standard Version (ESV): www.esvstudybible.org and www.gnpcb.org/esv

Opener #2. E-Learning and Blended Learning

The growth of e-learning, nationally and internationally, is a response to the constantly changing student populations in schools, colleges, and training organizations. The learning clientele is becoming more and more diverse each day. This diversification stems from many factors, including increased access to learning, lifelong learning pursuits, immigration, longer life spans, better course marketing, and so on. And a growing number of technologies and delivery mechanisms connect this diverse array of students together. One course might rely on asynchronous technologies, such as online discussion forums and practices tests. Such approaches allow for flexible work schedules since learners can participate at any time and from any region. Another course might corporate real-time chats with guest experts, online Webinars, and videoconferencing. These technologies provide a sense of caring from the instructor or expert as well as immediate feedback to participants questions and concerns. Many courses today combine such approaches.

Examples of Free Online Courses

- **MIT OpenCourseware: http://ocw.mit.edu**
  MIT OpenCourseWare (OCW) is a web-based publication of virtually all MIT course content –

over 1900 courses. OCW is open and available to the world and is a permanent MIT activity. MIT OpenCourseWare averages 1 million visits each month; translations receive 500,000 more. MIT OCW provides open access to the syllabi, lecture notes, course calendars, problem sets and solutions, exams, reading lists, and even a selection of video lectures from MIT courses representing 33 academic disciplines and all five of MIT's schools.

- **OpenCourseWare Consortium: www.ocwconsortium.org**
  An OpenCourseWare is a free and open digital publication of high quality educational materials, organized as courses. The OpenCourseWare Consortium is a collaboration of more than 200 higher education institutions and associated organizations from around the world creating a broad and deep body of open educational content using a shared model. The mission of the OpenCourseWare Consortium is to advance education and empower people worldwide through opencourseware. The University of Notre currently offers six theology courses online for free: http://ocw.nd.edu.

- **iTunes University: www.apple.com/itunes**
  (www.apple.com/education/mobile-learning)
  iTunes U, part of the iTunes Store, is possibly the world's greatest collection of free educational media available to students, teachers, and lifelong learners. With over 200,000 educational audio and video files available, iTunes U has quickly become the engine for the mobile learning movement. It puts the power of the iTunes Store in the hands of qualifying universities so they can distribute their educational media to their students or to the world. You can download lectures, discussions, language lessons, audiobooks, podcasts, and other opportunities for enlightenment — all from top universities, museums, and other cultural institutions around the world. (iTunes is a free download from the Apple website.)

Among the schools that provide courses and audio and video podcasts of lectures and events in Religion, Scripture, and Theology at iTunes U are: Abilene Christian, Creighton, Concordia Seminary, Covenant Seminary, Dallas Seminary,

Duke Divinity, De Paul, Emory, Fuller Seminary, Georgetown, Portland, Notre Dame, Reformed Seminary, Stanford, UC Berkeley, Westminster Seminary, and Yale.

- **Florida Virtual School (FLVS): www.flvs.net**
Florida Virtual School (FLVS) is an established leader in developing and providing virtual K-12 education solutions to students all over Florida, the U.S. and the world. A nationally recognized e-Learning model and recipient of numerous awards, FLVS was founded in 1997 and was the country's first, state-wide Internet-based public high school. Today, FLVS serves students in grades K-12 and provides a variety of custom solutions for schools and districts to meet student needs. Florida residents take courses for free while non-Florida residents take courses based on tuition rates. Students in Florida have the right to choose Florida Virtual School as an educational option.

A number of universities and seminaries offer free Scripture and theology courses, in addition to their tuition courses. Check out: C21 Online at Boston College (www.bc.edu/sites/ c21online) and STEP Online Theology at University of Notre Dame (http://step.nd.edu).

Opener #3. Availability of Open Source and Free Software

Free and open source software is a key ingredient in the WE-ALL-LEARN model. What is clear is that the movements for free software as well as open source software are transforming learning opportunities around the planet. Anyone with computer programming or design skills, money, resources, or networks, can now take time to improve the general education of this planet.

Examples of Free Course Design Software

- **Moodle: http://moodle.org**
Moodle is a Course Management System (CMS), also known as a Learning Management System (LMS) or a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). It is a Free web application that educators can use to create effective online learning sites. Go to their website to download the software and see examples of courses.

- **Sakai: http://sakaiproject.org**
Designed by educators for educators, Sakai is an enterprise teaching, learning and academic collaboration platform that best meets the needs of today's learners, instructors and researchers. Go to their website to download the software and see case studies of schools using the software.

- **MIT OpenCourseware: http://ocw.mit.edu**
(See Opener #2.)

Ning: An Example of a Free Website + Social Network + Education Site

- **Ning: www.ning.com**
Ning is a platform upon which an organization can build its own website, social network, and education online. Ning gives you the tools to create your own educational "space" online. It offers:
  - 50 distinct and unique themes or the ability to create your own design
  - the choice to make your Ning Network public or private for members only
  - an invitation process for you and members to invite new members
  - uploading and sharing of photos and videos
  - online chat in real-time
  - individual groups on your Ning Network with images, membership, comments and a discussion forum
  - a single or multi-threaded discussion forum with categories, photos and attachments
  - blogs for every member
  - an events organizer and the ability to keep track of who's attending.

Check out the "Ning and Education" site: http://education.ning.com/?xg_source=ningcom

Example: Book of Faith Initiative
http://bookoffaith.ning.com
The purpose of the Book of Faith Initiative is to increase biblical literacy and fluency for the sake of the world. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has made a commitment to encourage all members of our congregations, from children to adults, to dig deeper into our book of faith, the Bible. The Book of Faith Initiative recommends a new model for our church—a grass-roots approach embracing a common vision in which

all are invited to open scripture and join the conversation. Each community is encouraged to decide. The Ning Bible of Faith Network includes 1) stories of churches implementing the Book of Faith Initiative, 2) a blog, 3) conversations, 4) interest groups, 5) videos and photos, 6) event listings, and 6) resources

Opener #4. Leveraged Resources and OpenCourseWare

One of the most interesting trends in education today is the movement toward open coursework (OCW) initiated by MIT a few years ago. At the most basic level, OCW refers to the placing of free content on the Internet for anyone to use. OCW offers free, searchable, and open access to university resources and course content. For instance, instructors might put up lecture notes and course syllabi, sample tests, media files, course schedules, and other course-related information. However, there is no instructor at the site to review or grade students' work.

Examples of OpenCourseWare (OCW)

■ **Online Education Database: http://oedb.org**
The Online Education Database currently contains reviews of 1,041 programs from 88 accredited online colleges. The OED only lists accredited online colleges and allows you to sort reviews by program, college, or degree level. The library section educates you on the basics of online universities.

■ **Open Culture: www.openculture.com**
Open Culture brings together high-quality cultural and educational media for the worldwide lifelong learning community. Web 2.0 has given us great amounts of intelligent audio and video. It's all free. It's all enriching. But it's also scattered across the web, and not easy to find. Open Culture centralizes this content, curates it, and gives users access to this high quality content whenever and wherever you want it. Free audio books, free online courses, free movies, free language lessons, free ebooks, and other enriching content is here.

■ **Peer-to-Peer University: http://p2pu.org**
The Peer 2 Peer University (P2PU) is an online community of open study groups for short

university-level courses. Think of it as online book clubs for open educational resources. The P2PU helps you navigate the wealth of open education materials that are out there, creates small groups of motivated learners, and supports the design and facilitation of courses. Students and tutors get recognition for their work, and we are building pathways to formal credit as well.

■ **Open Education Resources: www.oercommons.org**
Open Educational Resources are teaching and learning materials that you may freely use and reuse, without charge. OER materials include: 1) full university courses, complete with readings, videos of lectures, homework assignments, and lecture notes; 2) interactive mini-lessons and simulations about a specific topic; 3) adaptations of existing open work; 4) electronic textbooks that are peer-reviewed and frequently updated; and 5) elementary school and high school (K-12) lesson plans, worksheets, and activities.

Examples of University OpenCourseWare
■ MIT OpenCourseware: http://ocw.mit.edu (See Opener #2.)
■ OpenCourseWare Consortium: www.ocwconsortium.org (See Opener #2)
■ iTunes University: www.apple.com/itunes (See Opener #2)
■ Open Yale University Courses: http://oyc.yale.edu
■ Open University of Notre Dame Courseware: http://ocw.nd.edu
■ Stanford University on iTunes: http://itunes.stanford.edu

Opener #5. Learning Object Repositories and Portals

There are vast educational resources on the Web that can be accessed through learning portals, referatories, and repositories. For all of us to learn, we need these types of free online education content and resources for learners across the world— resources for any age group, any educational level, any race or ethnic group, and any language. Such resources provide the pages to be delivered in the pipes of a new participatory learning culture. What exists so far is evidence of the turbocharged speed in which educational contents have been made

available to the learners of this planet. It has only been a little more than a decade since most educators paid notice to what the Web can offer. Think about the landscape of possibilities that might available a decade from now.

Examples

■ **MERLOT (Multimedia Educational Resources for Learning and Online Teaching): www.merlot.org**
MERLOT is a leading edge, user-centered, searchable collection of peer reviewed and selected higher education, online learning materials, catalogued by registered members and a set of faculty development support services. MERLOT's vision is to be a premiere online community where faculty, staff, and students from around the world share their learning materials and pedagogy.

■ **Connexions (Rice University): http://cnx.org**
Connexions is a place to view and share educational material made of small knowledge chunks called modules that can be organized as courses, books, reports, etc. Anyone may view or contribute: authors create and collaborate, instructors rapidly build and share custom collections, and learners find and explore content. Connexions is an environment for collaboratively developing, freely sharing, and rapidly publishing scholarly content on the Web. The Content Commons contains educational materials for everyone—from children to college students to professionals—organized in small modules that are easily connected into larger collections or courses. All content is free to use and reuse under the Creative Commons "attribution" license.

■ **Curriki: www.curriki.org**
Curriki is a community of educators, learners and committed education experts who are working together to create quality materials that will benefit teachers and students around the world. Curriki is an online environment created to support the development and free distribution of world-class educational materials to anyone who needs them. Curriki is the result of work done for GELC (the Global Education and Learning Community), an online project started by Sun Microsystems.

Examples of Museums as Online Learning Centers

■ **Museum of Online Museums: www.coudal.com/moom**
At the Museum of Online Museums you will find links to online collections and exhibits covering a vast array of interests and obsessions: Start with a review of classic art and architecture, and graduate to the study of mundane (and sometimes bizarre) objects elevated to art by their numbers, juxtaposition, or passion of the collector. The MoOM is organized into three sections: 1) the Museum Campus contains links to brick-and-mortar museums with an interesting online presence. Most of these sites will have multiple exhibits from their collections (or, in the case of the Smithsonian, displays of items not on display in the Washington museum itself); 2) the Permanent Collection displays links to exhibits of particular interest to design and advertising; and 3) Galleries, Exhibition, and Shows is an eclectic and ever-changing list of interesting links to collections and galleries, most of them hosted on personal web pages.

■ **Vatican Museum—Online Collections: http://mv.vatican.va/3_EN/pages/MV_Visite.html**

■ **Smithsonian Museum—Online: www.si.edu/research/online-collections-datasets.htm**

■ **The British Library—Gallery and Virtual Books ("Turning the Pages"): www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/index.html**

Opener #6. Learner Participation in Open Information Communities

E-learning as we know it has been around for ten years or so. During that time, it has emerged from being a radical idea—the effectiveness of which was yet to be proven—to something that is widely regarded as mainstream. It's the core to numerous business plans and a service offered by most colleges and universities. And now, e-learning is evolving with the Web as a whole and it's changing to a degree significant enough to warrant a new name: E-learning 2.0. The Web is evolving from a medium for information transmission and consumption to a platform through which content is created, shared,

remixed, repurposed, and passed along by its participants to potential users. This is the age of the Web 2.0 learners. Learners finally have a voice in their own learning activities. Today, instead of information transmission and consumption models, learners can find, design, mix and remix, repurpose, and select content to share. Web 2.0 harness the collective intelligence of individuals to situate us in a time of endless information abundance—the participatory learning age.

Examples

- **YouTube: www.youtube.com**
  YouTube is the world's most popular online video community, allowing millions of people to discover, watch and share originally-created videos. YouTube provides a forum for people to connect, inform, and inspire others across the globe and acts as a distribution platform for original content creators. Every minute, 20 hours of video is uploaded to YouTube.

- **Wikiversity (Wikimedia Foundation): http://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Wikiversity:Main_Page**
  Wikiveristy is a Wikimedia Foundation project devoted to learning resources, learning projects, and research for use in all levels, types, and styles of education from pre-school to university, including professional training and informal learning. Teachers, students, and research are invited to join in creating open educational resources and collaborative learning communities.

- **TeacherTube: www.teachertube.com**
  The goal of TeacherTube is to provide an online community for sharing instructional videos. It seeks to fill a need for a more educationally focused, safe venue for teachers, schools, and home learners. It is a site to provide anytime, anywhere professional development with teachers teaching teachers. As well, it is a site where teachers can post videos designed for students to view in order to learn a concept or skill.

- **SlideShare: www.slideshare.net**
  Upload and share PowerPoint and Keynote presentations, Word and PDF, and add audio to make a webinar. SlideShare is a media site for sharing presentations, documents and pdfs. SlideShare is the best way to get your slides out there on the web, so your ideas can be found and shared by a wide audience. Some of the things you can do on SlideShare: embed slideshows into your own blog or website, share slideshows publicly or privately, synch audio to your slides, market your own event on slideshare, join groups to connect with SlideShare members who share your interests, and download the original file

- **Scribd: www.scribd.com**
  Scribd is the largest social publishing and reading site in the world. On Scribd, you can easily turn any file—such as PDF, Word and PowerPoint—into a web document and immediately connect with readers and information-seekers in the Scribd community, through connected sites such as Facebook or Twitter, and search engines such as Google. Scribd users have shared tens of millions of free and for-purchase documents and books ranging from vampire fan fiction to research reports and business presentations. There's something for everyone—students and teachers, business professionals, companies and organizations, writers and artists. Millions of people contribute to the conversations happening on the site through comments (scribbles), ratings and other sharing features. They also read in whatever way they choose, including on Scribd.com, mobile devices, through downloads or even in print.

