DIOCESE OF GLOUCESTER

Social Media and the Church

“God is always good news; we are the ones who make ourselves irrelevant when we are not good news. And when we are good news, God's people see growing churches.”

- Archbishop Justin Welby



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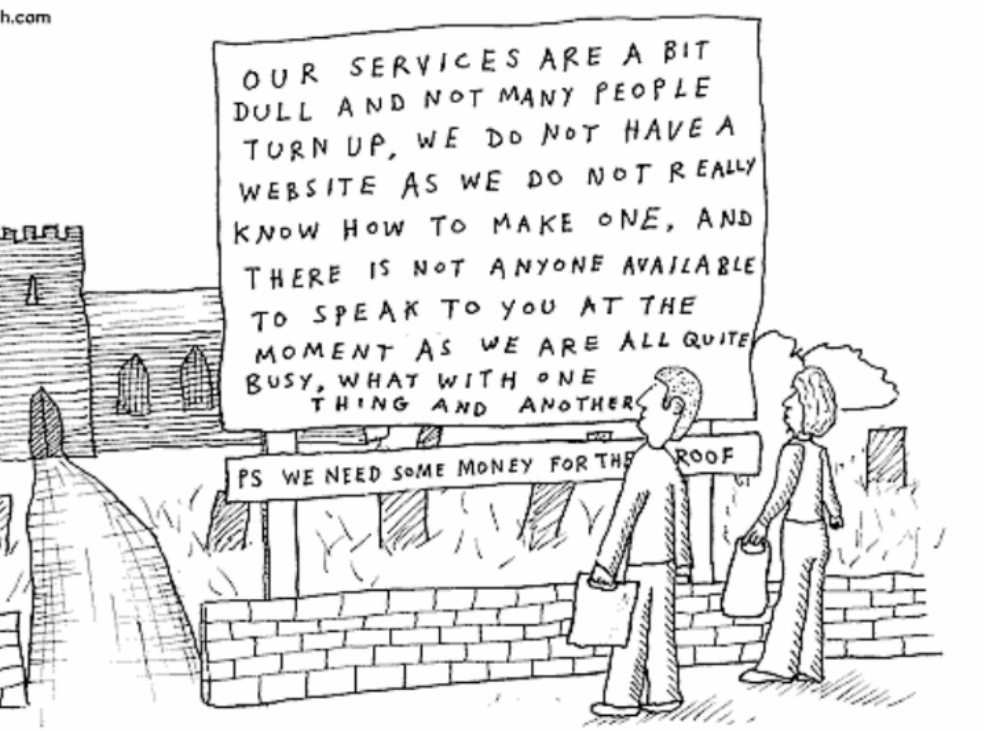


Resources are available at:
gloucester.anglican.org/communications







Hello, I am Sam.



My job at the Diocese of Gloucester:

- Consistent-ify fragmented brand & website(s)
- Create content (short films, photography) & digital systems to support the Vision
- Encourage & equip parishes to be ace online
- Steer national digital strategy etc.

The LIFE Vision has emerged from shared conversations involving 6,000 people across the Diocese

Leadership
Committed to transformation

imagination
Opening new paths to faith



faith
Living as adventurous followers of Jesus Christ

engagement
Living out Christ's love and hope

"The Church is the original social network – it connects people, encourages them to participate and to reach out to others."

~ CofE





The Printing Press: social media v0.1

- Pre 1440: The Church censors books for centuries, forbids Bibles in anything other than Latin



~1440: Gutenberg invents the printing press, tries to keep it secret, fails

- 1480: The Church realises the printing press is a challenge to its influence, tightens censorship, fails

- 1480-2017: BOOK MAYHEM AARGHHYAYAYAHHHHH

The Mission

The Gospel could be described as a story, best spread by word of mouth. How does the Gospel affect us?

How did Jesus communicate?

He knew his **message & audience**

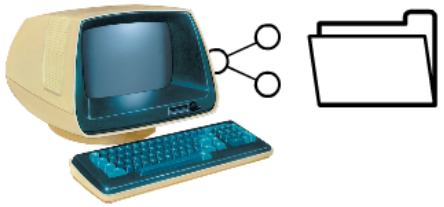
He used **different methods** for **different groups**

How are we going to cover all Social Media in one hour?!

Who uses twitter / fb / has a parish website?

What are you looking for from this training event?

