



CHURCH IN THE DIGITAL SPACE:  
KEY POINTS FROM CoFE DIGITAL LABS CONFERENCE



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## **Introduction**

An estimated 4 billion people worldwide are online. Churches at all levels have been more hesitant to engage in the digital world than other sectors. However, Covid-19 accelerated matters and many parishes posted services online during successive lockdowns. As society emerges from restrictions it is time to consider how church and the digital world can intersect.

This guide is a summary of the main points of the Church of England Digital Labs Conference which took place online in October 2020. The contributors to the conference are listed at the start of each section. It is intended for clergy and those who assist with digital communications in parishes to act as a starting point to consider where they go from here.

In his contribution to the Digital Labs Conference, Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell, contended that the Church will not be able to go back to the way things were before March 2020. Church in the future will be a mixed ecology between in-person services and online services, he contended. The vision of the Church remains the same – to be a Church centred on Christ. But to share that vision we must build new communities and those communities will be online and offline, he stated.

He addressed the dark side of the internet and social media but said that as Christians we have a moral responsibility to inhabit the digital world in an ethical way and speak prophetically to its ethical regulation.

Those who want to explore further or find information on specific areas can contact the DCO, Lynn Glanville, who will attempt to point you in the right direction.

## How we live out our Christian vocation in the online landscape?

Speaker:

Archbishop Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York

### KEY QUOTES AND POINTS:

- “My plea is that we use our best wit to use this technology in an imaginative way to share the Gospel.”
- “You don’t need me to list the harms done by the internet – the harms to democracy or the harms to children for example. But don’t go back to analogue. Inhabit the digital world in an ethical way.”
- He outlined the vision and strategy of the church of England. What kind of church does God want us to be and how does digital fit into it.
- “On March 10 1876 Alexander Graham Bell made the first ever phone call. He said, it is said, I can envisage the day when there will be one of these in every single town. Even the inventor of the telephone could not begin to conceive the intelligence of the thing that he had invented. Now we have one in every pocket. The whole of our world has been revolutionised – the way we communicate with each other and the way we build community was changed by this thing we have in our pocket. Sometimes it’s a failure of human imagination to see the potential of the things we invent. And we are in the very early stages of the digital world. The people growing up now, digital natives, will be amazed that we couldn’t see how we could use this tech for good.”

### ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- This is an area where the Church needs to take a lead.
- The Church of England has introduced a [digital charter](#).
- Facebook and Twitter refer to themselves as [platforms](#). Platforms imply a neutral space where they have no responsibility for what happens there. The Archbishop contends they are public spaces and like any public space must be regulated in an ethical way that takes account of wrong doing.
- We are all aware of the harm that takes place in the digital world. For those who inhabit the digital world, let us realise that as Christians we have moral responsibility to speak prophetically into the world that it be ethically regulated.

### LITURGICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- Great imagination is needed.
- Liturgy and worship online is not about pointing a camera at a church service.
- We have to develop our own language for developing services online.

- In the past year huge creativity has gone into rethinking how we do church in online worship.

#### EVANGELISTIC CONSIDERATIONS:

- Digital is good for telling stories.
- Digital is also good at advertising.
- It has its dark side but we need to engage.
- Algorithms could also be used to make the internet a safer place.
- Algorithms and advertisements can cause harm but could also be used for the promotion of good and for the Gospel.
- The internet is a liminal space. It is a gentle, permissive space for people to enter who are not quite sure of the Christian space. It can be an incredible space for evangelism. The online space is accessible and friendly.

#### THE BLENDED FUTURE FOR THE CHURCH:

- We're not going to be able to go back to where we were before March 2020.
- The future for the Church is going to be blended between church and online.
- This reality is going to be fundamental to the vision and strategy of the Church of England over the coming years.
- It will be a mixed ecology – the traditional church we know and live and online church.
- Wherever we are doing church we need to think about the digital world we now inhabit.
- The vision remains the same – We must be a church that is centred on Christ. To share that vision with others we create new communities of faith. We read about it in the New Testament. It has been the pattern throughout church history. The new communities will be online communities as well as offline communities.
- Understand people's anxieties but a mixed ecology is not favouring one community over another. It is a mixture.
- Church will always involve physical gathering.
- It could turn out to be the salvation of church – you could have 30-40 people in church and 100 people online.
- The online people won't necessarily come into church when this is over. But people who have never been to church before feel at ease attending online.