Opener #7. Electronic Collaboration and Interaction

It is clear that we are living and working in times of increasing collaborative focus. The push is toward global networking, sharing, and idea exchange. With effective design and use of collaborative tools, WE-ALL-LEARN. We all learn from our peers. We all learn from experts whom we have never met. We all learn from resources generated in another country or culture. And we all learn from archival records or online learning activities completed recently or long ago. If learning stems from engagement with others on a social plane, then it is collaborative tools that catapult learning to new heights.

Examples

■ **The GLOBE Project: www.globe.gov**
GLOBE (**G**lobal **L**earning and **O**bservations to **B**enefit the Environment) is a worldwide hands-on, primary and secondary school-based science and education program. GLOBE's vision promotes and supports students, teachers and scientists to collaborate on inquiry-based investigations of the environment and the Earth system working in close partnership with NASA and NSF Earth System Science Projects in study and research about the dynamics of Earth's environment.

For another example, see National Geographic Kids: http://kids.nationalgeographic.com.

■ **iEARN ((International Education and Resource Network): www.iearn.org**
iEARN is the world's largest non-profit global network that enables teachers and youth to use the Internet and other technologies to collaborate on projects that enhance learning and make a difference in the world. iEARN is an inclusive and culturally diverse community, a safe and structured environment in which young people can communicate, an opportunity to apply knowledge in service-learning projects, and a community of educators and learners making a difference as part of the educational process. iEARN is made up over 30,000 schools and youth organizations in more than 130 countries. Over 2,000,000 students each day are engaged in collaborative project work worldwide.

Opener #8. Alternative Reality Learning

We have entered an age of alternative reality learning, in which real worlds are approximated or entirely new ones are created, as in simulations. Highly popular in business and educational settings, simulations provides learners with a model of reality and strategies and skills that they can later use when facing similar live situations. Games, too, are part of an emerging learning culture. Members of the Net Generation grew up with ever-changing new technologies and became adept at playing games with handheld devices, computers, and television consoles. Educational games, therefore, have a

motivational energy about them that our learning delivery mechanisms simply do not have.

Examples

■ **Second Life: http://secondlife.com**
Second Life is a virtual world developed by Linden Lab and is accessible via the Internet. Residents can explore, meet other residents, socialize, participate in individual and group activities, and create and trade virtual property and services with one another, or travel throughout the world. Second Life is for people aged 18 and over, while Teen Second Life is for people aged 13 to 17. Second Life provides a virtual home for some of the world's most prestigious universities and academic institutions. Virtual classrooms at MIT allow for online collaboration, while Notre Dame makes use of Second Life as a cost effective solution to distance learning. You can explore the Smithsonian Latino Museum on Second Life through video, audio and slide presentations.

■ **Global Kids: www.globalkids.org and http://olpglobalkids.org/**
Global Kids' mission is to transform urban youth into successful students and global and community leaders by engaging them in socially dynamic, content-rich learning experiences. Global Kids is the first nonprofit to develop a dedicated space for conducting programming in the virtual world of Teen Second Life (TSL). Within TSL, the organization has established Global Kids Island, which hosts interactive, experiential programs for teens from around the world. Specifically, Global Kids is conducting intensive leadership programming for youth, bringing youth from its New York-based programs into the space, and streaming the audio and video of major events into the world. Global Kids' work in Teen Second Life is extensively detailed on the blog olp.globalkids.org/second_life.

Opener #9. Real-Time Mobility and Portability

For the learning world to be truly opened, educational activities must be possible wherever any single human being steps foot. Enter the ninth

opener—the world of mobile and portable computing. M-learning has sprung up in recent years with the escalating use of handheld, portable, and wireless devices by learners on the move. Kids come to the classroom equipped with cell phones, iPods, and other mobile technology. With mobile devices, the educational event or activity follows the learner, instead of the learner having to arrive at a designated place in which to acquire it. M-learning allows you to be a learner at any time.

Examples

■ **Apps for the iPod, iPhone, and iPad: www.apple.com**
There are hundreds of Bible, religion, and education applications for all ages designed for use on the iPod, iPhone, and the iPad. These apps cover a wide range of topics from learning history or a second language to learning how to cook and repair a house. For iPhone and iPod apps: www.apple.com/iphone/apps-for-iphone; for iPad apps: www.apple.com/ipad/apps-for-ipad. For listings and reviews of top apps: www.appstoreapps.com.

■ **Abilene Christian University: www.acu.edu/technology/mobilelearning**
An Apple iPhone or iPod touch is a central part of Abilene Christian University's innovative learning experience as the first university in the nation to provide these cutting-edge media devices to its incoming class. Students will use an iPhone or iPod touch to receive homework alerts, answer in-class surveys and quizzes, get directions to their professors' offices, and check their meal and account balances—among more than 15 other useful web applications already developed.

■ **Educational Podcast Network: http://epnweb.org**
The Education Podcast Network is an effort to bring together into one place, the wide range of podcast programming that may be helpful to teachers looking for content to teach with and about, and to explore issues of teaching and learning in the 21st century. Most of the producers of these programs are educators, who have found an avenue through which they can share their knowledge, insights, and passions for

teaching and learning and for the stories that they relish and teach.

■ **iTunes University: www.apple.com**
(See Opener #2)

Opener #10. Networks of Personalized Learning

We are a networked society now—networked individuals connected with each other in a mesh of loosely knit, overlapping flat connections. Interwoven in this way, individual scan find personally relevant information in more openly accessible communities produced by peers with similar interests. The educational aspects this transformation significantly alters accepted notions of what it means to learn, visions of where that learning is to come from, and, more important, what it means to be human. We have stepped into a new culture of learning where we assume radically new perspectives of ourselves as learners and what it means to participate in the learning process. The culture is one of participation and personalization.

Examples

■ **Livemocha: www.livemocha.com**
Livemocha is the world's largest online community for language learners, with free lessons and a global community to help you learn a new language. Livemocha is available today with support for six popular languages – English, Spanish, French, Hindi, German, and Mandarin Chinese. Key elements of Livemocha's learning approach include: 1) lesson plans with over 160 hours of beginner and intermediate level content, 2) a global community where members all over the world can utilize their native language proficiency to teach and learn from other members of the community, and 3) a motivational system: competitions, a language buddy system, and community encouragement.

A Sampler of Web 2.0 Faith Formation Sites

■ **Patheos: www.patheos.com**
Patheos.com is an online destination to engage in the global dialogue about religion and spirituality and to explore and experience the world's beliefs. Patheos brings together the public, academia, and the faith leaders in a single environment, and is the place where people turn on a regular basis for insight into questions, issues, and discussions. Patheos is a place to: 1) explore religious beliefs and histories through a deep library of accurate, balanced information on the world's religions, as well as through unique interactive lenses that allow visitors to compare, contrast and explore religions and belief systems in new and innovative ways; 2) enrich the global dialogue on religion and spirituality through responsible, moderated discussions on critical issues across religious traditions, in the site's unique Public Square; and 3) experience religious traditions, both online and off, through a variety of multimedia applications and online directories; and 4) engage in intra-faith discussion through religion-specific portals, designed to provide a forum for discussion and public interaction.

■ **Busted Halo: www. bustedhalo.com**
BustedHalo.com strives to reveal the spiritual dimension of young adults' lives through feature stories, reviews, interviews, faith guides, commentaries, audio clips, discussions and connections to retreat, worship and service opportunities. Busted Halo is committed to creating a forum that is: open, informed, unexpected, unpredictable, balanced, and thought-provoking.

■ **The Thoughtful Christian:
www.thethoughtfulchristian.com**
The Thoughtful Christian is a Web-based resource center filled with studies ranging from one to four sessions each for adult groups and individuals. Each session is designed for forty-five minutes to one hour and comes with a three- to four-page Participant Handout and a two- to five-page Leader's Guide with lesson plans and resources. The studies can be downloaded as Acrobat PDF files, printed out, and photocopied for use in classes or for personal study and devotion. In addition, leaders can e-mail the Participant Handout to students in advance of the next meeting. New studies, including rapid responses to current events, will be added to the site on a regular, ongoing basis.

■ **Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion:
www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu**
The Wabash Center seeks to strengthen and enhance education in North American theological schools, colleges and universities. The Center sponsors a website that includes the Internet Guide to Religion—a selective, annotated list of a wide variety of electronic resources of interest to those who are involved in the study and practice of religion: syllabi, electronic texts, electronic journals, web sites, bibliographies, liturgies, reference resources, software, etc. The purpose of the Guide is to encourage and facilitate the incorporation of electronic resources into teaching. The Teaching and Learning Guide contains links to resources in the areas of print resources and faculty development and education.

■ **Leadership Network: www.leadnet.org**
Leadership Network fosters church innovation and growth through strategies, programs, tools and resources that are consistent with their far-reaching mission: to identify, connect and help high-capacity Christian leaders multiply their impact.

■ **MethodX: www.upperroom.org/methodx**
MethodX (the way of Christ) is an online Christian community where young adults (college to 30s) can identify and explore their relationships with God and with others. MethodX helps young adults experience God in ways that will change their life in a hospitable place where they can gather and talk about things that matter.

■ **Calvin Institute of Christian Worship:
www.calvin.edu/worship**
The Calvin Institute of Christian Worship promotes the study of Christian worship and the renewal of worship in worshiping communities worldwide. The Calvin Institute of Christian

Worship is an interdisciplinary study and ministry center and partners with congregations, organizations, and publishers to further our mission. Their website includes: audio and video podcasts, publications, worship planning tools and resources, liturgical arts, worshipping communities, worship case studies, and leadership resources and tools.

■ **Alban Institute: www.alban.org**
The Alban Institute website incorporates the Congregational Resource Guide, articles, podcasts, Webinars, and blogs focused on congregational life and leaders. In the Conversation section, you can find articles from *Congregations* magazine and the weekly e-newsletter, as well as articles exclusively written for the Web site. Congregation Watch keeps track of the news and opinions from various denominations, religious news outlets, and bloggers. Alban Webinars combine an interactive visual PowerPoint presentation with an audio presentation. The Congregational Resource Guide is a unique online guide to resources for congregations and those who serve them. It is designed to answer questions, make connections to useful information, and enrich the life and leadership of congregations. The CRG includes lists of select resources that represent the scope of thinking and practice on more than 120 topics. Many topics include overview essays and articles. experts.

■ **Faith and Leadership: www.faithandleadership.com**
Leadership Education at Duke Divinity designs and delivers educational offerings that advance the practice of theologically wise and transformative leadership in service to God's work in the world. The Faith and Leadership website includes resources on the principles and practice of Christian leadership: articles, multimedia, profiles, Q&A, reflections, resources, and sermons. The Call & Response Blog includes blogs by experts and space for readers to offer daily insight, inspiration and discussion about Christian leadership.

■ **New Testament Gateway: www.ntgateway.com**
The New Testament Gateway is the award winning web directory of internet resources on the New Testament. Browse or search annotated links on everything connected with the academic study of the New Testament and Christian Origins. It is divided into several sub-directories and dozens of pages, each relating to a specific topic. Every link is annotated to help users to pinpoint the information for which they are looking. The New Testament Gateway focuses on resources that will be of interest to both scholars and students of the New Testament.

■ **Spirituality and Practice: www.spiritalityandpractice.com**
Spirituality & Practice is a multi-faith organization providing resources for the spiritual journey that encourage and accelerate this process. The website includes: 1) the Spiritual Literacy Project, showcasing clips from a 26-part DVD series featuring spiritual quotes from famous teachers, set to music and beautiful film images; 2) online spirituality courses from experts, covering different spiritual practices, religious traditions, changing habits, and more; 3) books for spiritual journeys with reviews of 350 new titles each year; and 4) a Spirituality & Practice online community.

■ **Speaking of Faith: http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org**
Speaking of Faith (SOF) is a new kind of conversation –and an evolving media space—about religion, spirituality, and large questions of meaning in every aspect of life. SOF is a weekly program heard on a growing number of public radio stations in the U.S., and globally via Internet and podcast. *Speaking of Faith* draws out the intellectual and spiritual content of religion that should nourish our common life. The website includes podcasts, transcripts, a blog, and archive of all past shows.

World without Walls
How to Teach When Learning is Everywhere
Will Richardson

E arlier this year, as I was listening to a presentation by an eleven-year-old community volunteer and blogger named Laura Stockman about the service projects she carries out in her hometown outside Buffalo, New York, an audience member asked where she got her ideas for her good work.

Her response blew me away. "I ask my readers," she said. I doubt anyone in the room could have guessed that answer. But if you look at the Clustrmap on Laura's blog, *Twenty Five Days to Make a Difference*, you'll see that Stockman's readers—each represented by a little red dot—come from all over the world. She has a network of connections, people from almost every continent and country, who share their own stories of service or volunteer to assist Stockman in her work. She's sharing and learning and collaborating in ways that were unheard of just a few years ago.

Welcome to the Collaboration Age, where even the youngest among us are on the Web, tapping into what are without question some of the most transformative connecting technologies the world has ever seen. These tools are allowing us not only to mine the wisdom and experiences of the more than one billion people now online but also to connect with them to further our understanding of the global experience and do good work together. These tools are fast changing, decidedly social, and rich with powerful learning opportunities for us all, if we can figure out how to leverage their potential.

For educators and the schools in which they teach, the challenges of this moment are significant. Our ability to learn whatever we want, whenever we want, from whomever we want is rendering the linear, age-grouped, teacher-guided curriculum less and less relevant. Experts are at our fingertips, through our keyboards or cell phones, if we know how to find and connect to them. Content and information are everywhere, not just in textbooks.

