



The Church of Scotland

1



INTRODUCING DIGITAL MINISTRY

INTRODUCTION

The Church has a God-given calling to venture into all places, sharing the Gospel of Jesus with audacious faith and nurturing disciple-making disciples. We do this best when we fully engage with the creativity God has given us. As the Fischy song 'Creativity' says: 'Look around you, what do you see? Creativity.' We have long known that sharing and embodying the gospel is not just about words, but about action. This is, after all, what keeps our faith alive. And, as image bearers of the Creator, we can expect and seek creative ways of partnering in the Missio Dei.

Historically that has involved our feet going to new, different and familiar places, where our hands offer cups of water, warm blankets, prayers, and Bibles

Scripture encourages us to understand the times and know what to do (1 Chronicles 12v32). In our time, the nations of the world are no longer only physical places - they now include digital nations and communities too. And we have the same calling there, don't we?

What might our feet and hands look like in sharing and being the gospel within digital communities and nations?



The heart of our vision is to enable, empower, and equip the flourishing Church for the works of digital ministry, helping it to fulfil its calling to be a revitalised, dynamic Church of Scotland for Christ. Our aim is to increase our digital handprint in every community and flood every community with the fruit of worship and mission via a synergized digital ministry.

These three resources are practical guides for the practitioners of the gospel (that's you!) to minister well and make disciple-making disciples within our digital communities. Each resource builds on the other with case studies as examples.

Digital ministry is one of the greatest missional tools of our age. It is a vital part of our Church ecosystem, contributing to the gospel transformation of a world needing faith, love, and hope, through a diverse mix of worship and community.

I pray you know the joy of the Lord as you engage with and grow God's digital ministry.

Ruth

Rev Ruth Kennedy
Digital Ministries Advisor

WHY DIGITAL MINISTRY?

This is an exciting time for the Church. Church attendance has increased by 50% over the last six years¹. Gen Z are buying more Bibles than any other demographic². Only 13% of 18-25 year olds describe themselves as an atheist, with the majority identifying as “very” or “fairly” spiritual³.

God is moving. People are spiritually hungry.

This spiritual growth is taking place in the context of rapid digital expansion. 85% of 16-29 year olds use social media every day⁴. 93% of all UK mobile users now have a smartphone⁵. No matter what generation we represent, we are in a digital world.

How do we, beloved of Christ, adopt, pioneer and thrive in this age we are living in? The same as followers of Jesus have always done:



ACTS 17: 16-23 (THE MESSAGE)

The longer Paul waited in Athens for Silas and Timothy, the angrier he got—all those idols! The city was a junkyard of idols. He discussed it with the Jews and other like-minded people at their meeting place. And every day he went out on the streets and talked with anyone who happened along.

He got to know some of the Epicurean and Stoic intellectuals pretty well through these conversations. Some of them dismissed him with sarcasm: “What an idiot!” But others, listening to him go on about Jesus and the resurrection, were intrigued: “That’s a new slant on the gods. Tell us more.”

These people got together and asked him to make a public presentation over at the Areopagus, where things were a little quieter. They said, “This is a new one on us. We’ve never heard anything quite like it. Where did you come up with this anyway? Explain it so we can understand.” Downtown Athens was a great place for gossip. There were always people hanging around, natives and tourists alike, waiting for the latest tidbit on most anything.

So Paul took his stand in the open space at the Areopagus and laid it out for them. “It is plain to see that you Athenians take your religion seriously. When I arrived here the other day, I was fascinated with all the shrines I came across. And then I found one inscribed, TO THE GOD NOBODY KNOWS. I’m here to introduce you to this God so you can worship intelligently, know who you’re dealing with.

Paul took the language, the culture of the day, that which irritated him the most and used it for something positive. He used it to share the gospel in a way the people in that context would understand. Culturally, contextually relevant mission and messaging. Many of us are, for valid reasons, cautious around digital spaces and new technologies. For some, it is as irritating as the Athenians were to Paul. This digital world can be a source of irritation, or, like Paul, we can have it in our toolbox to share the beautiful gospel.

WHAT IS DIGITAL MINISTRY?