Computer networks:
Web v0.1, pre-90s



Web v1.0
1990ish-2000



Web 2.0
2000-2007ish



Social Media 2007-present

(basically mayhem)







Both get involved **and** stay awesome



"While religion can make use of many of today's technological advances, I think it also has something to contribute by way of keeping the technology 'human'. It's possible to sustain reasoned arguments without descending to the level of personal abuse!"

(ie. apply Christian values to digital comms)

~ Catherine Wybourne (@digitalnun)



"Electronic media breaks through locked doors, and pierces people painfully. Love often says don't tweet, don't write. If you must rebuke, then do so in person and with touch - with an arm around the shoulder."

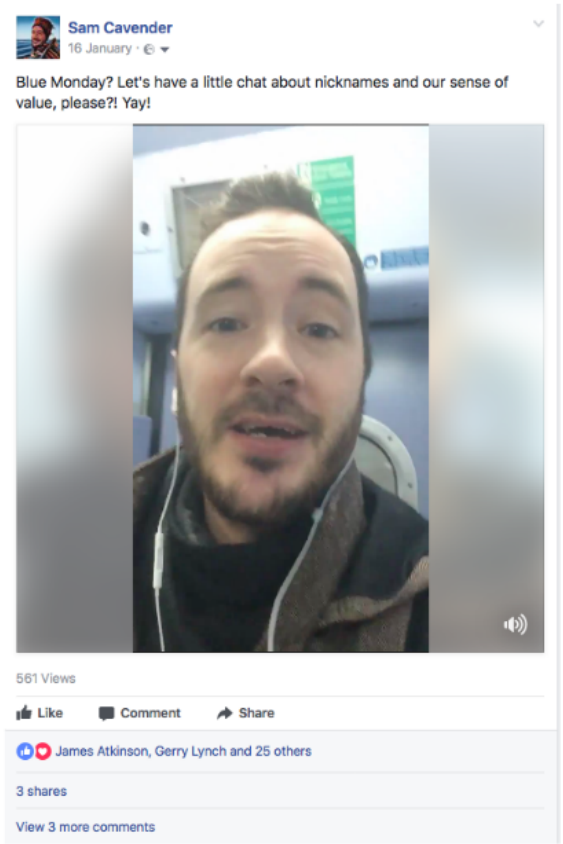
(ie. we can model appropriate use)

~ Archbishop Justin (@JustinWelby)

Not everything's bright and shiny

"It has been acceptable for some time to remain 'wound identified' (that is, using one's victimhood as one's identity, one's ticket to sympathy, and one's excuse for not serving), instead of using the wound to 'redeem the world,' as we see in Jesus and many people who turn their wounds into sacred wounds that liberate both themselves and others."

~ Richard Rohr
(@RichardRohrOFM)



Just to provide some balance...



Why is Social Media important?

(It's not, but people are, and there's lots...)

Around the world:

1.7 billion
monthly Facebook users

100 million
daily users on both Twitter and Snapchat

41%
of 18-34 year olds are reached **daily** via Snapchat. Top country for Snapchat usage is Ireland

In the UK:

16.4 million **daily** Twitter users

54% of all media advertising is spent on internet/social media ads. Still growing

82% of adults used the internet **daily** in 2016. Up from 78% in 2015

70% of those adults accessed the internet via mobile phone. Up from 66% in 2015

Conclusion:
It is an established part of our culture that is not going away. A church that chooses not to engage, is choosing isolation.



Key tools, grouped by type:

Blogosphere

WordPress
Blogger
Wix
ACNY

Good for:
- building free websites
- sharing news articles
- opinion pieces (blog)
- connecting with locality

Bad for:
- being maintained

Church potential:
- free website / newsy blog

Locality/microblogging

twitter
Instagram
Google+
tumblr.

Good for:
- finding things
- sharing content
- up-to-date everything
- super rapid comms

Can be bad for:
- relational depth

Church potential:
- connect with local groups

Pure comms

WhatsApp
Messenger
snapchat
slack
Yammer

Good for:
- sharing content
- up-to-date everything
- super rapid comms

Can be bad for:
- bullying/safeguarding

Church potential:
- free team/community comms, eg. Whatsapp prayer group

Network / automation

IFTTT
ifthisthenthat
hootsuite
LinkedIn
paper.li

Good for:
- automating mundane tasks
- connecting accounts/media
- exposure despite tiny workforce
- distribution

Bad for:
- accidentally leaving things to rot
- responding to people (unless you've setup response notificatons)

Church potential:
- Saves effort: IFTTT could be used to update a website via twitter or email

