

## Worksheet #2: Formulating a Digital Ministry Strategy

Step 1: Questions to help you set the premise of your strategy:

### 1. Why are you examining your congregation's digital presence?

Your answer:

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Consider what goes through many UU minds:

- a. Our current web site is too hard to manage. We are dependent on one person to update it, and that's not practical. It's dramatically limiting our ability to communicate and at worst hurting us because we can't reach our own members effectively.
- b. We like our site, but it's not helping us to retain and grow attendance
- c. We have a Facebook page but not everyone in the church is on Facebook. Same thing with our Twitter presence.
- d. Our church is large. Members and lay leaders have created blogs, Google docs, YouTube accounts, Pinterest pin boards, and Facebook pages to manage church-sponsored programs and to enable interaction and sharing between members in those programs. We are scattered all over the web. It makes church life hard to manage and many people end up being left out of programs because they don't

know where to find all the places where information is kept.

- e. We communicate well through printed newsletters, emails, phone calls, and announcements inserts in our orders of service, but those methods aren't appealing to many people. In fact, the perception created by these methods can deter people from engaging with us.
- f. Our young people only know what's going on with their church-sponsored groups. If we created an online area for them that is tied to the entire church, they'd know more and understand that church life and church community is welcoming to them. They'd see that what they discuss in their groups is related to worship.
- g. We think we can reach and serve people who for a variety of reasons can't physically come to church
- h. We might be able to engage and retain parents who are teaching RE if we could connect them more to the worship that they are missing when in class.

## 2. What are your goals for digital ministry?

Your answer: \_\_\_\_\_

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Consider how your goals align to your church's mission and/or vision; and to the areas of concentration of your ministers. For example, how do your digital ministry goals align to the following?

- a. The goals of your church's strategic plan?

- b. What about how your minister practices? Will your goals support that practice? Will the goals require your minister to adapt his or her practice to them?
- c. The goals of your stewardship strategy
- d. Your social justice goals

**3. Is the church ready to recognize digital ministry as a budgeted church operation and program, or will funds come from a general operations line in a budget? Why should you care at this point?**

Your answer: \_\_\_\_\_

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Consider: A digital ministry occurs within a digital infrastructure. And just like the infrastructure of a church costs to be maintained and grown, so too will there be expense in digital ministry. It will be infinitesimal, basically nil, by comparison to capital campaigns that can cost in the \$100Ks and millions. But the likelihood for digital ministry to take root and remain a legitimate, indispensable extension of church life, it needs formal budget recognition.

**4. How much time do you have to implement and manage digital ministry?**

How do you figure this out?

Your answer: \_\_\_\_\_

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- a. Example: At first, assume whoever is updating important official content will need 3 hours a week on average for the first 4 months. Then, after that person is accustomed to the tools, assume no more than an average of 1.5 hours a week.

**5. Who will join you in developing and practicing digital ministry?**

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

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Consider: Like all forms of church ministry, no one person can literally “do it” all. And it’s dangerous for the ministry for one person to do everything on an ongoing basis.

- a. Who will manage the development and implementation of digital ministry at first?
  - i. Lay leaders and staff together?

- ii. Just lay leaders and the church admin for launching a new site, Facebook page, twitter handle, or YouTube channel? Or all of them?
- iii. Will a staff person then take over some of the responsibility for publishing to these various locations? How will that staff person's time be reorganized to accommodate the work? Are you willing to look at how that person works to see if digital ministry can offer efficiencies and not additional workload? Will it be a shared responsibility between staff and lay leaders and members?

**6. What other resources can you draw on for digital ministry?**

Your answer:

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Consider:

- a. Free, ad supported turnkey plug and play solutions:  
Examples: Facebook, Drupal, Wordpress, Pinterest, Google+
- b. Fee-based turnkey solutions such as Ning or premium versions and add-ons for free services.
- c. UUA.org and district staff
- d. Best practices from other UU congregations and individual ministers with established digital ministries

**7. Is your church instrumented (fitted with) Internet access?**

Your answer:

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- a. Is it wireless?
- b. Is the signal strong throughout your building, including the sanctuary and chapel, or campus?
- c. Is this staff hardware up to date ----(should be replaced every 3-4 years and the expense should be accounted for in the maintenance of capital improvements, for example.)