The Collaboration Age is about learning with a decidedly different group of "others," people whom we may not know and may never meet, but who share our passions and interests and are willing to invest in

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exploring them together. It's about being able to form safe, effective networks and communities around those explorations, trust and be trusted in the process, and contribute to the conversations and co-creations that grow from them. It's about working together to create our own curricula, texts, and classrooms built around deep inquiry into the defining questions of the group. It's about solving problems together and sharing the knowledge we've gained with wide audiences.

Connection Meets Content

Inherent in the collaborative process is a new way of thinking about teaching and learning. We must find our own teachers, and they must find us. In fact, in my own kids' lives, I believe their best, most memorable, and most effective teachers will be the ones they discover, not the ones they are given. That's no slight against the people in their face-to-face classrooms, who are equally important in a connected world. But it does suggest that we as educators need to reconsider our roles in students' lives, to think of ourselves as connectors first and content experts second.

As connectors, we provide the chance for kids to get better at learning from one another. Examples of this kind of schooling are hard to find so far, but they do exist. Manitoba, Canada, teacher Clarence Fisher and Van Nuys, California, administrator Barbara Barreda do it through their thinwalls project, in which middle school students connect almost daily through blogs, wikis, Skype, instant messaging, and other tools to discuss literature and current events. In Webster, New York, students on the Stream Team at Klem Road South Elementary School, investigate the health of local streams and then use digital tools to share data and exchange ideas about stewardship with kids from other schools in the Great Lakes area and in California. More than learning content, the emphasis of these projects is on using the Web's social-networking tools to teach global collaboration and communication, allowing students to create their own networks in the process.

We must also expand our ability to think critically about the deluge of information now being produced by millions of amateur authors without traditional editors and researchers as gatekeepers. In fact, we need to rely on trusted members of our personal networks to help sift through the sea of stuff, locating and sharing with us the most relevant, interesting, useful bits. And we have to work together to organize it all, as long-held taxonomies of knowledge give way to a highly personalized information environment.

That means that as teachers, we must begin to model our own editorial skills—how we locate and discern good information and good partners -- at every turn, in every class, reflecting with students on our successes and failures. The complexities of editing information online cannot be sequestered and taught in a six-week unit. This has to be the way we do our work each day.

Collaboration in these times requires our students to be able to seek out and connect with learning partners, in the process perhaps navigating cultures, time zones, and technologies. It requires that they have a vetting process for those they come into contact with: Who is this person? What are her passions? What are her credentials? What can I learn from her?

Likewise, we must make sure others can locate and vet us. The process of collaboration begins with our willingness to share our work and our passions publicly—a frontier that traditional schools have rarely crossed. As Clay Shirky writes in *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations*, "Knowingly sharing your work with others is the simplest way to take advantage of the new social tools." Educators can help students open these doors by deliberately involving outsiders in class work early on—not just showcasing a finished product at the spring open house night.

Fortunately, social tools like wikis, blogs, and social-bookmarking sites make working with others across time and space easier than it's ever been. They are indeed "weapons of mass collaboration," as author Donald Tapscott calls them. We no longer have to be present to participate. Look no further than *Wikipedia* to see the potential; say what you will of its veracity, no one can deny that it represents the incredible potential of working with others online for a common purpose.

Opportunity Cost

As *Wikipedia* so wonderfully shows, while the tools make virtual work easier, navigating these work spaces is far from simple. We can use del.icio.us to organize our collective research, Google Docs to write together, and Skype to videoconference when

necessary, but technical know-how is not enough. We must also be adept at negotiating, planning, and nurturing the conversation with others we may know little about—not to mention maintaining a healthy balance between our face-to-face and virtual lives (another dance for which kids sorely need coaching).

The Collaboration Age comes with challenges that often cause concern and fear. How do we manage our digital footprints, or our identities, in a world where we are a Google search away from both partners and predators? What are the ethics of co-creation when the nuances of copyright and intellectual property become grayer each day? When connecting and publishing are so easy, and so much of what we see is amateurish and inane, how do we ensure that what we create with others is of high quality?

At this moment, there are no easy answers for educators; most of the school districts I visit still have not begun to contextualize or embrace these shifts. Instead, as illustrated by the Canadian college student who faced expulsion for "cheating" after creating a study group to share notes on Facebook rather than face to face in the library, many of our students continue to explore the potentials and pitfalls of instant communication with little guidance from their teachers. The technologies we block in their classrooms flourish in their bedrooms. Students are growing networks without us, writing Harry Potter narratives together at *FanFiction.net*, or trading skateboarding videos on YouTube. At school, we disconnect them not only from the technology but also from their passion and those who share it.

In our zeal to hold on to the old structures of teaching and learning and to protect students at all costs, we are not just leaving them ill prepared for the future, we are also missing an enormous opportunity for ourselves as learners. Regardless of the limits of technology or the culture of fear in our workplaces, almost every teacher I meet now has the ability to tap into these shifts in their personal practice should they choose to. They could start by browsing Classroom 2.0 or search at blogsearch.google.com for loggers who share their interests. Anyone with a passion for something can connect to others with that same passion—and begin to co-create and co-learn the same way many of our students already do.

NEW SKILLS FOR A NEW AGE
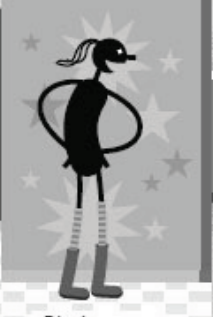
What students must master to succeed.

LEARN

Access, evaluate and use different forms of information

Exercise critical thinking

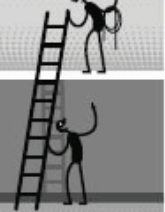Exhibit fluency with tech tools

CREATE

Use various forms of media when presenting ideas

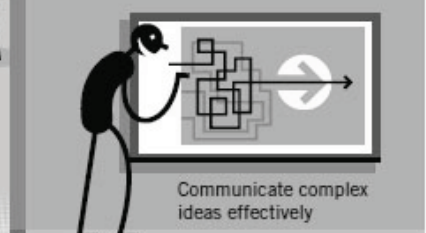Display originality

Employ problem-solving skills

COLLABORATE

Work successfully as a team

Demonstrate cross-cultural awareness

Communicate complex ideas effectively

Based in part on work by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills.

edutopia.org

I believe that is what educators must do now. We must engage with these new technologies and their potential to expand our own understanding and methods in this vastly different landscape. We must know for ourselves how to create, grow, and navigate these collaborative spaces in safe, effective, and ethical ways. And we must be able to model those shifts for our students and counsel them effectively when they run across problems with these tools.

Anything less is unacceptable for our kids, for my kids, for the Laura Stockmans of the world, who so far have been relegated to learning how to add dots to their maps on their own. The good news, for those willing to accept the challenge, is that we don't have to do it alone.

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http://streamteam.wikispaces.com
www.skype.com
http://thinwalls.wikispaces.com
www.weblogg-ed.com
www.wikinomics.com

www.edutopia.org

Kids today—no previous generation has experienced anything like the current pace of transformational societal change. Yet, in light of extraordinary advancements in how we interact with each other and the world, our system of education has been frustratingly slow to adapt. The George Lucas Educational Foundation was created to address this issue. Our vision is of a new world of learning. A place where kids and parents, teachers and administrators, policy makers and the people they serve, all are empowered to change education for the better. A place where schools have access to the same invaluable technology as businesses and universities—where innovation is the rule, not the exception. A place where children become lifelong learners and develop the technical, cultural, and interpersonal skills to succeed in the twenty-first century. A place of inspiration, aspiration, and an urgent belief that improving education improves the world we live in. We call this place **Edutopia**. And we provide not just the vision for this new world of learning but also the leading-edge interactive tools and resources to help make it a reality.

Through the **Edutopia.org** web site, we spread the word about ideal, interactive learning environments and enable others to adapt these successes locally. Edutopia.org contains a deep archive of continually updated best practices, from classroom tips to recommendations for districtwide change. Allied with a dedicated audience that actively contributes success stories from the field, our mission relies on input and participation from schools and communities. The diverse and innovative media resources available from The George Lucas Educational Foundation are designed to connect and inspire positive change in all areas of education.

- **Edutopia.org**: An in-depth and interactive resource, Edutopia.org offers practical, hands-on advice, real-world examples, lively contributions from practitioners, and invaluable tips and tools.
- **Edutopia video**: Through an extensive offering of documentaries, Edutopia video is a catalyst for innovation by helping educators and parents, as well as business and community leaders, see and understand pioneering best practices.

Nurturing Lifelong Faith Online

Lynne M. Baab

T hree years ago, I was buried deep in a study of congregational websites. I was finishing a PhD in communication, and I had chosen to study the way congregations use their websites to communicate their identities. I looked at hundreds of church websites, enjoying the rich diversity in the congregations represented there.

When I started the study in 2004, blogs had barely appeared on the scene, so I didn't include blogs by ministers or congregations in my research. When I finished my study of websites in 2007, I wished that I had studied blogs as well. In 2007, just three years ago, social networking websites weren't even on my radar screen. At that time, Facebook and other forms of online social networking were used mostly by teenagers and university students, but not by older adults like me. At that time, most leaders of congregations used email frequently, consulted websites occasionally, and got on with the work of ministry.

In the three years since I completed that study of websites, things have changed dramatically. People of all ages are connecting with their friends on Facebook, following celebrities on Twitter and reading diverse opinions on blogs. Because so many people now spend time online making connections in new ways, congregations and other organizations are beginning to figure out how to have an online presence beyond their website.

Websites remain essential communication tools for congregations. Email, Facebook, Twitter, and blogs are now used by congregations to supplement the website and to point people toward it. The various forms of online communication work together to direct people back and forth between them. At their best, all these forms of communication highlight the central priorities of the congregation. And one of those priorities should be lifelong faith formation.

In this article, I want to sketch some of the ways the various forms of online communication can work together to nurture faith.

Lynne M. Baab, Ph.D., is the author of numerous books on Christian spirituality and on congregational life, including *Fasting: Spiritual Freedom Beyond our Appetites* (InterVarsity Press, 2007) and *Reaching Out in a Networked World* (Alban Institute, 2008). She is a Presbyterian minister who teaches pastoral theology in Dunedin, New Zealand. Visit her website, www.lynnebaab.com, to read more articles she has written about congregational communication and on Christian spiritual disciplines.

Communication Today

Many people today make a seamless transition between various forms of communication: face-to-face, telephone, cell phone, email, Facebook, Skype, Twitter, websites, blogs, online photo sharing, and other forms of internet connection. Any one person may use only a few of those ways to connect, but some form of electronic of communication is embedded in everyday life for many, many people.

Congregations and Christian leaders are increasingly giving careful thought to strategic use of electronic communication in faith formation. Several of my Facebook friends are ministers of congregations, and I love to watch the ways they use Facebook to post Scriptures, prayers, quotations from Christian books, and links to interesting faith-related articles available online. I have signed up as a member of numerous congregational groups and pages on Facebook and Twitter, just to watch the way congregations are using these new ways of connecting with their members.

Congregations are using Facebook and Twitter to announce congregational events, sermon topics, Scriptures for the Sunday service, the arrival of overseas visitors, birthdays of congregation members, prayer requests, and significant happenings in the wider community. In addition, Facebook and Twitter are often used to post links to new material on the church website or the minister's blog, as well as links to interesting articles on other websites and blogs. Many congregations are using Facebook's internal email to send messages to the people who have signed up as members of the congregation's page or group.

I'll illustrate how this works by imagining a congregation that has just begun to host a neighborhood food bank on its premises. The minister has written a blog post about the foodbank, and photos of the new foodbank have been posted on the church's website. The congregation uses Facebook and Twitter to provide a link to the minister's latest blog post and another link to the photos. The church website also has a link to the blog, and the blog post has a link to the photos on the website. An email is sent using traditional email as well as Facebook email to say that the photos of the foodbank have been posted on the website, and that the minister's new blog post this week focuses on the foodbank. The email provides a link to the photos and to the blog.

The next week the minister writes another blog post about the foodbank, this time reflecting on generosity as a fundamental Christian virtue. The minister has found two wonderful articles online about the way acts of generosity enable Christians to grow into the likeness of Christ. The blog post provides links to the two articles. Posts on Facebook and Twitter provide links to the articles as well, encouraging the members of the congregation to read the articles and reflect on the role of generosity in their own lives.

In the next few weeks, the minister also preaches a sermon about generosity and writes an article for the printed church newsletter about generosity. The traditional means of church communication—such as sermons and newsletters—are not neglected but they are amplified through online communication. The sermon is posted on the website (either in written or audio form), and the article is posted on the website as well. Links to the sermon and article might be sent out through Twitter and Facebook as well.

Notice two things about the scenario I have just sketched. First, the minister and the people in charge of congregational communication understand that a congregational event—the opening of a foodbank—is also teaching moment. Everything a congregation does has the potential to shape the spiritual development of congregation members. Often this is forgotten, and the events are viewed as an end in themselves. Feeding people in need is a good thing, and in that sense it could be viewed as an end in itself. However, that would be a waste of a good opportunity to reflect on the nature of generosity in the life of faith. Other topics that could be stressed in connection with this event include God's call to care for the poor, God's invitation to engage in acts of social justice, or the connection between evangelism and acts of mercy. Leaders of congregations must always remember that congregation members usually need to have events interpreted; the significance of everyday acts of obedience to God in the larger scheme of faith formation needs to be explained.

Secondly, notice the way that online communication these days is interwoven and interconnected. Increasingly, Twitter and Facebook are being used to post links to other information: blog posts, helpful articles, and new information on organizational websites. Increasingly people are realizing it's not enough to post new photos or announcements on websites. People need to be

alerted to the fact that new material has been added to the website.