Content delivery

facebook
YouTube
SOUNDCLOUD
vimeo
flickr
Pinterest

Good for:
- connecting with the geographical community
- getting content online
- sharing variety
- stories

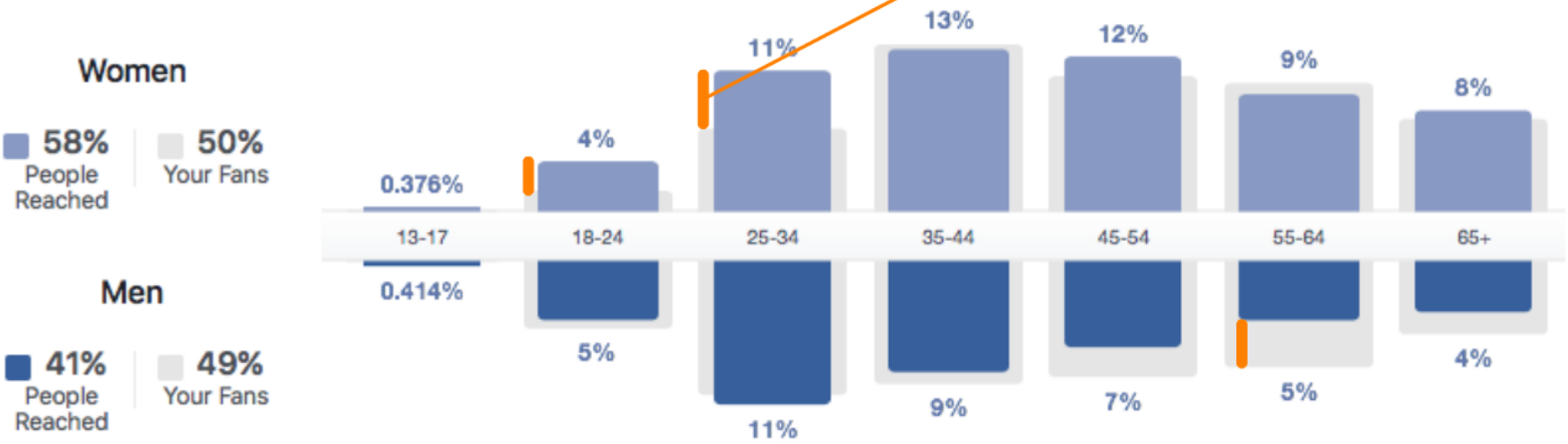
Bad for:
- fake news, wasting time, addiction

Church potential:
- Sharing and discussing stories! Youtube and Facebook particularly good for content-rich info, and each has communities of their own.

Statistics! Yay!

Diocesan facebook page stats, Apr 2017:

Great for spotting demographic responses to specific content



Reach
12 April – 9 May

43,316
People reached ▲665%



Post engagements
12 April – 9 May

17,303
Post engagement ▲1,352%



Videos
12 April – 9 May

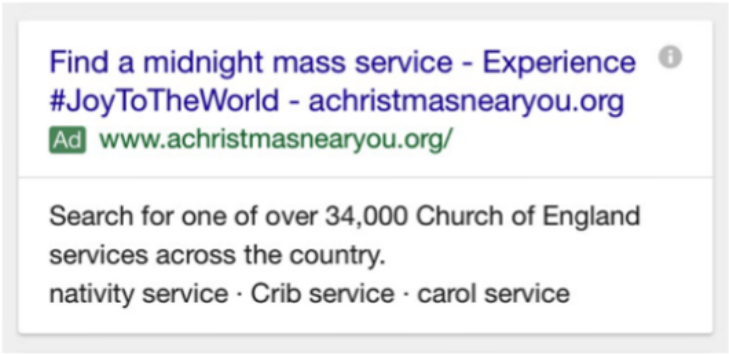
582
Total video views ▼61%



Campaigns & ads

CofE #JoyToTheWorld campaign:

- £30-70 spent on ads (per channel)
- Fb ads brought 50% of traffic to target (60k)
- Google ads responsible for 15% of all traffic – 22k
- 700k video views on Fb





Kate Bottley shares her moment of Christmas joy

19 December 2016 · 250k views



Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin shares her moments of joy at Christmas