Digital ministry provides a digital space where people can encounter God, reflect on their faith, be provoked or disrupted to ask deeper questions, and connect with the ministry of their local church both online and in-person. It forms part of a mixed ecology of worship for churches, creates opportunities for ground-breaking and far-reaching mission, and fosters innovative spaces for inclusive community growth and discipleship.

Digital ministry can include:

GAMING

VIDEO

BLOGS

EMAIL

APPS

MUSIC

SOCIAL MEDIA

PODCASTS

SPOKEN WORD

LIVESTREAMED SERVICES

ONLINE WORSHIP

DIGITAL GROUPS

WEBINARS



SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media includes platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, X, Pinterest and BlueSky. Different types of content work on the different platforms. You can find more information on this in the “Understanding Digital Ministry” resource.

AUDIO: MUSIC, PODCASTS, SPOKEN WORD

Audio platforms such as Spotify, Soundcloud, Audible and Apple/Google Podcasts allow for music, podcasts and other audio content to be shared with listeners.

EMAIL/WEBSITES/BLOGS

Many churches already have websites, and some use email as a means of sharing information about church events. In “Understanding Digital Ministry”, you will find information about different ways these platforms can be used as digital ministry. Blogs can form part of a church website, or can be hosted on different sites such as Tumblr and Substack.

VIDEO

Short form video content is popular on apps like TikTok and Instagram. Youtube and Vimeo are better for longer content. This can include vlog (video blog) style content, short films, or a wide variety of other content.

GAMING

Gaming ministry can include gaming together in person or online. It can be a particularly useful tool for engaging young people. You can find more information about how this might work on page ten!

LIVESTREAMED SERVICES & ONLINE WORSHIP

Sharing worship online can take a number of forms. Live streaming Sunday services has become increasingly common since lockdown. Additionally, you might wish to create content specifically designed for online worship. There are differences between how live streamed services and online worship are filmed, but both could feature similar content and have the potential for interactivity.

DIGITAL GROUPS AND WEBINARS

Digital groups can be a great space for Bible study, prayer meetings and other forms of digital fellowship. Similarly, webinars are often used to host presentations and talks and can be made interactive to facilitate Q&As and discussions. Groups and webinars are often hosted on platforms such as Zoom and Teams.



MINISTRY vs. COMMUNICATION?

As we consider digital ministry, it is important to recognise the difference between simply communicating information digitally and practicing digital ministry and mission. Digital ministry should create a digital space where people can encounter God.

Digital communication is vital for our churches. Our social media pages are like online versions of our church notice boards or local newspapers. These digital formats are more accessible, viewable and changeable. These are the modes whereby the majority of people, especially those outwith our faith communities, look for information.



Digital communication might include information about upcoming services, events and groups within the church. It can direct people to relevant contacts or share updates about church life. These are all important parts of fostering an online church community.

But digital ministry is different.

Digital ministry is about standing, like Paul did, in our equivalent “aeropagus” and marketplaces speaking in culturally and contextually relevant ways. This should all point to Jesus, helping us to pray, worship and reflect and connecting us to local church.