In this article, I want to give two more extended examples of the way internet connections can complement traditional means of communication in faith formation in congregations. My first example will focus on fasting. Many Christians are rediscovering the joy of engaging with spiritual disciplines, which are practices that help us draw near to God and which make space for God in the midst of busy lives. More congregations are encouraging their members to engage in spiritual disciplines as individuals and in community. Communal spiritual disciplines can involve people of all ages, and having a significant internet component can encourage younger people to participate. Fasting is just one example, an example that works well to illustrate the multiple means of communication that can be used to nurture a spiritual practice that usually bears much fruit.

Fasting & Online Connections

Fasting was an accepted and common practice for most of Christian history, but it fell out of favor in Western countries for most of the twentieth century. The resurgence of interest in fasting began with Richard Foster's 1988 book, *Celebration of Discipline*, which has a chapter devoted to fasting. Many Christians have become motivated to give it a try. Another factor that has contributed to the rise in interest in fasting is exposure to Christians in Asia, Africa and Latin America where fasting is an everyday practice in congregations. In addition, Christians in Western countries have experienced a dawning realization that giving into every desire may not be the best thing for human beings to do.

Introducing the concept of fasting in a congregation requires a lot of education. What exactly is fasting? Why fast? What is the biblical basis for fasting? What are the benefits of fasting? How can fasting be done safely?

About two dozen incidents in the Bible recount stories of fasting, and several passages describe the significance of fasting (Isaiah 58, Joel 2:12-13, Matthew 6:16-18, Mark 2:18-20). People who fast report many of the same themes that occur in the biblical accounts. Fasting helps them draw near to God in prayer, and fasting helps them experience a purity of heart that centers on Jesus.

Christians today are fasting in amazingly creative ways. Some Christians fast from food, others fast from coffee, shopping, internet use, television, and other components of everyday life. Forms of fasting from food vary as well. Some Christians fast from all food and drink only juice or water, and some fast from certain categories of food, such as sweets or meat. A person who has had an eating disorder should never fast from food in any form, so the non-food options for fasting need to be promoted and encouraged. Children can fast in a limited way from food, such as giving up sweets or some other favorite food, but they must never been encouraged to abstain from all food.

A definition of fasting for our time needs to take into account these varieties of ways of engaging in a fast. Here's a definition I like: *Christian fasting is the voluntary denial of something for a specific time, for a spiritual purpose, by an individual, family, community or nation* (Baab, 16).

The information sketched briefly in the previous paragraphs is the kind of information people in a congregation need to know in order to consider the way fasting might contribute to their lives as individuals. Much of the same information is necessary for encouraging a congregation to engage in forms of communal fasting. How can that information best be disseminated?

For about a decade, a church in the Midwest of the United States has encouraged the whole congregation to participate in a month-long fast every fall. Each week a different kind of fasting is encouraged. Testimonies about the benefits of fasting are presented during the worship services leading up to the fast, and usually one or two sermons on fasting are delivered. Basic information about fasting is available in booklet form. Specific prayer requests for each week are distributed in the weekly printed bulletin.

Let's imagine another congregation wants to encourage a week of fasting by all members. The minister has laid the groundwork by preaching on fasting, and a few people who fast regularly have given testimonies in worship. The congregational leaders want to give people the practical information they need about fasting, so they're considering how to make that information available.

The first and most obvious option is the church website. A statement on the home page could present the notion of a congregational fast, with a prominent link. That link could take the viewer to pages with basic information about fasting, some

biblical background, and suggestions for ways of fasting today. Testimonies from people who have fasted, explaining the ways fasting helped them draw near to God, could be written specifically for the website or could be transcribed from oral testimonies given during the worship service. Prayer requests for the week of fasting could be posted on the website.

Many, many resources on every topic imaginable are available online these days. One of the increasingly significant responsibilities of congregational leaders will be to find appropriate and helpful resources and provide those links to members of the congregation. Links to helpful articles about fasting should be included with information about fasting on the church's website.

A church's website is of little use if no one visits it, so encouraging visits to the website is essential. A description of the information about fasting on the website can be placed in the printed bulletin. A Twitter post could give the link to the information about fasting on the church's website, and additional Twitter posts could give reminders of the date of the congregational fast as it approaches. Facebook posts by congregational leaders could provide links and dates as well. Emails from within Facebook could be sent to the members of the congregation's Facebook page or group. Email reminders—sent from within Facebook and sent using traditional email—could include the fast dates, the prayer requests, and a link to the information on the website. If the minister or other congregational leaders have a blog, a blog post about fasting can also provide links to the information on the website.

After the fast is over, a few testimonies about the benefits of the fast could be placed on the website. Again, links to those testimonies could be sent out using Twitter, Facebook status updates, Facebook email, and traditional email. Links can also be listed in the printed Sunday bulletin.

Printing the information about fasting on paper may be necessary for people who are not online. The presence of the links to other online sources of information will be part of what motivates people to look at the church website rather than pick up a printed booklet. Information about prayer requests can be updated so much more quickly online as well.

Any spiritual practice can be encouraged in a congregation in a similar way: sabbath observance, contemplative prayer, intercessory prayer,

journaling, various kinds of personal Bible study, and other spiritual disciplines as well. Websites are wonderful places to provide extended information about a topic, including the biblical basis, guidelines for practice, testimonies about the effectiveness of the practice, and links to online resources. Increasingly, people expect to see links to the information provided to them by email, Twitter, Facebook, or on blogs.

Congregation members need help understanding the significance of what they are encouraged to do in the life of faith. Nudging congregation members to adopt spiritual practices is a good thing. However, it is even better to provide help interpreting the significance of the things they do. Sermons, blog posts and personal testimonies in worship services or posted on websites can be good avenues for helping people understand the significance of their practices.

Overwhelmed by Communication Challenges

Many ministers and congregational leaders feel overwhelmed by the numerous communication options that need to be considered today. Who has time, they wonder, to search online for resources, to continually post things on Twitter and Facebook and to keep up a blog? Very few people do, and that's where this kind of communication needs to be a team effort.

Every congregation will have a few people who love the online environment and enjoy spending hours on the internet. Those people can be recruited to set up a Twitter account and a Facebook group or page for the congregation. When something new is posted on the church website, these individuals may be willing to receive a brief notice by email so they can post a link on Twitter and Facebook.

For ministers and congregational leaders who are unfamiliar with Facebook or Twitter, ask someone to show you how they work. They have similarities, but each offers something different. Two years ago, I knew nothing about either one. I got some younger people to describe to me how they use them. I assimilated that information, then I got some more young people to show me how they worked. I then forced myself to sign up for both of them so I could learn about them. To my total surprise, I enjoy Facebook a lot and frequently use it

to connect with my friends. And I have been increasingly impressed with the strategic use of both Facebook and Twitter by congregations and by Christian leaders.

People who love to be online can also be asked to research topics that are relevant for the congregation's priorities and to pass on to the minister or other leaders links to articles. Those articles can be evaluated, and if appropriate, links to those articles can be posted on the congregational website, the minister's blog, and Facebook and Twitter.

Someone—the church secretary or a person who enjoys online communication—needs to be charged with the task of keeping up an email list of everyone who wants to be on it. Emails shouldn't be sent to everyone in the congregation more than once or twice a week, but those emails can be strategic indeed, pointing members to information on the website and highlighting issues and events.

All of this presupposes that the congregation has a website, an increasingly strategic tool for congregational communication. One of my sons, who is in his late twenties, calls websites "our new front door," and he says most people in his generation would never consider visiting a place they haven't read about online. Money spent on website design and maintenance is well spent.

Blogs are free, and I believe every minister should consider having a blog. Posting once a week is enough, and posts should be brief (200-300 words). A post might be a short review of a book, a link to an article, a thought that has come to mind during the preparation of a sermon, a story of something significant that happened, an alert about an upcoming event. Good blog posts are informal and conversational, an excellent opportunity for a minister to engage personally with significant topics and express his or her priorities to the congregation.

Blogs can also be used by ministries within a congregation. For example, a children's ministries program could set up a blog with a handful of contributors who might post brief biographies of new volunteers, information about upcoming lessons, and links to articles about ministry to children.

Because of the many communication options that are available now, ministers and church leaders will necessarily need to spend more time thinking about communication strategies. Communication, however, is never an end in itself. Communication always involves a focus on what can be accomplished through it. I'd like to encourage an attitude in congregations that focuses first and foremost on the life-long spiritual development of the members of that community. As a part of the working out of that focus, leaders can consider the question of how best to express information and tell stories about that significant focal topic.

The best communication in our time will involve an awareness of the interconnectedness of the various forms of interaction. The examples above of the new foodbank and the congregational fast illustrate those connections. In addition, the best communication in our time will take into account the challenging fact that most individuals will use only some of the available ways to communicate, not all of them, so congregational leaders need to be thinking of multiple ways to get information out. One more illustration, a mission trip, will provide some additional options.

A Mission Trip & Online Connections

Sandra just returned from Honduras, where she worked on a Habitat for Humanity house for a week with a group from her church. When she returned, she wrote up a summary of her week-long experience and sent it to her friends by email. The experience was deeply transformative for her. God's daily help with the physical labor in hot weather, the companionship with the others from her church, and the tender connections with Honduran people all worked together to give her a heightened sense of God's goodness and God's presence with her. She brought something of that awareness of God back with her when she came home, and her letter expressed her awe at the way God had blessed the trip and the participants.

More congregations are engaging in short term mission trips to locations within and outside their own countries. Many participants find mission trips to be significant learning experiences. Learning can be enhanced by intentional actions before, during and after the trips, and online communication can play a significant part in all those three stages.

The first stage of a mission trip is recruitment. Often a handful of people within the congregation are motivated to make the trip happen, and they dive into recruitment, trying to get people to sign up for the trip. Recruitment can be an excellent time to

engage in transformative education for the wider congregation as well. That education might focus on the physical or spiritual needs of people in the location of the mission trip, the activities of the churches in that place or the way that risk functions in the life of faith. Testimonies from previous trips, which are great recruiting tools, are also opportunities to encourage the congregation to reflect more deeply on the way God works in other parts of the world.

Intentional effort during the recruiting phase can meld recruiting and education. As congregation members learn more, they can be encouraged to pray and give financially, even if they can't come along on the trip.

Online components during the recruiting phase might include information and testimonies about the trip, as well as the educational components, on the church website. A minister's blog, or the blog of the church's mission committee, could highlight the spiritual significance of the trip. Links to that information could be sent out by email and posted on Facebook and Twitter.

As the team assembles, training of the team before the trip is another opportunity to nurture spiritual growth. Links to online articles about the destination for the trip can be provided to the whole congregation on the website, with special encouragement to the team members to read the articles. Prayer together before the trip builds unity and trust in God. Fund raising for the trip and recruitment of prayer partners can be spiritually transformative activities for the team members, and they need encouragement to view them that way.

A mission trip team might want to consider using a wiki as a part of their preparation. A wiki is a website where numerous people can work collaboratively on a document, each one making changes from their own home, on their own time. Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia, is the most famous wiki, but a wiki can also be a simple one-page document. If the team has a task to do on their trip that will involve assembling and packing materials of any kind, one person might use a wiki to post a preliminary list of things to take on the trip. Others can log on and sign up for the things they can bring, as well as add things to the list. A wiki is much less cumbersome than a flurry of emails circulating around the group. A wiki makes tracking the progress on the list much easier than emails.

On the trip itself, team members may want to use the internet to upload photos so people at home can see what's happening. Options for places to upload the photos include photo-sharing websites like Flickr or social networking websites like Facebook. The website administrator might be willing to post photos on the church website, but that process is slower than the immediate availability of photos on Flickr and Facebook. For the website, a person back home has to find the time to upload photos from an email, while photo-sharing websites and social networking websites enable viewers to see the photos as soon as they are posted.

A blog can be another good way to show photos and tell stories about the trip while it is happening. The team on the trip can set up a blog before leaving home, and prayer requests can be posted before and during the trip, along with stories and comments about the trip. Links to the blog can be posted on Facebook, Twitter and on the church website.

After the trip, the whole congregation that has participated in the trip vicariously, by looking at photos and reading blog posts about the trip, needs further encouragement to continue learning from the trip. And the team members also need encouragement for further reflection as well. This can be done through testimonies in worship, which may be transcribed or recorded and put on the church website. A longer debriefing time by the team members, with an invitation to their family and friends as well as the wider congregation, can be held, with online invitations to that gathering.

A wiki could also be used for debriefing after the trip. "What we did" and "what we learned" could be two topics for a document that the team members work on collaboratively on the wiki. After the document is finished, it could be put on the church website for the congregation to read.

Mission trips by individuals and groups within a congregation can be an excellent opportunity for the whole congregation to engage with broader issues related to justice and evangelism. Intentional action before, during and after the trip make broader learning possible. The congregational website, blogs, wikis, and photo-sharing websites enrich the experience for everyone.

A Few Implications

An effective church website requires careful design and time, as well as money. Website hosting costs money, and good website design and upkeep can also involve costs. Blogs, wikis, photo-sharing and social networking websites are free. It may be tempting to believe that a website can be dispensed with in the light of all these other free online tools.

At this time, nothing can replace a church website as a place for presenting comprehensive information about who a congregation is and what it values. Blogs, Facebook and Twitter posts, as well as emails, can highlight current issues and events and provide snippets of interesting information, but the pattern of posting makes a difference: information is posted or sent, then disappears behind later posts. Websites are like anchors, holding information in place, while the other forms of communication have a more ephemeral quality to them because previous posts are not easily visible. They can send people to the website for deeper material that is posted there. Websites, at their best, provide a systematic, well-organized presentation of the congregation's priorities and values.

All events and congregational activities have the potential to be learning experiences that contribute to the faith development of congregation members of all ages. Wise use of traditional means of communication—such as sermons, testimonies, newsletters and bulletins—accompanied by careful use of electronic means of communication—such as websites, blogs, social networking, and wikis—will enable a rich focus on lifelong faith development.