1 December 2016 · 181k views



Matt Woodcock shares his moments of Christmas joy

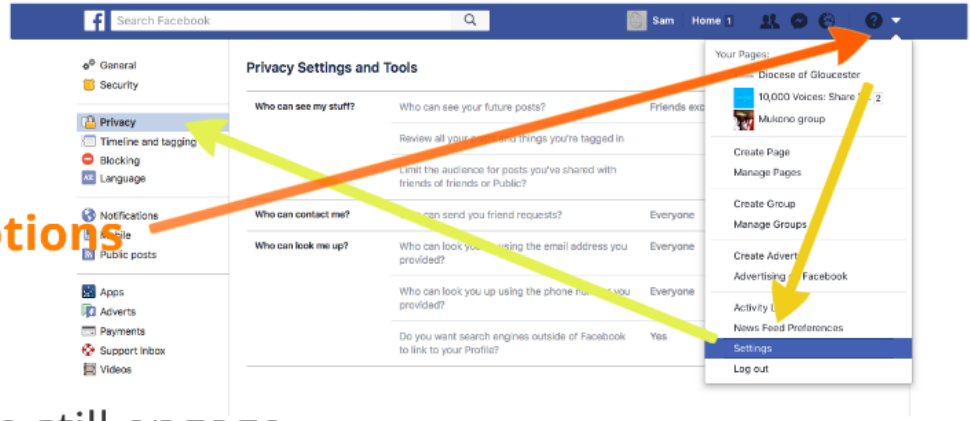
6 December 2016 · 169k views



Paul Kerensa share Christmas joy

13 December 2016 ·

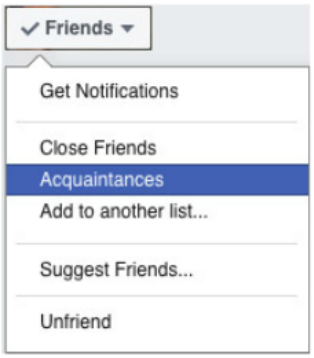
How to facebook

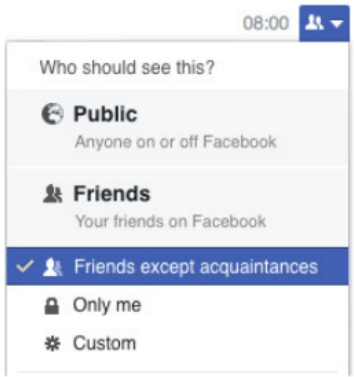


First, look at your personal privacy/sharing options

Check you're sharing things to the right people

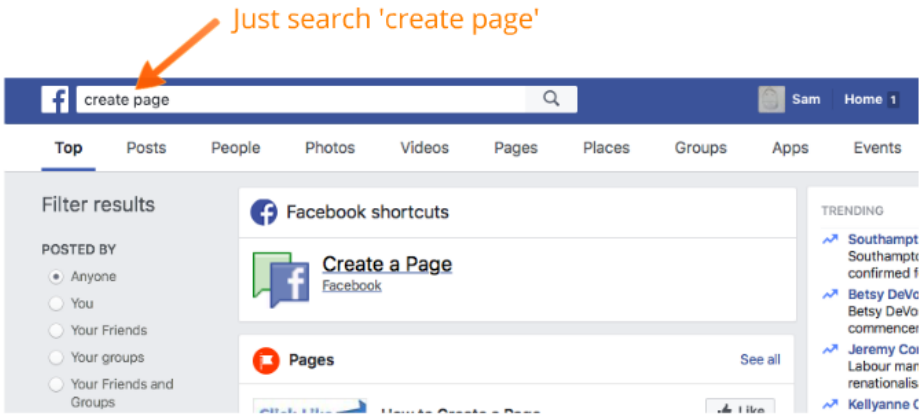
- Be bold! With the Golden Rule in mind, you can still engage
- Just started? Use the search bar to find friends and local organisations (like/friend/follow)
- Promote occasional key church events, share news and pictures, promote discussion
- Chance to talk honestly and openly about your faith and what it means
- Share faith stories!
- Use **'acquaintances'** settings to filter personal content



