
From the RMC's Vivid Description of the Future: "When people seek a community of faith, the most exciting one they see is a UCC community in their neighborhood." So, how do we make sure they see us?

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Introduction and Self-Assessments

- Cory's Introduction
- Workshop Goals: Empowerment, Inspiration, and Models for Action
- Definition Clarification: Website, Social-Media, CMS, etc?
- Each attendee will please:
 - Introduces themselves
 - Says which church they're from
 - Say how / when they feel most connected to the world.
 - Says where they are on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "totally ignorant of anything computer-related," and 10 being "extremely tech-savvy."

How do we actually feel about the Digital Age?

Think/Pair/Share:

How do we REALLY feel about technology in churches, especially social media, web presences, etc?

- How does it help us?
- How does it harm us?
- How does it change our church culture and identity?

Examples of Churches Using Tech. Well!

Awesome examples of churches sharing their stories:

- [Casper UCC on MTV News](#): Through sharing this story, we let people know that there is a fully inclusive faith community in Casper, and that the UCC is standing up for LGBTQ rights, when and where it matters.
- [Christ Congregational Website Gets New Members](#): Sandy, Chuck, and Amanda didn't plan on learning how to manage a WordPress site, but they reached out for training, and since then their site has attracted new members.
- [Plymouth Congregational Supports Islamic Center](#): Shows the people of Ft. Collins that there are allied communities of faith in the area.

Less dramatic but just-as-important effects.

Usually, what it does is a lot less exciting but extremely important:

- It gives our church visibility—half the battle.
- It allows us to build our persona outside church walls.
- Larger presence = better placement in search results. (More on this later.)
- Inspiration from and for other churches and organizations.
- Resources, invitations, and events for current members.
- Serves as historical record, photo album, and member forum.

Questions, comments, or concerns so far?



BREAK! We'll Reconvene in 10 Minutes :)



**WAYS to BE CONNECTED,
HOW to GETTING STARTED, and
WHY ANYONE SHOULD GIVE a HOOT**

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WEBSITES:

Why do we need one?

How do we get one?

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Website: Man's Best Friend, or Dangerous Robot?

Perhaps the best recruiting and relational tool at your disposal.

- Why do churches NEED a website? It's your storefront, and how people can tell you're Open for Business. People don't find churches (or anything) like they used to. Let's talk about Google vs. Phone Books.
- What should a church website be? Your Radical Welcome! Simple, navigable, friendly/welcoming, informative, authentic, **INVITATIONAL**. ([Park Hill Example](#).)
- How will people find you? Let's talk about SEO, or Search Engine Optimization. Sounds complicated, but it mostly means representing your church effectively.

How to Help People Find Your Church

- Take five minutes to write a description of what makes your church awesome / important / meaningful / worth visiting.
- Switch papers with your partner.
- They will circle the words that stand out to them as being things that would attract them to a faith community.
- When you get your description back, consider including the circled words on your website to boost your website's SEO.

Good News: Websites are Easier than Ever.

Ways to create or redo your website:

- **Hire an agency** (like [MinistryDesigns.org](https://ministrydesigns.org))
 - **Pros:** Punctual, turn-key, supportive, and slick!
 - **Cons:** Price, less control, and more reliance on outside forces.
- **Find a volunteer / freelancer**
 - **Pros:** Cheaper, more flexibility and revisions, more options for site design.
 - **Cons:** Looser deadlines, all knowledge with one person, hard to hire friend.
- **Do It Yourself!**
 - **Pros:** Complete control, free (or near free), easy CMS platforms.
 - **Cons:** More time-consuming, lots of learning on the go.

Popular Content Mgmt. Systems (CMSs)

These are all free, or almost free, and offer drag-and-drop design:

- **Wix.com**
 - **Example:** www.rmccignite.com
 - **Details:** Free, simple, FAST (made in one day), intuitive, but limited
- **WordPress.org**
 - **Example:** www.rmccucc.org
 - **Details:** Free, much more customizable, but more complex
- **Squarespace.com**
 - **Example:** <http://pncucc.org/>
 - **Details:** Inexpensive (\$18 a month), minimal, simple, supported

Examples & Tours of Resourceful Websites

- [RMCUCC.org](https://www.rmcucc.org)
 - News
 - Camps & Events
 - Churches & Ministries
 - Radically Connect
 - Directory & Resources
 - Ignite, In the MUD, etc.
- www.ucc.org
 - Brand Guidelines and Logo
 - J&P, ONA, A2A, etc.
 - Church Vitality

Questions on Websites?