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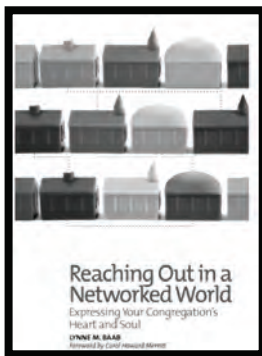www.vox.com
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Reaching Out in A Networked World: Expressing Your Congregation's Heart and Soul

Lynne Baab (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2008) [$18]]

In *Reaching Out in a Networked World*, Lynne Baab examines technologies such as websites, blogs, online communities, and desktop publishing. She demonstrates how a congregation can evaluate these tools and appropriately use them to communicate its heart and soul, to convey its identity and values both within and outside the congregation. Baab urges congregation leaders to reflect on the way they communicate. The recent explosion in communication technologies offers many new ways to present values and identity. Baab seeks to help leaders use these new technologies with more precision, flair, and consistency. When congregations are intentional about communicating who they are and what they value, people in the wider community can get a clear and coherent picture of the congregation and its mission. Newcomers and visitors are more likely to see why faith commitments matter and why and how they might become involved in this congregation, while current members and leaders will greatly benefit from having a unified vision of the congregation's heart and soul.

Moving Online: Faith Formation in a Digital Age

Julie Anne Lytle

A t the end of most stories on the nightly news, the anchor encourages a visit to the station's website to learn more about breaking stories. Movie previews offered before the feature-length presentation at the Cineplex provide URLs for viewers to find out more about the cast and production process. Increasingly, newspapers and novels are weaving paper-based story lines with digital ones hoping to catch the "eyeballs" the United States' 227, 719,000 Internet users (Nielsen Online,_www.internetworldst ats.com/am/us.htm). In addition to desktop and laptop computers, mobile devices like cell phones and PDAs (personal digital assistants) now offer the ability to carry personal information and connect to the Internet from almost anywhere at almost any time. With almost 75% of the United States population online, it feels as if *everyone* and *everything* is moving online.

Within this digital context, the 2004 *Faith Online* report (www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2004/Faith-Online.aspx) from the Pew Internet and American Life Project documents that 64% of wired Americans have used the Internet for spiritual or religious purposes. Therefore, it is no surprise that faith community leaders are considering whether or not and how to incorporate the Internet and other digital tools in their faith communities' toolkits. The challenge these leaders face is recognizing the unique characteristics of what is technically possible, and matching the right media and methodology with their desired goal.

My hope is that this article will help "digital immigrants" (those of us born in the era of rotary telephones and manual typewriters) catch up with "digital natives" (those who have always had desktop and palm-sized computers). After briefly reflecting on the "why" and "what" of faith formation, we will wade through the vast array of technological possibilities to assess their potential for faith formation. I will explain my mantra—Message, Method, *then* Media—for making decisions so that digital tools are appropriately used, and offer concrete examples of ways faith communities can appropriately use digital resources to provide faith formation online.

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The Great Commission: Story-Keeping, Story-Telling, and Story-Making

Mark and Matthew describe the Great Commission in slightly different but interconnected ways that are essential characteristics of faith communities. Mark (16:15-16), with its emphasis on *proclamation,* invites all of creation into the story of God's salvific love. More *information*-oriented, it is a way of keeping the story of God's presence alive through the use of human communications whether oral traditions, written letters, radio and television broadcasts, or digital messages. From this perspective, communities are called to collect the wisdom of the past and present and pass it to the next.

Matthew (28:19-20), with its emphasis on *faith formation,* directs Jesus' disciples, and us their descendants, to go into the world to make disciples. Following this view, the second century Christian apologist Tertullian claimed that "Christians are made, not born," which is a *formation*-, and ideally *transformation*-, oriented approach. It recognizes that e*verything* a community says and does—prayer and worship, teaching and learning, advocacy and outreach—converges to "make disciples" and shape belief.

These two views of the Great Commission define discipleship as the means by which Jesus and his teachings will perpetuate and set a direction for communal forms of faith formation. Taken together, they unite our knowing and being such that each informs the other and becomes an invitation to new initiates and longtime adherents calling them into a journey of lifelong faith. As neophytes and seasoned members walk together in faith, information *about* Christ and the community which follows his teachings become the foundation of a way of being and of being transformed. By hearing the Christian message and learning communal mores, all members of the community claim a Christian identity, embody Christian beliefs, and give witness to their faith in a way which, ideally, invites others to join them.

One way to imagine this is to consider how Christians function as story-keepers, story-tellers, and story-makers. As story-keepers, community members maintain the wisdom of their tradition and orient the community, as lay theologian Verna Dozier names it, toward the "Dream of God." As story-tellers, community members share this vision of life with God and invite others into their understanding of it. As story-makers, community members move from faith to action, putting their beliefs into practice, and adding their witness to the Christian Story.

Together, story-keeping, story-telling, and story-making reveal a whole ecology of faith. By interacting with and supporting one another, individuals in a faith community deepen their relationships as they prayerfully engage challenging ideas and issues, gain a vision of life greater than themselves, and go out into the world seeking to create and enact it. The result is that new members and longtime adherents are informed about, formed in, and transformed by faith primarily by their participation in it.

Contemporary Dilemma and Digital Response

This vision of proclaiming the gospel and making Christians is a highly interactive, relational process. It assumes commitment by members to one another and encourages their full, conscious, and active participation in the faith community. But what happens when time is short and community members can't gather? What happens when individuals are so stretched by imposed and imagined contemporary demands that they are restricted from engaging with others in their faith community? Does a community's story-keeping, story-telling, and story-making cease just because contemporary circumstances are making it more difficult to engage with one another in face-to-face settings? I hope not!

Rather than lament the loss of a 1950s model where churches were typically the center of social and cultural life in America, the response for many faith communities is to move some elements of community life online. Tapping the new digital tools and social networking technologies, they are finding that many aspects of the story-keeping, story-telling, and story-making processes can continue. Their efforts demonstrate that moving online both is possible, and often desirable.

To move online successfully has some requirements. In addition to identifying and keeping up with the ever-expanding range of technologies available, church leaders need to learn about the

opportunities and limitations of each technology so as to be able to differentiate between the options available to them. These leaders also need to prayerfully reflect on how these technologies could appropriately be integrated into their ecology of faith. These three steps are described in more detail in the next sections.

Step 1. Identifying the Ever-Expanding Range of New Technologies

It seems as if every day brings new terms for technological innovations into our vocabulary. While most parishioners are familiar with email and websites, the "net" lexicon, with its catchy names and descriptions of divergent functions, can confuse even the bravest digital immigrant. This makes the often uncomfortable notion of having Internet-mediated interactions as a basis of one's relationships with others even more overwhelming. To reduce anxiety, I encourage faith community members to develop a basic glossary of technology terms. Here are some of the most common as a start.

- **Avatar**: a representation of ones' real or idealized self in three dimensional virtual games and virtual worlds. Derived from the Sanskrit word *avatara*, its loose translation is "incarnation."
- **Blog:** short for weblog—a web-based collection of journal-like entries listed with most recent on top. Most include text, audio, and video clips (sometimes called vlogs). Topics range from personal to professional and can be informal or formal, humorous or serious. Online services, typically free, provide the basic software and infrastructure for individuals and communities to create their blogs. These include Blogger, TypePad and WordPress.
- **Chat**: software embedded in a website that enables two or more people to discuss topics live by typing words and phrases to each other. This is similar to instant messaging (IM), which is generally limited to communication between two people.
- **Hosted Service**: **data or programs contained on a** computer at a remote site that a user accesses through a network (the

Internet). Most hosted service providers offer maintenance, updates, and other infrastructure in exchange for a low monthly or annual fee.
- **Open Source Software**: publicly available software that may be copied or modified without license or payment. Linux is an operating system developed by a group of software designers to replace operating systems like Microsoft Windows. Other open source software includes web browser Mozilla Firefox, course management Moosel, and Microsoft Office competitor OpenOffice.
- **Podcast**: an audio recording that can be listened to online or downloaded to one's computer, iPod, or other MP3 (a type of audio file) player.
- **Social-networking**: a method of connecting people using a collection of Internet-based tools for synchronous (at the same time) and asynchronous (time-delayed) interaction. For example, Facebook is a social networking site that enables individuals to post information about themselves, leave comments on a "wall" or bulletin board for anyone to see, interact live using chat, upload pictures and create photo albums. Some social networking sites link people with similar interests. For example, LinkedIn and Plaxo are used for developing business contacts; Facebook, MySpace and Friendster are more typically used for social interaction.
- **Streaming Media**: a live or recorded "stream" or transmission of audio or video data that can be played on a user's computer without being downloaded. This method typically is faster for the viewer and enables audio and video producers to protect their creation. Sometimes streaming media require a plug-in, like QuickTime or RealMedia, others you can use on demand like YouTube.
- **Threaded Discussion**: one of the earliest forms of social networking, software is embedded in a website so that two or more people can have an asynchronous conversation by typing and leaving messages in a space that others can respond to at a later time. It is called "threaded" because conversations are typically organized by topic or thread. Threaded discussions are also known as discussion groups and bulletin

boards. Some blogs invite reader comment and so blend into threaded discussions.

- **Tweet**: a short text message (140 characters or less) sent using Twitter.
- **Twitter:** a free software application that enables users to send a short text message (140 characters or less) and receive short messages from others.
- **Vodcast/Video Podcast**: a video recording offered the same way as a podcast. YouTube is a popular site for watching videos online.
- **Web-conference** or **Webinar:** a live, synchronous conference where participants can see and hear each other. Audio may be offered over the Internet (VOIP—voice over Internet protocol) or by telephone. Adobe Connect, Skype, WebEx and Wimba are some of the products which allow two or more people to conference online.
- **Website:** typically a static site which displays text, audio and/or video information.
- **Wiki**: community publishing tool that allows multiple people to create an asynchronous website. Typically text-based, it may be limited to a specific set of authors or open to the public so anyone can add information.

This is just a start. As digital immigrants gain confidence in understanding and evaluating these digital tools, they can explore many other functional elements, like tags (keywords that describe content on a website), and tools, like RSS ("Really Simple Syndication"—a format for storing online information so that it can be translated by lots of different types of software and read using different types of hardware). Community members also could create a wiki to collect and disseminate their findings.

Step 2. Differentiating Options

Beyond identifying and defining technology tools, the next step for faith communities is to gain an appreciation of the inherent functional opportunities and limitations of each tool. Faith community members should consider at least four sets of distinguishing characteristics: 1) broadcast or interactive, 2) synchronous (live, or at the same time) or asynchronous (stored or delayed), 3) open or secure (password protected), and 4) media type (text, audio, still pictures, combined audio and video).

The first decision is whether the faith community wants to simply share information or to encourage dialogue between information recipients. Broadcast-oriented technologies are designed for one-way communication—from a sender to many receivers. For example, most parish websites are designed as static displays of information, "broadcasting" it to whomever happens upon the site. These websites typically provide a description of the faith community and its vision or mission, introduce the pastor(s) and/or pastoral leadership, list hours of services and weekly activities, and archive seasonal meditations and weekly sermons. With the likely exception of email information, they do not invite feedback or encourage a response.

In contrast, interactive technologies are designed for many-to-many communication—anyone can be a source or a recipient. When a faith community adds threaded discussions or chat capabilities, they encourage community members to create as well as respond to questions posted online. Congregational websites with interactive tools often include opportunities to comment on sermons or minutes from monthly meetings, solicit prayer requests, and encourage discussion about theological topic or a change in community practice.

The second decision is whether or not the faith community wants or needs everyone to participate in an interactive process at the same time. Synchronous technologies assume everyone will be present during a live session. For example, a community may schedule a series of educational sessions with a presenter. Live engagement enables interaction among and between the participants and presenter. For extroverted thinkers—individuals who "think out loud" and process information by engaging with others or other some other external means (journaling, etc.), synchronous sessions are essential.

Depending on software, it may be possible to record the session for later review by participants or viewing by those unable to attend the live sessions. This is an example of asynchronous, or "on-demand," use. The benefit of asynchronous technologies is that participants can schedule their engagement at times convenient to their lives; the limitation is that they do not have opportunities to question the presenter or reflect on the material

with others at the same time. For introverted thinkers—individuals who need time to reflect and consider a response before speaking, asynchronous sessions are essential.

The level of security required is the third decision for faith communities to consider as they decide whether or not and how to move online. Most digital tools enable the site designers to designate whether a website or web tool is available to everyone who finds the site, or is restricted to particular members. Social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace as well as blogging tools like Blogger and TypePad enable users to limit viewers. This is particularly important if there are privacy concerns (such as the use of pictures or discussion of sensitive topics).

The types of media communities choose for story-keeping, story-telling, and story-making also impact the messages sent and received. Consider how some stories are best read as text, with its inherent ability to allow us distance from the message in order to analyze various aspects and discern a path of action. Other stories are enhanced by engaging pictures and the tonal quality of a voice narrating it. Still other stories are told best as a documentary combining audio and video to capture an event or describe a situation.

In addition to these major elements, faith communities also need to be aware of other factors as they consider moving online. For example, do community members have the technical proficiency and audience awareness to create and maintain the type of resources they want to provide? Are there access issues including economics (individually and communally) that impact investment in digital technologies, network availability to distribute a message, and physical abilities like visual impairments that direct particular forms of communication sending and receiving? Similarly, are there concerns about sharing a community's intellectual property or crossing the boundaries of copyright law?

The greater the clarity a community has with respect to their goals, the better they can assess whether or not to move online, and if yes, to determine how. I recommend using the mantra "message, method, *then* media" as a process to help communities determine the best ways incorporate digital media in their parish toolkit.

Step 3. Making Choices - Message, Method, *then* Media

"Message, Method, *then* Media" is a three-stage process designed to help communities avoid the ever-present potential of letting the "tail wag the dog." In an environment that fosters the development and deployment of a dizzying array of technological innovations, pastoral leaders risk choosing a popular medium only to realize that it cannot assist the community in meeting its mission. By starting with message, then moving through method and media, faith communities can avoid chasing the latest fad and exerting a lot of time and energy in the wrong direction. Additionally, by defining these elements and asking particular questions about each, faith communities will ensure that what they believe (espoused theology) matches what they do (operative theology) and leads to their intended outcome.