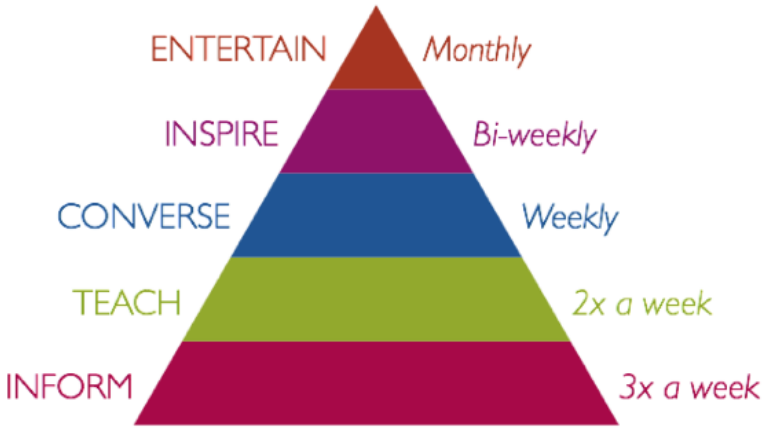




Create a Facebook page for your church



- **Be bold! We're with you :)**
- Promote key church events, share news & pics
- Be honest and open about Christian faith
- Promote discussion by asking questions of people
- Photos are vital! (incl of PEOPLE!)
- Perhaps ask people to put in prayer requests
- Share videos from other parishes & orgs, CofE, and the diocese



Great examples:

- CofE Facebook page (using notes, video etc)
- Trinity Cheltenham
- Alpha course

Get involved:

- #ourLIFEstory
- #Pledge2Pray

• #Pledge2Pray



"Twitter?! Nonsense. It'll never catch on."

- Sam Cavender, 2006

Twitter has 555 million active users, 270 million of whom tweet at least once per month. At Twitter HQ they consume 1,440 eggs and 585 gallons of coffee every week. Gross.

How to Twitter (for church)

Follow people you know. Then, as you start tweeting regularly, follow more people based on your parish interests / ministries.

Basics:

- Chance to talk honestly and openly about Christian faith and what it means
- Just starting? Search for and follow the Readers / Clergy / locals you know
- A smart phone will help
- Talk to people! Engage on matters you care about
- Use it as a source of local info, retweet interesting things, tag relevant people
- Follow @glosdioc – send us a tweet and we'll follow you back

More advanced:

- Use hashtags as a simple way to connect topics eg #joytotheworld, #liedentity
- Use twitter as a comms tool to organise events, involve local orgs
- Geotag local things to build that 'hyperlocal' vibe; link happenings to places
- Livetweet events you go to, twitter makes a great campaign tool - hook up to Hootsuite or RSS (ie. a news feed) to front-load flurries of tweets. Eg during Lent

Photos

"We've seen a consistent trend toward sharing through image and video, rather than text-based content." - Forbes