#### “ONLINE CHURCH ISN'T CHURCH”

- People who say this are wrong! But it is a serious question.
- Sacramentally – to be the Church is to be a sacramental community. You can't be baptised online.
- We can use our imagination about how we are going to become communities online.
- There are important sacramental questions – baptism and the Eucharist. This is an interesting theological issue for the Church to grapple with.

- In the greater diversity of mixed ecology of online and offline church there will be points of unity and in those points of unity is where the sacraments will be lived out.

#### DIGITAL POVERTY AND THOSE WHO AREN'T COMFORTABLE WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

- How should churches approach this?
- There are parts of the country (England) where access to the internet is poor or non-existent. The Church needs to be a prophetic voice in this – this is a justice issue.
- For those who don't feel comfortable in the online world – we need good pastoral care, but the future is digital.
- We don't need to list the harms done by the internet – harms to democracy and children. But don't go back to analogue, inhabit the digital world in an ethical way.

#### MANAGING CHURCH IN PERSON AND ONLINE – IS IT WORTH DOING BOTH?

- The last year has been exhausting.
- Don't make a big distinction between online and offline – there is one world, and in it is the online world.
- We got used to the analogue phone. It's also great when someone Zooms you. It's another way of being with each other. It won't replace the previous way of being with each other.

# The Power of Online Communication

Speaker:

**Warren Nettleford – Channel 5 News**

## KEY POINTS

The digital space provides an opportunity for individuals and groups to reach many people. It is crucial to have an understanding of the best way to make social media work for you. Authenticity in the digital space can be measured in our sincerity with God's word. We are not salesmen so how can our voices be heard. If a viewer can find an authentic representation of the Gospel, it doesn't matter if we have a smaller number of followers.

The content must be authentic to our church's mission. It is important to find a balance between wanting to share and get the message out widely and the ego of building a successful platform. Having lots of followers is not a sign of success, the authenticity of the message is. Putting something out into the digital space means it might be seen by someone who does not normally go to your church. It is better to have committed followers online than hundreds of people who do not engage with your content.

## FRAMING YOUR AUTHENTIC VOICE IS KEY

- How authenticity is expressed can change depending on the platform you communicate on.
- Having an authentic voice – rather than making out our lives are bigger and better than they are – enables your audience to get to know you.
- Understand the grammar of each social media platform. You can deliver a traditional sermon on YouTube but it would be very difficult to do that on Snapchat or Tik Tok.
- Tell stories differently on each platform
  - Facebook – the stories are stripped back to the people – let people's voices be heard.
  - Twitter – more news lead – analysis and professional photos.
  - Instagram – curating a brand voice – all about looking good – the quality of the photos and videos.
- If you want to speak to different communities understand that you have to be on their platform and be seen to use them.
  - Facebook – largest share of over 25 year olds.
  - Instagram – largest sector of users is under 40.
  - Teens are on Tik Tok, Snapchat and Instagram and will be multiscreening with YouTube at the same time.
- Don't attempt to use all the platforms – find the one that's best for you (where your audience is). Facebook currently leads the way for church communicators but plan for change.
- Sharing stories works well for churches online.

## Livestreaming on a Shoestring Budget

Speaker:

**Sam Poch – Content producer for the Church of England**

### KEY POINT

You don't need a big budget to livestream your service.

### INTERNET CONNECTION

This is most important – if you aren't connected to the internet you can't livestream. If your church has no internet connection, you could buy a dongle to create an internet hotspot. This will give you a wifi connection to whichever network you buy the dongle from. This will involve a monthly subscription. You can generally purchase a dongle from your local phone shop – eg Eir or Vodafone.