For most faith communities, *message* is defined particularly to align with a specific community goal or objective. It should also correlate more broadly with a church's mission and reflect both the theological framework and orienting vision a community uses to make decisions and direct action. Either way, how the community defines the message impacts the direction and scope of subsequent decisions.

Method refers the type of engagement and interaction which is needed and/or desired as part of a communications effort. Many of those responsible for proclaiming the Gospel and creating faith formation opportunities begin with the assumption that to be relevant in contemporary society requires moving online. While often true, this is an assumption that must be evaluated early in a community's decision-making. The existence of digital tools and online resources does not mean that a faith community should use them. Even when practical considerations of resources, economics, and the like allow for an online implementation, story-keeping, story-telling, and story-making processes require context-sensitive choices. Fears about losing community and relational aspects of faith formation require faith communities to be deliberate and intentional when asking if there is anything that *must* be done face-to-face along with determining what *could* be done online. For

example, we learn a lot about one another through non-verbal communication—body language, gestures, eye-contact, and the like. Although web conferencing can relay some of this information, physical presence remains the preferred mode for initiating a new relationship. Other examples relate to prayer and worship. While most faith communities concede that it is possible to pray and share ritual practices together online, most sacramental communities find the notion of digital Eucharistic celebrations challenging.

If an online method is appropriate for the message, then the various methods can be evaluated. As implied by the discussion of broadcast/interactive, synchronous/ asynchronous, and secure/open, methods can encourage and restrict interaction, demand attention at specific times or allow participants to make timing decisions, and encourage an individual or community's passive or active involvement as a message is proclaimed and embodied.

Media refers to the tool or tool combination chosen to express a message. The media used to implement the message have inherent characteristics that can enhance, nuance, or detract from the message expressed. For example, if a task force simply wants to promote a Lenten Soup Supper or encourage the community's youth to help prepare an elderly member's house for spring, the goal is to get the word out and the community will likely need multiple broadcast tools: notice on the parish website, email sent directly to members' accounts, and tweets to members' cell phone. If instead the task force wants input about the type of educational program, or to find out what tools and skills are available to provide home repair, the message requires feedback which will lead to different choices. By first identifying message and method, the choice of medium becomes more obvious, and church leaders can ensure continuity between beliefs and practices and avoid distraction by the latest new application or digital tool.

Blending Spaces with Virtual Places

Using the mantra of message, method, *then* media, can help determine whether or not and how a faith community can best integrate digital resources. With the hope of developing sustainable models for proclaiming the good news and making Christians, many are developing *hybrid* or *blended* models of community life that incorporate both face-to-face with online interaction. For them, ensuring access to the social, spiritual, emotional, educational, and outreach-oriented resources of a faith community is essential. By maintaining focus on their particular message, and the unique dimensions of method and media choices, faith communities can incorporate the contributions of both *place* (tangible, finite, physical) and *space* (intangible, infinite, virtual) in their efforts to inform, form, and transform Christians. As faith communities consider their call to proclaim the Gospel and form people in faith as well as consider whether or not and how to move online, it can be helpful to examine how other communities have used their digital toolkits for story-keeping, story-telling, and story-making.

Virtual Church Services

Most digital immigrants grew up knowing that there were televised church services. Along with broadcasts of the *Hour of Power* and the Old *Time Gospel Hour* that brought the Good News into our homes were televangelists including Jimmy Swaggert, Oral Roberts, Rex Humbard, and Aimee Semple McPherson. The cost of producing and distributing these weekly television programs is prohibitively expensive for most faith communities making it impossible to consider televised broadcasting as an option for their story-keeping, story-telling, and story-making efforts. This has changed with the development of relatively inexpensive digital cameras, personal computer-based video production software, and the Internet. Today, many faith communities share their services online.

The Internet is being used to distribute a broad assortment of live and on-demand as well as broadcast and interactive religious services for viewing on computer monitors, iPods, and cell phones. The *Hour of Power* is still in production and a new generation of preachers including Joel Osteen, Joyce Meyer, Max Lucado, and Ed Young are sharing the Good News online (See www.livechurchservices.com and www.christianipod.net/about-us.html).

Many communities that worship together in a physical church also share their common prayer with those at a distance using digital technologies. One example is the First Baptist Church in Waldoboro, Maine, which broadcasts a live worship

service every Sunday at 11 am ET and provides an assortment of recorded worship services and education classes (www.livestream.com/ fbcwaldoboro). They are using a hosted service provider, LiveStream (www.livestream.com), which provides the church with online video production tools and incorporates chat, Facebook, and twitter with its video stream for a small fee.

Always open for the virtual visitor, Saint Joseph Catholic Church in Dalton, Georgia offers a low-cost, no-edit virtual experience. This community apparently installed a camera and microphones connected directly to the Internet to distribute a permanent stream of their community's sanctuary (www.sjccdalton.com/mass feed.html). Designed to broadcast the Mass when it is offered seven times on weekends, a visit at other times enables Internet surfers a glimpse of whatever is happening in the life of faith. When I visited their site on a Monday evening, I was able to listen to the Spanish-speaking choir practice and hear the joy of their laugher as they shared stories between songs.

Faith Communities Offer More than Worship

Sunday worship is the heart and soul of most faith communities; however, reflective of religious educator Maria Harris' notion that "a church does not have an educational program, it is one" (*Fashion Me A People*, 47), communal worship is not the exclusive form for Christian story-keeping, story-telling, and story-making. Faith communities also engage in teaching and learning, service and outreach, guidance and healing, enablement and advocacy.

Father Matthew Presents (www.youtube.com/ user/FatherMatthew) on *YouTube*, has become a popular site for learning about Christianity in general and its Episcopal expression in particular. Using hand-puppets, items from around the church, and quick wit, the Rev. Matthew Moretz started distributing these quirky videocasts from Christ Church, Rye, NY, in 2006. Gaining sophistication and production polish each year, his presentations range from his current introduction to the kneelers in his church (their origins and artistic theological symbolisms) to explanations of the sacraments like the Holy Eucharist. Methodologically constructed as a broadcast medium, *YouTube* also provides a

bulletin board-like space called "channel comments" for viewers to post responses to his videos.

Understanding that faith formation generally requires more interactive forms of human communication, many faith communities also grasp the significance of emerging social networking tools and combine them with older online technologies for community building and more dialogic learning. Many parishes and denominational offices are using tools like Facebook (www/facebook.com) and Ning (www.ning.com). The result is a move from static paper directories displaying a picture and contact information for faith community members to dynamic online spaces with extensive personal profiles, still pictures and video clips. Individual members also interact with others using Instant Messaging and web conferencing. One example is *Anglimergent,* self-described as "a relational network of Anglicans engaging emerging church and mission." Their Ning site (http://anglimergent.ning. com/groups) both promotes its vision of a new way of being church and supports those learning and creating new forms of Christian community. Blending broadcast and interactive elements, curious visitors and longtime activists can explore published resources, meet fellow prophets, view innovative liturgies, and discuss provocative topics.
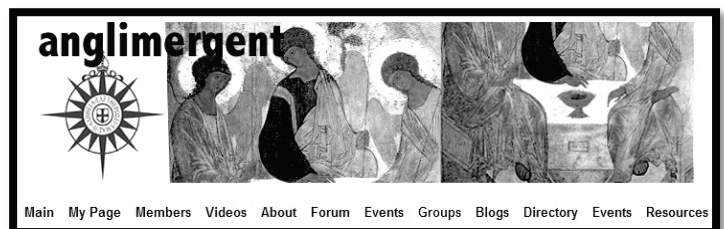
Churches are also using the Internet to offer care and inspire outreach. An older site by Internet standards, *OnceCatholic* (http://oncecatholic.org) was designed to help heal the hurts which led individuals to leave the Roman Catholic Church. Launched in 2001 by the Franciscans and Saint Anthony Messenger Press, it has continuously maintained and archived asynchronous conversations about the most common reasons people leave the church: marriage issues, spiritual hunger, drifting away, quarrels with church personnel, feeling excluded, abortion, and church teachings. The site includes a "Find-a-Church" tool and seeks to help those who were "once Catholic" find a way home.

The Rev. Mark Hanson, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America's (ELCA) presiding bishop, is using online technology to create a space for dialogue in a tension-filled time for his church. Coming on the heels of their General Assembly, which decided in August 2009 to support the blessing of same gender relationships/marriages and to permit lesbians and gay men who are in same gender marriages (committed relationships) to be ordained ministers, Hanson is hosting a series of live online Town Hall Forums (www.elca.org/townhall) with his community across the country and potentially around the world. First launched on December 6, 2009 with over 2200 viewers from the United States and seven other countries, a second occurred March 6, 2010. Designed for transparency and interaction, Hanson used a combination of a live video cast with chat, Facebook Connect, tweets, and email questions. Shortly after the event concluded, a recording was also posted online with a series of slides and a presentation summary for later viewing.

Online Town Hall Forum
with ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson

You're invited to attend a one-hour live webcast Sunday, March 7, at 5 p.m. EST with Bishop Hanson and ELCA members from across the country.

TOWN HALL FORUM
with ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson

March 7, 2010, at 5 p.m. EST

Visit www.elca.org/townhall at 5 p.m. EST to join the conversation.

Putting It All Together: Story-Keeping, Story-Telling, and Story-Making

Anyone familiar with marketing and advertising will tell us that for it to be heard, a message needs to be repeated over and over again using a variety of media. This is the principle behind the expansive communications efforts of Trinity Wall Street (www.trinitywallstreet.org/congregation/online), one of the oldest Episcopal Churches in the United States. Established in New York City in 1696, it pioneered church radio broadcasting with a Christmas Eve radio transmission in 1922 and has had a long history of incorporating new technologies in its effort to spread the Good News and form people in faith. Their communications outreach expanded in 1985 when they built a state-of-the-art audio and video room and continues today as they maintain a vast collection of broadcast and interactive as well as live and on-demand digital features to support distant members and reach out to an online congregation.

Creatively blending face-to-face and online opportunities, Trinity's offerings include live and on-demand worship services (including service booklets) and musical offerings, along with an extensive web archive of programs about Faith and Culture, Faith in Action, and Faith Formation and Education. In hope of encouraging feedback for and dialogue with the week's preacher, remote viewers are encouraged to interact online through a threaded discussion. Surfers are also asked to make comments on a collection of blogs maintained by Trinity staff and community members. Additionally, the church sponsors local, national, and international mission and service trips that provide reports online and stories created by their senior producer and shared by creative individuals around the globe are also collected. Not possible in every community, Trinity Wall Street provides a compelling example of what faith communities can do with an expansive vision and extensive financial resources.

Conclusion
Remember the Guidelines

Obviously there is an ever-expanding list of tools and creative options for utilizing them as faith communities strive to live into the Great Commission's mandates. Proclaiming the Gospel and "making Christians" through story-keeping, story-telling, and story-making is limited only by a community's vision and budget. To assist pastoral leaders as they decide whether or not and how to move online to provide informational, formational, and ideally transformational elements, I have offered a three-step process.

1. **Identifying the ever-expanding range of new technologies**
2. **Differentiating options**
3. **Making choices: message, method, *then* media**

My goal has been to remind communities to prayerfully reflect upon their mission and goals as they develop the right mix of elements. By being attentive to the whole ecology of faith and intentional in their design, faith communities can create participatory structures for spontaneous and planned interaction that lead to the embrace and enactment of the dream of God.

Recommended Resources

Bailey, Brian. *The Blogging Church: Sharing the Story of Your Church through Blogs*. San Francisco: John Wiley and Sons, 2007.

Estes, Douglas. *SimChurch: Being the Church in the Virtual World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009.

Gailardetz, Rick. *Transforming Our Days: Spirituality, Community, and Liturgy in a Technological Culture*. New York: Crossroad Publishing, 2000.

Hanson, Jarice. *24/7: How Cell Phones and the Internet Change the Way we Live, Work, and Play*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007.

Hipps, Shane. *Flickering Pixels: How Technology Shapes Your Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009.

Miller, M. Rex. *The Millennium Matrix: Reclaiming the Past, Reframing the Future of the Church.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004.

Palfrey, John and Urs Gasser. *Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives.* New York: Basic Books, 2008.

Tapscott, Don. *Grown Up Digital: How the Net Generation is Changing Your World*. New York: McGraw Hill, 2009.

Young, Kimberly and Patrice Klausing. *Breaking Free of the Web: Catholics and Internet Addiction*. Cincinnati: Saint Anthony Messenger Press, 200).

Web Resource

The Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion, Internet Guide to Religion: www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/resources.