Tools

facebook YouTube flickr Instagram vimeo Pinterest snapchat

Examples

twitter.com/c_of_e/moments
facebook.com/Alpha
facebook.com/groups/glospicshare

People are ace; share photos of them

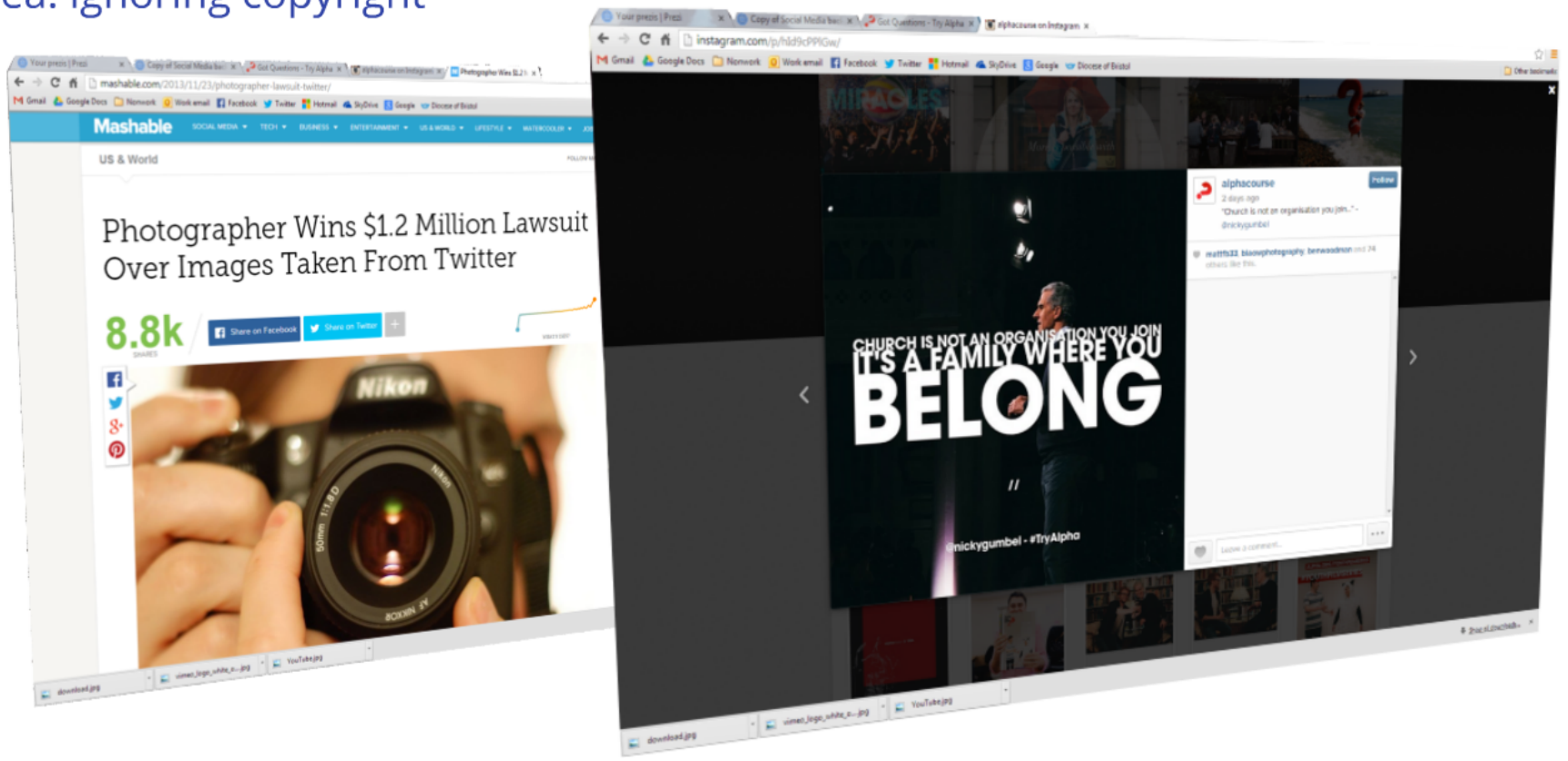






Good idea: Alpha's use of Instagram

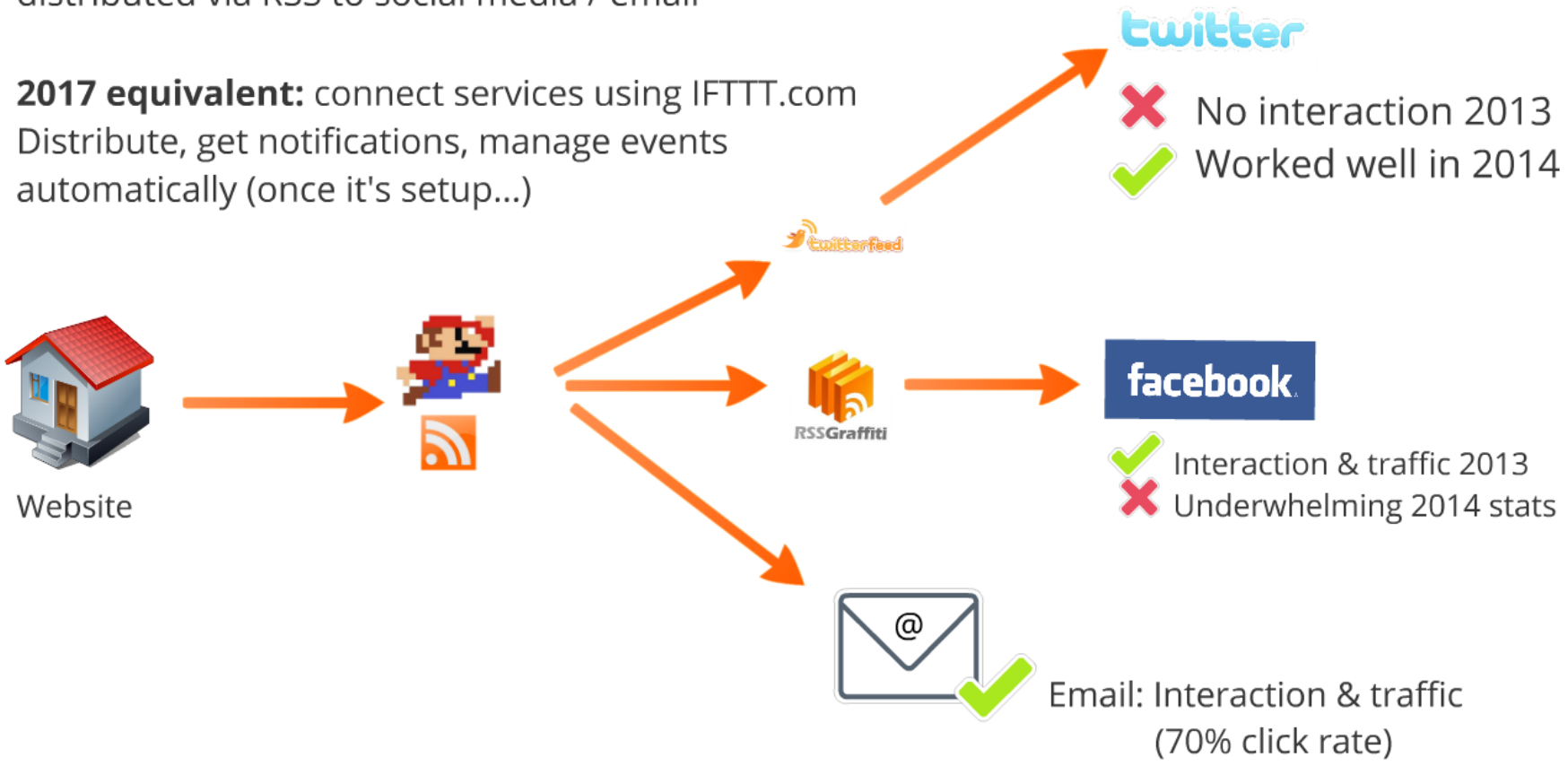
Bad idea: ignoring copyright



Learn and change as you go

2013/14 example (pictured): Diocesan Lent series distributed via RSS to social media / email

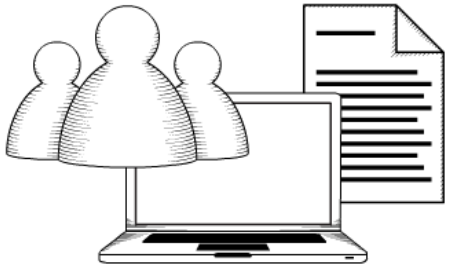
2017 equivalent: connect services using IFTTT.com
Distribute, get notifications, manage events automatically (once it's setup...)



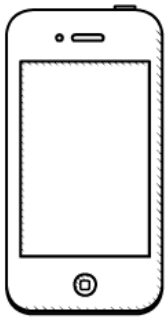
Being flexible

Don't be limited by fashion. Try it. If it doesn't work, try something else. Social media doesn't have to mean Instagram.

Example: prayer group promotion



vs.



Normal church promotion for a week: zero attendees

Bulk SMS the morning of the prayer group: record numbers (30 in this case)

The Joy of Text

Carphone Warehouse do cheap sims which can send unlimited texts
bulksms.co.uk charges £11 to send 200 text messages
Churchapp can be used to send notifications
Whatsapp!! Perfect. Free.



Email

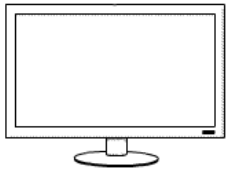
ELECTRONIC NEWS BEEP BEEP



- Consolidate many random emails into a more content-rich occasional hit
- Requirements: you need people's email addresses (!)