### EQUIPMENT

- Phone  
You can use your phone to livestream on social media. You will not be able to livestream from your phone to YouTube unless you have 1000 subscribers to your channel. But you can use an app called StreamYard ([www.streamyard.com](http://www.streamyard.com)) to stream to YouTube from your phone.
- Webcam  
There are many different types of webcams. They link to your computer for streaming. The webcam will need to be put at the front of the church as there is no zoom.
- Video camera  
A video camera can be set up anywhere in the church as it has a zoom – this might be useful if you are conducting blended services with some of the congregation at home and some in the church – seeing people present provides atmosphere (remember under GDPR to tell the people in church that the service is being streamed).  
If using a video camera you will need a video catcher device – eg a Black Magic mixer - (which is inexpensive) to convert your camera feed into to a format that your laptop will recognise.
- Audio  
Invest in audio – sound is very important. The feed should go directly to your stream or your church sound desk. You may need an audio adapter to plug into the laptop so that the feed from the microphone goes into your stream. You can purchase a sound mixer which you can plug your microphone into which sends the audio to the



computer. If you have mics in your church they can be fed into your stream. You can also buy mics for your phone.

- Streaming software  
Streamyard – allows you to stream from your phone to YouTube as well as social media platforms. This is a subscription service but there is a free trial.  
OBS (Open Broadcaster Software) Studio - offers free and opensource software for video recording and live streaming – [www.obsproject.com](http://www.obsproject.com) This takes camera/audio feed and sends to Facebook or YouTube. You can add pictures and videos. There are online tutorials.

#### HOW TO SET UP IN YOUR CHURCH

- Find the best location for the camera – think about where your subject is. Is there a window behind the subject which can cause over exposure? Putting the camera close to the subject helps people feel connected. Frame the shot from the subject's waist up.
- Make sure the subject is well lit. You can purchase LED light panels on stands (about €100).
- GET A TRIPOD – this is essential for ensuring that your footage is steady.
- Camera angle – angle the camera head on so people feel you are speaking to them. If you have people in the congregation this may not be possible if the camera is in their way.

#### LIVESTREAMING FROM ZOOM

- You can now livestream from Zoom to Facebook and YouTube. Bear in mind the sound from the computer – you may need to plug in a mic to the USB port. This is good for discussion, prayer, community building.

## More than watching – building community online through services and events

Speakers:

**The Revd Matt Hogg, Vicar of St Albans church in Fulham, and Emma Sijuwade, Social media consultant**

### KEY POINT

Parishes have done so much. They've adapted, adopted digital technology and tried new ways of reaching people. The challenge lies in discipling people. Disciple is an active word, not a passive word. How do we create a feel in livestreams where people aren't just passively consuming? How do we connect with the topics and communities through online services.

### TAKE STOCK OF WHERE YOUR AUDIENCE IS

- At home
- What channel – Facebook/YouTube?
- Show something of yourself in the service – embrace where you are.
- Shorter services
- Be consistent with content – people need to know what to expect.
- Possibility of including parishioners – readings/prayers recorded from home. Have an opening video of parishioners in their own homes sending greetings to the rest of the parish. Parishioners can hear the voices and see the faces of others as they would when going to church.
- Consider holding live worship on Zoom after the pre-recorded service to build community – meet online for coffee, prayer and discussion on the theme of the service.

### ENGAGE WITH THOSE WATCHING – BUILD CONNECTION

- Bring warmth – welcome and smile
- Recognise their context – don't ignore the fact that everyone is at home and expect everyone to pretend they are in church.
- Ask people to comment and add their reflections on the service online.
- If you are asking people to pre-record readings etc advise them on what you want.
- Elevate key messages – put a link to the relevant reading in the comments so people can find it. Put a prayer used in the service in the comments.
- Ask questions – possibly include an end screen with questions for people to reflect on.
- If livestreaming from a church with some physical congregation and some at home make sure to acknowledge those watching at home regularly so that all feel part of the service.

## TRACKING THE STATISTICS

### WHO ARE YOU ENGAGING WITH?

- Likes are a vanity metric – it's more important that your audience is engaged with your content.
- Are you getting consistent numbers coming back each week? Are people sharing and commenting on your content? This shows what content people find valuable.

### USING PLATFORMS TO BUILD COMMUNITY

- Facebook Groups – you can create groups on Facebook of your 'top fans' or engaged members of your congregation. Let them know what's coming up. Engage with them.
- If someone comments on your post engage with it – reply to them or put an emoji on it.
- You can't build community if your audience can't relate to you.