# Free Online Resources: The New Digital Media

- "The Networked Congregation: Embracing the Spirit of Experimentation." Andrea Useem. (www.congregationalresources.org/Networked/About.asp)
- "Ten Top Tips for Teaching with New Media" Edutopia. (www.edutopia.org/ten-top-tips)
- "Generation M²: Media in the Lives of 8- to 18-Year-Olds." A Kaiser Family Foundation Study. January 2010 (www.kff.org/entmedia/mh012010pkg.cfm)
- "Pockets of Potential—Using Mobile Technologies to Promote Children's Learning." Caroly Shuler. January 2009. The Joan Ganz Gooney Center at Sesame Workshop (www.joanganzcooneycenter.org/pdf/pockets_of_potential.pdf)
- "Pow! Wham!—Children, Digital Media, & Our Nation's Future." Rima Shore. May 2008. The Joan Ganz Gooney Center at Sesame Workshop (www.joanganzcooneycenter.org/pdf/Cooney_Challenge_advance.pdf)
- "Living and Learning with New Media: Summary of Findings from the Digital Youth Project." Mizuko Ito, et al. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. November 2008. (http://digitalyouth.ischool.berkeley.edu/report)
- "The Future of Learning Institutions in a Digital Age." Cathy N. Davidson and David Theo Goldberg. 2009. (http://mitpress.mit.edu/books/chapters/Future_of_Learning.pdf)
- Reimaging Learning in the 21st Century. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. (www.macfound.org)
- "Apple Classrooms of Tomorrow—Today: Learning in the 21st Century." April 2008. (http://images.apple.com/education/docs/leaders/Apple-ACOT2Whitepaper.pdf)

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1. "Generations Online in 2009"

(http://www.pewinternet.org/Experts/~/link.aspx?_id=258EE0426A7A487C9BEDAEF9286AD10E&_z=z)
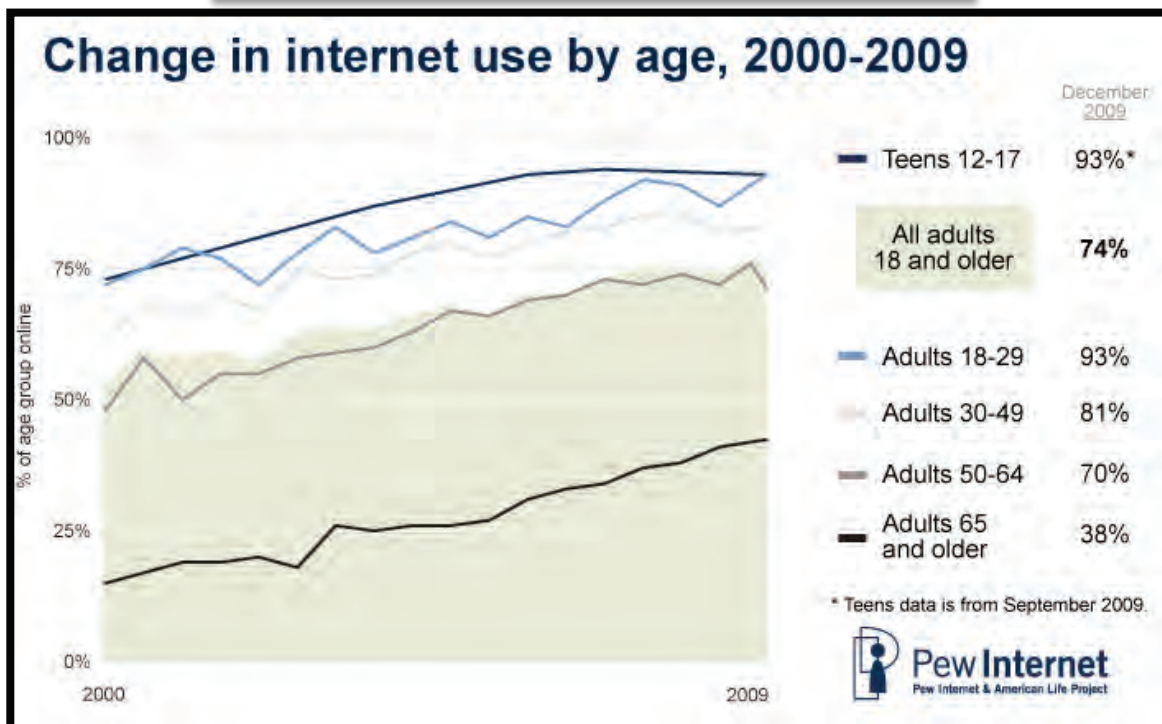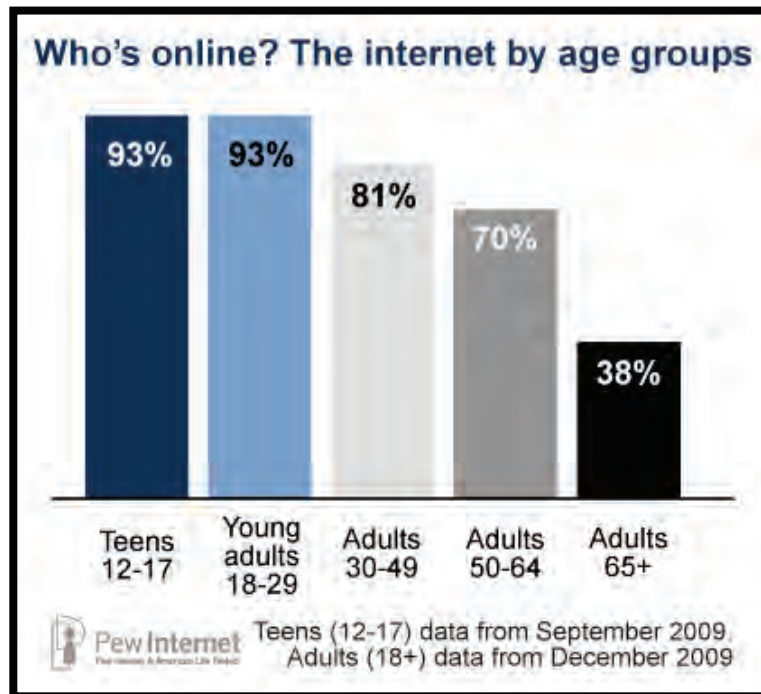
Generational Differences in Online Activities

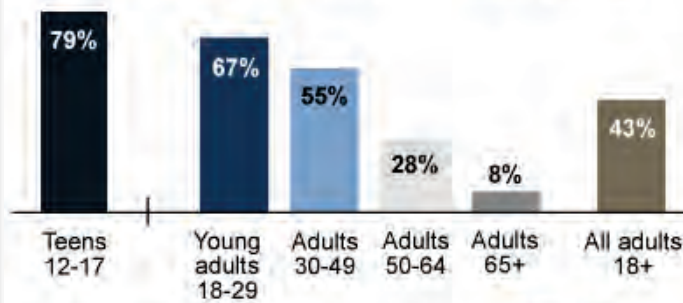|	Online Teens^ (12-17)	Gen Y (18-32)	Gen X (33-44)	Younger Boomers (45-54)	Older Boomers (55-63)	Silent Generation (64-72)	G.I. Generation (73+)	All Online Adults^^
Go online	**93%**	**87%**	**82%**	**79%**	**70%**	**56%**	**31%**	**74%**
Teens and Gen Y are more likely to engage in the following activities compared with older users:								
Play games online	78	50	38	26	28	25	18	35
Watch videos online	57	72	57	49	30	24	14	52
Get info about a job	30~	64	55	43	36	11	10	47
Send instant messages	68	59	38	28	23	25	18	38
Use social networking sites	65	67	36	20	9	11	4	35
Download music	59	58	46	22	21	16	5	37
Create an SNS profile	55	60	29	16	9	5	4	29
Read blogs	49	43	34	27	25	23	15	32
Create a blog	28	20	10	6	7	6	6	11
Visit a virtual world	10	2	3	1	1	1	0	2
Activities where Gen X users or older generations dominate:								
Get health info	28	68	82	74	81	70	67	75
Buy something online	38	71	80	68	72	56	47	71
Bank online	*	57	65	53	49	45	24	55
Visit govt sites	*	55	64	62	63	60	31	59
Get religious info	26~	31	38	42	30	30	26	35
And for some activities, the youngest and oldest cohorts may differ, but there is less variation overall:								
Use email	73	94	93	90	90	91	79	91
Use search engines	*	90	93	90	89	85	70	89
Research products	*	84	84	82	79	73	60	81
Get news	63	74	76	70	69	56	37	70
Make travel reservations	*	65	70	69	66	69	65	68
Research for job	*	51	59	57	48	33	9	51
Rate a person or product	*	37	35	29	30	25	16	32
Download videos	31~	38	31	21	16	13	13	27
Participate in an online auction	*	26	31	27	26	16	6	26
Download podcasts	19	25	21	19	12	10	10	19

^ Source for Online Teens data: Pew Internet & American Life Project Surveys conducted Oct.-Nov. 2006 and Nov. 2007-Feb. 2008. Margin of error for online teens is ± 4% for Oct.-Nov. 2006 and ±3% for Nov. 2007-Feb. 2008.

^^ Source for Online Adult data: Pew Internet & American Life Project Surveys conducted August 2006, Feb.-March 2007, Aug.-Sept. 2007, Oct.-Dec. 2007, May 2008, August 2008, November 2008, and December 2008. Margin of error for all online adults is ±3% for these surveys. The average margin of error for each age group can be considerably higher than ± 3%, particularly for the Matures and After Work age groups. See Methodology for average margins of error for each generational group.

~ Most recent teen data for these activities comes from the Pew Internet & American Life Project Teens and Parents Survey conducted Oct.-Nov. 2004. Margin of error is ± 4%.
* No teen data for these activities.

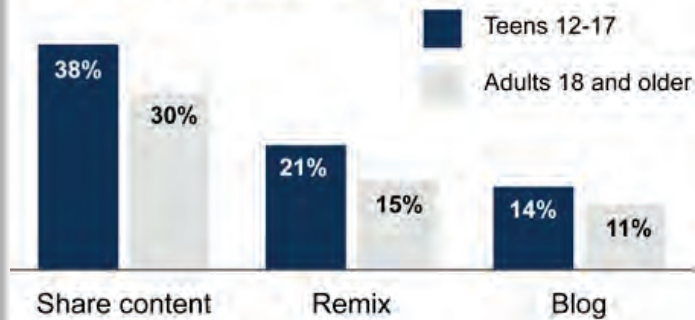Pew Internet
Pew Internet & American Life Project

Mp3 player ownership, by age group

Teens 12-17: 79%
Young adults 18-29: 67%
Adults 30-49: 55%
Adults 50-64: 28%
Adults 65+: 8%
All adults 18+: 43%

September 2009 data.
Pew Internet

Content creation activities

Teens 12-17
Adults 18 and older
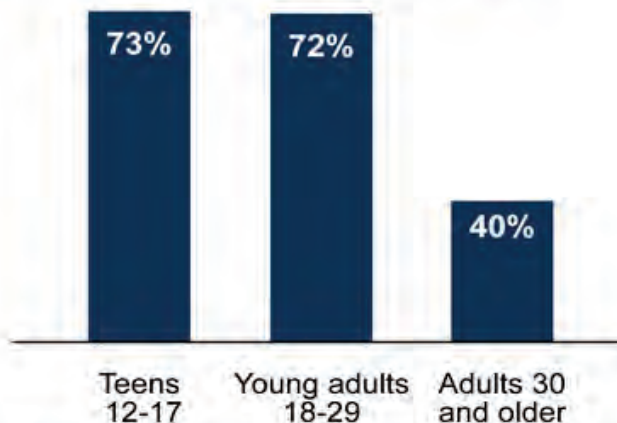
Share content — 38% / 30%
Remix — 21% / 15%
Blog — 14% / 11%

Pew Internet
Percentages are for internet users.
September 2009 data.

Teens and young adults converge in enthusiasm for social networking sites

Teens 12-17: 73%
Young adults 18-29: 72%
Adults 30 and older: 40%

Pew Internet
September 2009 data.

2. "Social Media and Mobile Internet Use among Teens and Young Adults" (2010)

(http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Social-Media-and-Young-Adults.aspx)

Since 2006, blogging has dropped among teens and young adults while simultaneously rising among older adults. As the tools and technology embedded in social networking sites change, and use of the sites continues to grow, youth may be exchanging 'macroblogging' for microblogging with status updates.

Blogging has declined in popularity among both teens and young adults since 2006. Blog commenting has also dropped among teens.

- 14% of online teens now say they blog, down from 28% of teen internet users in 2006.
- This decline is also reflected in the lower incidence of teen commenting on blogs within social networking websites; 52% of teen social network users report commenting on friends' blogs, down from the 76% who did so in 2006.
- By comparison, the prevalence of blogging within the overall adult internet population has remained steady in recent years. Pew Internet surveys since 2005 have consistently found that roughly one in ten online adults maintain a personal online journal or blog.

While blogging among adults as a whole has remained steady, the prevalence of blogging within specific age groups has changed dramatically in recent years. Specifically, a sharp decline in blogging by young adults has been tempered by a corresponding increase in blogging among older adults.

- In December 2007, 24% of online 18-29 year olds reported blogging, compared with 7% of those thirty and older.
- By 2009, just 15% of internet users ages 18-29 maintain a blog—a nine percentage point drop in two years. However, 11% of internet users ages thirty and older now maintain a personal blog.

Both teen and adult use of social networking sites has risen significantly, yet there are shifts and some drops in the proportion of teens using several social networking site features.

- 73% of wired American teens now use social networking websites, a significant increase from previous surveys. Just over half of online teens (55%) used social networking sites in November 2006 and 65% did so in February 2008.
- As the teen social networking population has increased, the popularity of some sites' features has shifted. Compared with SNS activity in February 2008, a smaller proportion of teens in mid-2009 were sending daily messages to friends via SNS, or sending bulletins, group messages or private messages on the sites.
- 47% of online adults use social networking sites, up from 37% in November 2008.
- Young adults act much like teens in their tendency to use these sites. Fully 72% of online 18-29 year olds use social networking websites, nearly identical to the rate among teens, and significantly higher than the 39% of internet users ages 30 and up who use these sites.
- Adults are increasingly fragmenting their social networking experience as a majority of those who use social networking sites—52%—say they have two or more different profiles. That is up from 42% who had multiple profiles in May 2008.
- Facebook is currently the most commonly-used online social network among adults.
- Among adult profile owners 73% have a profile on Facebook, 48% have a profile on MySpace and 14% have a LinkedIn profile.
- The specific sites on which young adults maintain their profiles are different from those used by older adults: Young profile owners are much more likely to maintain a profile on MySpace (66% of young profile owners do so, compared with just 36% of those thirty and older) but less likely to have a profile on the professionally-oriented LinkedIn (7% vs. 19%). In contrast, adult

profile owners under thirty and those thirty and older are equally likely to maintain a profile on Facebook (71% of young profile owners do so, compared with 75% of older profile owners).

Teens are not using Twitter in large numbers. While teens are bigger users of almost all other online applications, Twitter is an exception.