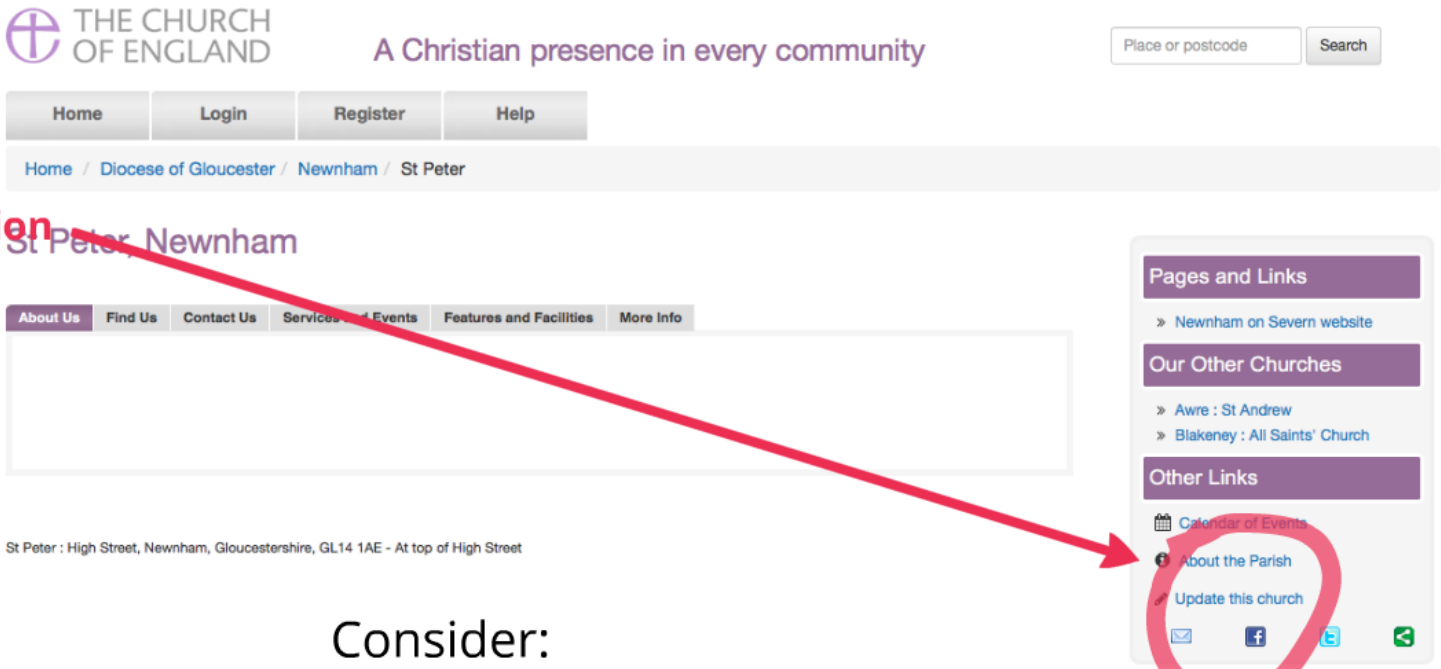
Tools: We use Mailchimp, it's brilliant
Results: Great big spike in web stats, far greater reach for our articles, collaboration between departments. Free for a reasonabe sized mailing list.

Potential: You can hook Mailchimp up to Wordpress or Twitter/Facebook - meaning when you put articles online, they self-distribute everywhere
Example: Lent Series



Your parish on A Church Near You

Represents the CofE locally. Make sure it's up to date.



Essential:

- **Update the information**
- About the church
- Contact info
- How to get there
- Services
- At least one photo!

Nice to have:

- Shared online calendar
- Social Media links / embedded
- Events
- Gallery/Instagram
- E-newsletter
- Videos of people / inspiring stuff

Consider:

- Which people are responsible for updating the site?
- Buy a custom URL and forward it to ACNY, use it as a mini website (~ £20 annual fee)
- Logins - make sure there's no single point of failure!
- There are great advances to ACNY coming in late 2017; get involved!



Parish website build options

(Get your parish up to date on ACNY first)

Just you?

Wordpress/Blogger/Wix/Weebly

£Free!
Quick & easy
Attractive
Weebly 'pro' £30 annual

wordpress.com / blogger.com etc

Be aware: branding of owner website will remain in footer/ header unless you pay a little. There's normally a simple way of buying a new web address and hooking it up too :)

Example: aldertonvillage.co.uk/ st-margarets-church.html

Got tech help?

Hosted

From £2.99/month
Ultimately flexible
Setup/knowledge/effort
Good support - use it!

bytemark / godsweb / wordpress.org

Be aware: learning curve if you've not done it before. Use their support when you get stuck. Make sure login details aren't held by a single person.

Example: bibleforlife.co.uk

Got some cash?

Nettl, Crome Creations, Squarespace

£100 - 500 annual
Good support

nettl.com/uk/gloucester, cromecreations.co.uk

You're paying for the comfort of knowing someone else deals with the hosting and security etc. As flexible as the time you have to direct web development. Any site needs maintenance regardless if you pay for it or not. Someone has to update it or it'll rot, just like any website.

Examples: elmoreparish.co.uk
cinderford-churches.org.uk

A quest:

Who would you like to communicate with, and how do they currently communicate?

What could your parish do to improve its own communications?

How can we serve you?

What could the diocesan office be communicating better? (And what media would serve that best?)

Communications around Parish Share; what would be helpful? Feed back to us!

Detailed guidance and resources:
gloucester.anglican.org/communications





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