### CHOOSING YOUR PLATFORMS

- If you are on your own – without a team to help with content – don't try to use all social media platforms.
- Tailor your use to suit your audience.
- Facebook is still the main platform so go there first.
- If you are pre-recording on YouTube make sure to post the link to Facebook also.
- People spend 3.5 hours a day on social media so part of digital discipleship is to show up and be present.
- Every community on every platform is different – tailor your content.

### FOR THOSE OPPOSED TO FACEBOOK

- It is something that is not going to go away.
- Social media is here to stay and if you are not part of it you will be left behind.
- 4 billion people are online you can't afford to ignore it.
- Facebook is interactive. People can get to know you on it.
- Use social media mindfully.

### HOW TO BE INCLUSIVE TO REACH A WIDER COMMUNITY

- Think about the language you use – it is easy to fall into using Christian shorthand – but some people don't have that framework and may not know how to use a Bible. Remove those barriers.
- Consider an identity statement – you are loved, you are not alone, you have purpose – as opposed to we are loved, we are not alone and we have purpose.

# Audience First Approach To Digital

## Speaker:

**Camilla Field Head of Digital Transformation – Church Army**

## KEY POINT

Taking time to understand your audience and how they engage with your content can help deepen your relationship with them.

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR AUDIENCE

- Who are they?
- What do they need to know?
- How is your audience interacting with your digital channels?
- Is what you are doing reaching those you need to engage with? – Measure reach.
- What are their needs? – Ask them.
- Whose story will they engage better with? – Yours or your users.
- What do you need to tell them? – Your key messages to fulfil your tasks.
- How do you need to tell them? – Which channels do they use?

## THE USER JOURNEY

- This is a snapshot of the entire visitor experience – off line and online.
- Combine storytelling and visualisation – take the audience on a journey with you.
- It is not just one big audience – there are different segments with different needs and preferences.
- We live in a digital world at the moment – we need to make sure we are being concise.

## User persona

- Build a character for your users based on your current audience understanding.
- Deepens engagement with the existing audience.
- Think about engaging with the persona.
- Allows us to understand the users' expectations, motives, the channels they use, their behaviours.
- Think of their questions, emotions, touchpoints, pain points and influences.
- Helps to visualise who you are engaging with.

## The power of content

- What is your objective?
- Every piece of content you share should meet your objective but also the audience's objective.
- Different content for different user groups.
- Think about the language and tone that best appeals to your audience segments.
- Create shareability – content that users will share with others.

- Frequency – be consistent – don't set off at unsustainable pace.
- Imagery and video add depth and engagement.
- Video is important – doesn't have to be extremely polished – be authentic and let your personality shine through.
- To grow your audience you need to – intrigue, inspire, inform, engage.
- User generated content – enable people share their experience – helps your audience relate.

#### Exemplary customer experience

- Build your user journey.
- Understand their needs, motives, drivers and challenges.
- Share relatable content – think about the touch points of the customer journey.
- Fuel organic audience growth by creating content that people share.

#### Growing your audience through value added content

- Church Army has: created online youth church services, online school assemblies, midday reflections, prayer roulette via Facebook, online kids' club, cuppa with a keyworker on Zoom and Facebook, livestreamed events, social media targeting of video events.
- This has created engagement and widened their reach.
- If you understand your audience and what their needs and motivations are, try new things that create content that is relatable to them.

## How is the Church maximising the use of digital?

Speaker:

**Adrian Harris, Church of England Head of Digital**

The Church of England digital team was formed in 2016 with one member of staff and a small budget. Since they have received investment to support the work of churches. They support, learn from, highlight best practice and sustain churches in digital.

- Audience research and insights sit at the heart of what they do.
- They support churches with campaigns at key moments.
- Provide training
- Work on apps and smart skills.
- Developed a social media charter and guidelines.
- Produce content that can be used by churches nationally.

### IMPACT OF COVID-19

- There has been a huge pivot to online video and audio and mixed ecology.
- Significant increase in social media engagement.
- Record national weekly online services – this resources the local church in the event they can't record a service.

### ONLINE TRENDS

- Facebook is still the key platform.
- There is growth in YouTube and WhatsApp
- Globally there has been a 12 percent increase in social media usage. There is a growing audience for content and to have local and national Christian content is important.
- Daily time spent on social media is increasing. How can we continue to bring the light shining in the darkness?
- Covid will continue to cause disruption.
- Video will continue to be crucial for services and interactive events.