LUNCH! 30 Minutes to Savor Your Morsels



SOCIAL MEDIA:
Why!? Which Ones!? How!?
What are people's experience-levels?

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Social Media: How Do We Experience It?

Discussion!

- **As individuals, how do we use or experience social media?**
 - **Which platforms do we use, and how often?**
- **What do we like about it?**
- **What do we DISLIKE about it?**

Social Media: What is it, and how should we use it?

There are a bajillion different types. Here are the most common:

- **Facebook:** (Example: www.facebook.com/rmcucc/)
 - **Best for:** Event promotion, interacting with members and potential members, sharing photo albums, connecting with wide demographics.
- **Twitter:** (Example: www.twitter.com/rmcucc/)
 - **Best for:** Connecting with similar churches, Conferences, organizations, public figures; sharing and speaking on real-time trending news.
- **Instagram:** (Example: <https://www.instagram.com/explore/locations/476484582/>)
 - **Best for:** Connecting with younger generations, building church image.
- **Blogs:** (Example: <http://newsacred.org/>)
 - **Best for:** Developing your voice, solidifying mission, creating engagement.

Best Practices & Guidelines for Facebook

See [Document](#) Sent to You this Morning for Example!

- **Be topical.** Share current church / regional news that speaks to your mission.
- **Be of one voice.** Multiple page admins is OK, but avoid contradictory posts.
- **Interact.** Social media is about being social, and having a dialogue. Ask questions!
- **Don't get sued!** Get permission for photos and other assets.
- **Include images.** With every post if you can.
- **Follow/tag other pages.** Churches, organizations, etc.
- **Have fun!** Facebook is useful for critical news and important events, but social media is meant to be engaging. People log in to have fun, even though sometimes people like being angry for fun. It's OK to be playful!

What Could Social Media Do for Your Church?

Think / Pair / Share!

- **What's a Goal Your Church Has? Could be mission-related, financial, vitality-related, etc.**
- **How could Social Media Help You Reach This Goal?**
- **Sharing with group.**

NEWSLETTERS:
Building & Maintaining Your Own
Getting Your News Out There

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Creating Church Community with Your Newsletter

Newsletters keep us feeling involved! There are several platforms that are easy to use, and they are the best way to feel connected. They are:

- **Simple!** All major platforms (Mailchimp, Constant Contact, Vertical Response, etc.) offer templates (no coding), editing is drag + drop, and it's really easy to upload images and customize your layout.
- **(Almost Always) Free!** Unless you want to have a lot of extra features, or have 100,000 emails on your email list, free versions works wonderfully.
- **Flexible!** If you feel like getting fancy, you can integrate it with Social Media, run signup social-media campaigns, create target audiences, and create signup forms that you can embed on the web.
- **Example:** The RMC's [Connected at Our Roots eNewsletter](#).

Self-Promotion: Writing & Sharing Press Releases

Self-promotion doesn't mean bragging or grandstanding—it's sharing your loving community's good works and welcome with the world!

- **Your News is Worth Sharing.** If you have a community event, new members, a new pastor, an exciting visitor, or a mission milestone to share, submit a short Press Release to the RMC, UCC, and local news! It's easier than you think.
- **Be sure to include:** Who, what, where, why, how, as well as contact information and a Call to Action (CTA).
- **Be concise:** If outlets can simply copy and past your PR into their newsletter, they'll be much more likely to share it!
- **Example:** [This Press Release](#) led to [This Article](#).

QUESTION & ANSWER TIME:
Pre-submitted questions +
Questions on the fly!

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Pre-Submitted Questions (Thank You!)

- **What is Zoom, and why is it better than Skype?** Skype (and Google Hangouts and FaceTime is perfectly terrific for one-on-one communication; Zoom is built for organizations and groups.
- **Can the SEA have a section on the RMC website, or should we make our own?** - Excellent Question. Let's talk.
- **How can we make sure we don't post anything copyrighted?** See guidelines, and also, [Creative Commons Search](#) (remember to credit!).
- **How can your church establish and maintain a unique "brand" on social media, especially with multiple posters?** Follow best practices, develop "poster persona."
- **What are the advances from the last seven years?** Biggest are CMSs and new Social Media platforms. Also, decline of email, demographic change of FB, and absence of print.
- **Why should churches care about connecting with people they don't know?** Strangers are potential members, but at the very least, they may need to hear your inclusive message.
- **How to use Facebook / start a blog:** Let's talk!

QUESTION & ANSWER TIME:

Other Questions?

Anyone?

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THANK YOU!

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