- 8% of internet users ages 12-17 use Twitter. This makes Twitter as common among teens as visiting a virtual world, and far less common than sending or receiving text messages as 66% of teens do, or going online for news and political information, done by 62% of online teens.
- Older teens are more likely to use Twitter than their younger counterparts; 10% of online teens ages 14-17 do so, compared with 5% of those ages 12-13.
- High school age girls are particularly likely to use Twitter. Thirteen percent of online girls ages 14-17 use Twitter, compared with 7% of boys that age.
- Using different wording, we find that 19% of adult internet users use Twitter or similar services to post short status updates and view the updates of others online.
- Young adults lead the way when it comes to using Twitter or status updating. One-third of online 18-29 year olds post or read status updates.

Wireless internet use rates are especially high among young adults, and the laptop has replaced the desktop as the computer of choice among those under thirty.

- 81% of adults between the ages of 18 and 29 are wireless internet users. By comparison, 63% of 30-49 year olds and 34% of those ages 50 and up access the internet wirelessly.
- Roughly half of 18-29 year olds have accessed the internet wirelessly on a laptop (55%) or on a cell phone (55%), and about one quarter of 18-29 year-olds (28%) have accessed the internet wirelessly on another device such as an e-book reader or gaming device.
- The impact of the mobile web can be seen in young adults' computer choices. Two-thirds of 18-29 year olds (66%) own a laptop or netbook, while 53% own a desktop computer. Young adults are the only age cohort for which laptop computers are more popular than desktops.
- African Americans adults are the most active users of the mobile web, and their use is growing at a faster pace than mobile internet use among white or Hispanic adults.

Cell phone ownership is nearly ubiquitous among teens and young adults, and much of the growth in teen cell phone ownership has been driven by adoption among the youngest teens.

- Three-quarters (75%) of teens and 93% of adults ages 18-29 now have a cell phone.
- In the past five years, cell phone ownership has become mainstream among even the youngest teens. Fully 58% of 12-year olds now own a cell phone, up from just 18% of such teens as recently as 2004.
- Internet use is near-ubiquitous among teens and young adults. In the last decade, the young adult internet population has remained the most likely to go online.
- 93% of teens ages 12-17 go online, as do 93% of young adults ages 18-29. One quarter (74%) of all adults ages 18 and older go online.
- Over the past ten years, teens and young adults have been consistently the two groups most likely to go online, even as the internet population has grown and even with documented larger increases in certain age cohorts (e.g. adults 65 and older).

Our survey of teens also tracked some core internet activities by those ages 12-17 and found:

- 62% of online teens get news about current events and politics online.
- 48% of wired teens have bought things online like books, clothing or music, up from 31% who had done so in 2000 when we first asked about this.
- 31% of online teens get health, dieting or physical fitness information from the internet. And 17% of online teens report they use the internet to gather information about health topics that are hard to discuss with others such as drug use and sexual health topics.

Resources

The New Digital Media
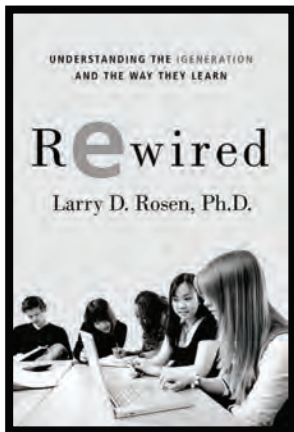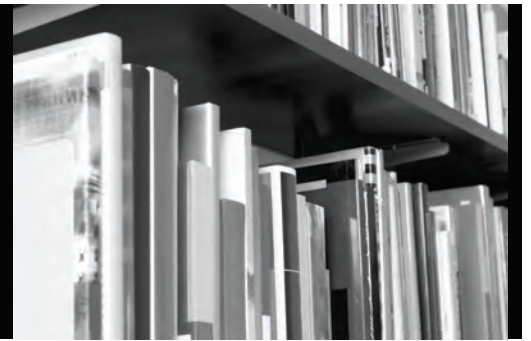
Rewired: Understanding the iGeneration and the Way They Learn
Larry D. Rosen (New York: Macmillan, 2010) [$17]

Look around at today's youth and you can see how technology has changed their lives. They lie on their beds and study while listening to mp3 players, texting and chatting online with friends, and reading and posting Facebook messages. How does the new, charged-up, multitasking generation respond to traditional textbooks and lectures? Are we effectively reaching today's technologically advanced youth? *Rewired* helps educators and parents teach to this new generation's radically different learning styles and needs. This book will also help parents learn what to expect from their "techie" children concerning school, homework, and even socialization. In short, it is a book that exposes the impact of generational differences on learning while providing strategies for engaging students at school and at home.

Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out: Kids Living and Learning with New Media
Mizuko Ito, et al. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010) [$35]

Conventional wisdom about young people's use of digital technology often equates generational identity with technology identity: today's teens seem constantly plugged in to video games, social networks sites, and text messaging. Yet there is little actual research that investigates the intricate dynamics of youth's social and recreational use of digital media. *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out* fills this gap, reporting on an ambitious three-year ethnographic investigation into how young people are living and learning with new media in varied settings—at home, in after school programs, and in online spaces. By focusing on media practices in the everyday contexts of family and peer interaction, the book views the relationship of youth and new media not simply in terms of technology trends but situated within the broader structural conditions of childhood and the negotiations with adults that frame the experience of youth in the United States. Integrating twenty-three different case studies—which include Harry Potter podcasting, video-game playing, music-sharing, and online romantic breakups—in a unique collaborative authorship style, *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out* is distinctive for its combination of in-depth description of specific group dynamics with conceptual analysis.
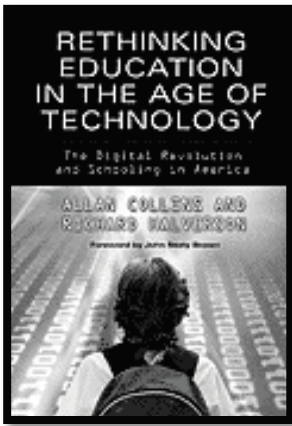
Rethinking Education in the Age of Technology

Allan Collins and Richard Halverson (New York: Teachers College Press, 2009) [$54]

The digital revolution has hit education, with more and more classrooms plugged into the whole wired world. But are schools making the most of new technologies? Are they tapping into the learning potential of today's Firefox/Facebook/cell phone generation? Have schools fallen through the crack of the digital divide? In *Rethinking Education in the Age of Technology*, Allan Collins and Richard Halverson argue that the knowledge revolution has transformed our jobs, our homes, our lives, and therefore must also transform our schools. Much like after the school-reform movement of the industrial revolution, our society is again poised at the edge of radical change. To keep pace with a globalized technological culture, we must rethink how we educate the next generation or America will be "left behind." This groundbreaking book offers a vision for the future of American education that goes well beyond the walls of the classroom to include online social networks, distance learning with "anytime, anywhere" access, digital home schooling models, video-game learning environments, and more.

Technology Tools for Your Ministry

Tim Welch (New London, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2008) [$16.95]

Tim Welch writes with wit, wisdom, and above all, clarity, about the technology tools now available to parish ministers. He tackles topics like having the right computer, the necessary software, and ways to effectively use the internet and email. He suggests tools for working with spreadsheets and managing data, ways to create and share PDFs, tips for using PowerPoint or Keynote, ideas for making your own presentations with iTunes and podcasts, methods of creating a parish Website, and so much more. This is a great introduction to the world of technology for parish ministers, but it is more than that. It is a challenging invitation to use every means available today to effectively announce the Reign of God.

Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts, and Other Powerful Web Tools for Classrooms (3rd Edition)

Will Richardson (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2010) [$31.95]

The book provides real examples from K–12 teachers around the world who are at the forefront of bringing today's Web tools into their schools and to their students. This book is filled with practical advice on how teachers and students can use the Web to learn more, create more, and communicate better. This fully updated resource opens up a new technology toolbox for both novice and tech-savvy educators. Will Richardson provides clear explanations of specific teaching applications, with how-to steps for teaching with: weblogs, wikis, Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds and aggregators, social bookmarking, online photo galleries, Facebook and Twitter. Updated with materials on Web publishing and information literacy, this invaluable handbook helps students and teachers use Web tools within the classroom to enhance student learning and achievement.
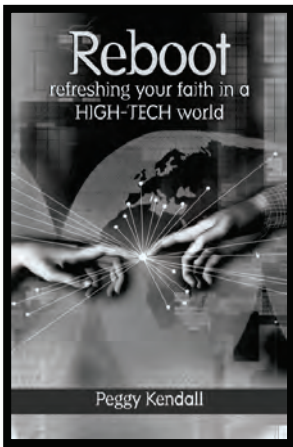
Reboot: Refreshing Your Faith in a High-Tech World
Peggy Kendall (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2010) [$14]

When one reboots a computer, it is usually because of a bug in the system. This is an interesting concept that Kendall, associate professor of communication at Bethel University, brings to the spiritual life. Human beings, like machines, can get stuck in a rut and require some refreshment. The author brings a commonsense approach to ways to grow spiritually in the contemporary world, neither canonizing nor vilifying technological progress. She points out that, for all of its conveniences, technology does not come without costs. It can isolate us if we are not self-aware. Kendall advocates for reflection about technology and its impact on our daily lives. Most impressively, she invites readers to find places of silence and solitude, far away from the blips and bleeps of machines, where a person can find his or her center. Each chapter concludes with some important suggestions and exercises for personal reflection. Most people's lives are touched by communication and information technologies, so examining how these modern conveniences affect our relationships and commitments is of utmost importance to all who care about their spiritual life.
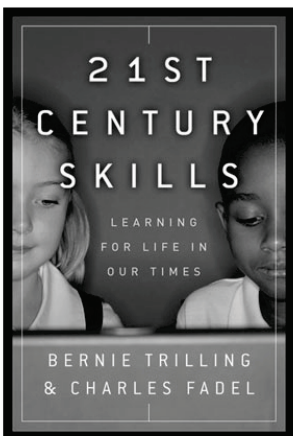
21st Century Skills: Learning for Life in Our Times
Bernie Trilling and Charles Fadel (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009) [$27.95]

This book introduces a framework for 21st century learning that maps out the skills needed to survive and thrive in a complex and connected world. 21st Century content includes the basic core subjects of reading, writing, and arithmetic-but also emphasizes global awareness, financial/economic literacy, and health issues. The skills fall into three categories: learning and innovations skills; digital literacy skills; and life and career skills. This book is filled with vignettes, international examples, and classroom samples that help illustrate the framework and provide an exciting view of what twenty-first century teaching and learning can achieve. Includes a DVD with video clips of classroom teaching.

Engaging Technology in Theological Education
Mary E. Hess (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005) [$27.95]

We live in a media culture, surrounded by ever-evolving digital technologies. While many learning organizations have embraced the new teaching tools and models for learning that technology affords, religious institutions have struggled with how and why to do the same. *Engaging Technology in Theological Education* invites religious educators to both engage and adapt their pedagogy to incorporate new media and technology. Drawing from her expertise as a seminary professor and consultant to religious institutions on the use of technology in teaching, Mary Hess invites professors, pastors, seminarians, and anyone interested in religious education into critical reflection on ways of engaging technology to enhance learning and serve as critical interpreters within communities of faith.
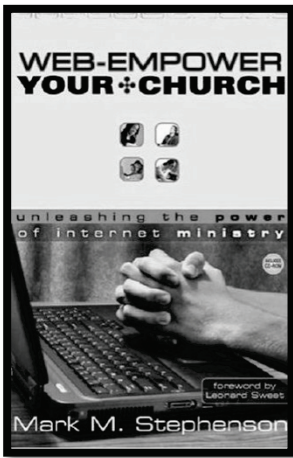
Web Empower Your Church: Unleashing the Power of Internet Ministry
Mark M. Stephenson (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006) [$23.50]

A great church website is more about ministry than technology. *Web-Empower Your Church* offers step-by-step guidance to web implementers and other church leaders who are on the exciting journey to building an effective web ministry. Mark's engaging, conversational style makes technology accessible. He offers first-hand advice on every aspect of building an internet ministry: from assembling a team to designing and maintaining the website to adding powerful ministry features. The accompanying CD-ROM contains documentation, training, and a demonstration version of website building software from the folks at the Web-Empowered Church ministry.
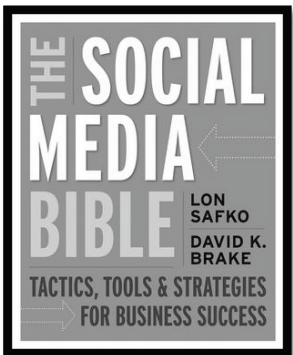
The Social Media Bible: Tactics, Tools & Strategies
Lon Safko and David K. Brake (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley Publishers, 2009) [$29.95]

The Social Media Bible will show you how to build or transform your organization into a social media-enabled enterprise where people can connect and collaborate. You'll learn how to engage people in new forms of communication, collaboration, education, and entertainment; determine which social media tactics you should be using; evaluate and categorize the tools and applications that constitute the rapidly evolving social media ecosystem, make social media tools like Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Twitter, blogging, podcasting, and hundreds of others a part of your strategy.

Digital Nation: Life on the Virtual Frontier (Film)
PBS (www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/digitalnation)

Within a single generation, digital media and the World Wide Web have transformed virtually every aspect of modern culture, from the way we learn and work to the ways in which we socialize and even conduct war. But is the technology moving faster than we can adapt to it? And is our 24/7 wired world causing us to lose as much as we've gained? In *Digital Nation: Life on the Virtual Frontier*, FRONTLINE presents an in-depth exploration of what it means to be human in a 21st-century digital world. Continuing a line of investigation she began with the 2008 FRONTLINE report *Growing Up Online* (www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/kidsonline), award-winning producer Rachel Dretzin embarks on a journey to understand the implications of living in a world consumed by technology and the impact that this constant connectivity may have on future generations. "I'm amazed at the things my kids are able to do online, but I'm also a little bit panicked when I realize that no one seems to know where all this technology is taking us, or its long-term effects," says Dretzin.