### AVOIDING BURNOUT

- There is a growing need to share and provide content in different ways.
- There is a need to maximise your content rather than simply doing more and more.
- If you are pre-recording your service or event, can you reuse some of it during the week and get your users to share it.
- Focus on a couple of key platforms. Facebook is still important for the different age ranges.
- Churches have a huge opportunity to offer up what they are doing locally.
- It's not a competition – parishes are not in competition with each other and it is not a competition between physical and digital.

- Focus on what is manageable and do a couple of things well rather than a lot of things poorly.
- Focus on bringing light into darkness and using social media in positive ways to bring good news.

#### POSITIVES FROM LOCKDOWN EXPERIENCE

The CofE Digital Team has found that:

- A lot of people are watching and engaging in online services.
- One in five viewers of their national service are not regular church goers – according to responses to the survey posted at the end of each service.
- People have realised and appreciated the role of faith based groups at this time.
- The CofE is unrivalled in its local presence – 16,500 churches.

## How to turn your sermon – or anything else – into a podcast

### Speaker:

**James Newhood - Audio producer with Church of England Digital**

### KEY POINT

Podcasting is a piece of media delivered in audio format. Some people enjoy audio format. It fits into places that a lot of other content doesn't. It also allows for long form media. They are good for reaching smaller audience who are going to be more engaged.

### WHY START A PODCAST?

- Very easy – you already have the tools you need in your pocket – your phone.
- You can go to different levels with production.
- It can be done on low budget.
- It fills a gap in your congregation or audiences consumption.
- All media fights for your attention but podcasting is separate – some prefer to listen to podcast – fill gaps on commute, long drive, reduces screen time.
- You may be doing a Sunday service but a podcast could be a way to encourage prayer during the week without the extra work of recording another service. People often listen to night prayer before bed – relaxing.
- You don't have to organise people – just do it yourself at home.

### WHAT YOU WANT PODCAST TO BE ABOUT?

- If you're already producing Sunday service – maybe take the audio from that and put it in a podcast – get more mileage out of something you already have.
- A sermon or another service from your house.
- Night prayer.
- Discussion or interviews – discussion on theology – you might need to use an online service to record over the internet.
- For the more ambitious you could choose something like a magazine show – different segments, discussions, interviews. This requires more organisation.
- If using music don't monetise your podcast.

### HOW DO YOU RECORD IT?

- Can use your phone, tablet or computer – preferably phone or tablet for better sound quality.
- If have a budget get a dedicated mic and audio interface.
- Audio interface takes signal from your mic and converts it to something that your computer understands. But you can get usb mics which does the converting.



- If recording at home – buy a dynamic microphone – (cost £15 ish) - records what's in front of it and not much around it. Good for recording without the best acoustics.
- If recording in church or place with nice acoustic, a condenser mic better – a phone or tablet have these built in.
- If recording multiple people, you will need more mics. Can set your phone a bit back and record everyone but this does not produce the best quality. People may forgive lower audio quality if the content is really valuable to them.
- Stand or arm for the mic – a pop filter to stop plosive sounds and sibilance – cable to get mic into your audio interface.
- Software – phone or tablet – voice recorder on phone – free app called Auphonic – offers settings.
- Computer might already have software – Mac had Garage band. Audacity is completely free and can be used to record and edit.

## RECORDING

- Record in WAV format – at a Sample rate 48khz. This preserves the sound of the audio – MP3 compresses audio – record in the best quality. Ophonic app allows you to this.
- Recording environment – it doesn't matter where you record but the best places are a bedroom or living room with lots of soft furnishing which absorb the reflections bouncing off the walls and give a dead studio sound. Be conscious of extraneous sound – traffic or birds, fridges. Duvets are effective at absorbing sound – hang two duvets behind you to give a more professional sound.
- Microphone positioning – for a dynamic mic follow the four finger rule. Too close and your voice will be booming. Too far and you will lose clarity.
- Technique – keep voice fairly level (not shouting and then whispering). Think about pace. Speak slower.