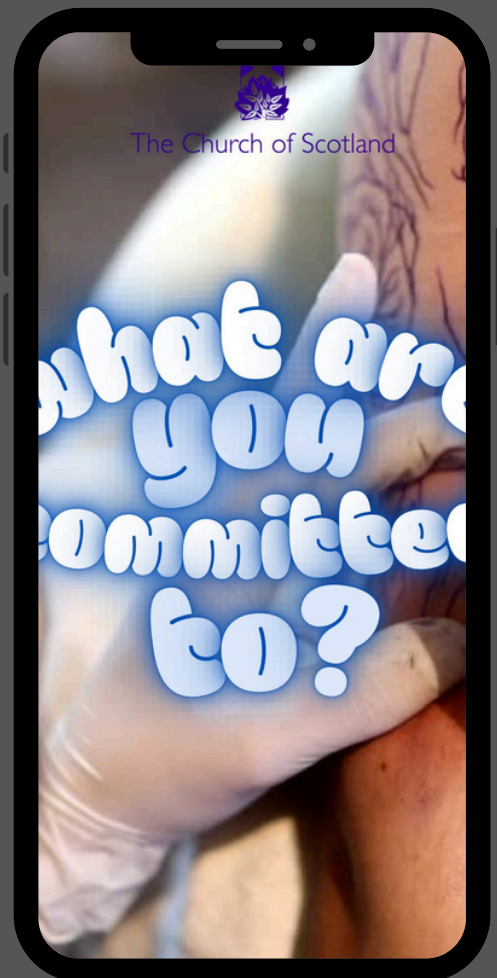
MINISTRY and COMMUNICATION

CASE STUDY: INSTAMMISSION

Instamission is a long-running project on the Church of Scotland's Instagram and Youtube. Since April 2025, a group of volunteers have been creating regular short-form video content that aims to disrupt the scroll! The instamission videos create space to provoke deeper thoughts, reflections, and responses as they consider what it means to be a contemporary follower of Jesus. In particular, this work is aimed at an audience who don't typically attend church. [Click here](#) for an example.

The instamission work is focused on reaching out to young people, and to reflect this, our team is mostly made up of people under 40. Our team come from across different presbyteries, some work for the church or are candidates in training but many others are simply volunteers with a love for Jesus and social media!

The videos focus on a sense of authenticity and asking honest questions about what it means to be a Christian. Each volunteer brings their own style and perspective, which means the content is able to appeal to a broad audience.



CASE STUDY: THE OUTSPOKEN BIBLE PODCAST

There are a growing number of Christian podcasts across various platforms. These can take many forms and if you are considering starting your own, it is worth doing a bit of research into what is already out there and what might appeal to your target audience. A successful example of a Scottish Christian podcast is the brilliant “The OutSpoken Bible Podcast”.

The podcast is produced by Scottish Bible Society and hosted by Fiona Stewart, Jen Robertson and Neil Glover. Here’s a description of the podcast in their own words:



“Fiona Stewart (writer and performer), Jen Robertson (Scottish Bible Society) and Neil Glover (minister, Aberfeldy Parish Church) are friends and colleagues. Their lives may have taken different twists and turns, but the one thing that brings them back together is their love for the Bible. Join our hosts as they talk about God, faith and the Bible, how it affects their lives, how it challenges them, and how it guides them in their no holds barred, frank and funny conversations”⁶

There have been nine series of the podcast so far and each series takes a deep dive into a specific book of the Bible, with occasional breaks from this format to discuss special events like Advent and Easter. Some of the books covered so far have been Romans, Acts and the Psalms.

There are several great things about this podcast but, for those planning their own, you might want to take note of the fact that this is a podcast with a clear, specific focus and a group of hosts who are genuinely comfortable with each other and happy speaking openly about their faith. This gives the podcast a relaxed feel whilst still giving the listener plenty to think about.

For more guidance on launching your own podcast, see our “Developing Digital Ministry” resource. To listen to The Outspoken Bible Podcast, [click here](#).

Digital ministry is a ministry that creates spaces for ground-breaking and far-reaching mission, provides platforms to address social injustice and care for creation, facilitates worship, and equips the people of God for the works of God. It fosters inclusive community growth and serves as an avenue for societal transformation by the Spirit of God.

This set of resources has been designed to help equip churches with the practical guidance they need for effective digital ministry in the local church. In ‘Understanding Digital Ministry’, you’ll find information about the groundwork and preparation needed for this work. This includes help with identifying audiences, choosing appropriate platforms, and making sure your work aligns with the Church of Scotland safeguarding policies. From there, you can use ‘Getting Started’ to find step-by-step guides for creating and posting your own content.

NOTES

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2. Laura Barry, “Bible Sales Surge Among Gen Z: SPCK’s Role in The Growing Demand”, SPCK, 2025:
<https://spckpublishing.co.uk/blog/bible-sales-surge-among-gen-z-spck-s-role-in-the-growing-demand.html>
3. Christopher Gasson, “Belief in Britain: A Look into the Religious and Spiritual Landscape”, 2025:
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