## EDITING

- Software – Audacity. Or for the phone – Wavepad.
- Approaches – podcast can be easy – You can just record it and post it. You may decide to tidy up the beginning and the end or put different pieces together.
- It is better to learn to use Audacity because when you want to develop your podcast you won't have an ability limit.
- Auphonic mobile app and web service – post production tools – free for two hours of audio and once you've processed your audio you can delete it from their website and then you get your two hours back.
- Auphonic has tools – Signal levelling (turn loud bits down and quiet bits up) but it is important to keep voice level as bringing sound up and down changes quality. Loudness – brings volume up to a level similar to other podcasts out there. Noise reduction – brings down background noise. Don't go to crazy with it because it won't sound very nice. Auphonic has tutorials.

## DISTRIBUTION

- A distributor hosts your podcast and distributes it to platforms – eg Apple or Spotify. They offer analytics. Some offer Wordpress integration. Some give a free website to use.
- Soundcloud, Buzzsprout, Captivate.
- Soundcloud isn't a dedicated podcasting platform – it is not the best place to host your podcast. It is free. But only up to three hours – not ideal as you will run out of space and have to delete old episodes. It gives you an RSS feed to link to your podcast. Each platform has its own way of entry – it's not that difficult. Most dedicated podcast platforms offer one click to get podcast to that platform.
- Buzzsprout – free option 2 hours a month. Can pay for increments.
- Captivate – pay for - really good. They don't charge you by space – charge you on how many listen to podcast. There is an option for multiple RSS feeds.

## HOW TO MARKET YOUR PODCAST

- Post an audiogram to your social media platform. Take an audio snippet from your podcast and put it to video – give snippet of podcast to audience on social media and link to where your podcast is available.

## HOW INVITE PEOPLE TO FOLLOW UP IF BEEN LISTING TO PODCAST

- Have a section in your podcast for audience questions and answers – encourage people to send in questions. Next episode follow up on all the questions.
- Invite engagement in the podcast.
- Polls in Spotify – good way to engage people.

## FREQUENCY

- Weekly is the standard. But you can batch produce them. You could record a number in one day.

## Welcome in Church Online

### KEY POINT

There is no such thing as a fully inclusive church – online or offline – it depends on resources available. We need to learn from others, see what others are doing and think about how we implement this in our own settings. Before placing a notice on your noticeboard or website, have a conversation with your parishioners to decide how you are going to include people and how to make people feel included even if you haven't mentioned them. Covid has seen a rush of people online but people who have disabilities have been attending church online for a long time.

### WELCOME

- The welcome is a process. It is not just the initial moment but it is an engagement.
- The question you should have in mind is: Where will we meet each other again? Not: When will you come into my space again?
- We must be willing to share our stories.
- Put yourself in the place of people who are unfamiliar with us. What are you tell the outsider about how they can become part of this community?

### IMAGES OF YOUR CHURCH

- Use images of 'doing' rather than images of the 'higher ups' in the church.
- Action photos give people an idea of what is going to happen when they go to church as opposed to telling people who makes up the hierarchy of the church.

### HOW TO INCLUDE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ONLINE

- Ask your congregation and find out what they want.
- There are lots of ways people connect with faith – physical presents, online, phone or by post.
- Pandemic prayer booklet – a liturgy to help people participate in the online service (many people already send out the service sheet or post it on the website before their online service).
- When you put a service online don't just forget about it – go back later and caption it. YouTube has a captioning service and captions include more people.

### MENTAL HEALTH

- Be aware of your language and tone.
- Sometimes worship is led with a sense that the only place to be is 'upward and onward' without acknowledging the sections of Scripture in which people are falling apart.
- We use the phrase 'mental health' in a strange way – we all have mental health but people have different needs.
- We need to acknowledge that life has ups and downs right now.

## PRACTICAL THINGS CHURCHES CAN DO TO BE MORE WELCOMING

- Develop the art of curious conversation.
- Invest in intentional training for those conducting the ministry of welcome – get people to focus on what they are doing and why.
- Embrace the hybrid approach – don't forget online church once the pandemic is gone – being online enables you to reach out into the community.

# Building Your Audience In The Local Community

## KEY POINT

Key to building your audience is to make sure that you are thinking about all the people in your community and all the iterations of them. Make sure you are providing information for all of them. Your audience is made of lots of different people and they're going to be interested in lots of different things.

There are social listening platforms which help you see what people are talking about. Google Trends or key word planners can help you learn what people are looking for. Look at your own social media and website insights to see the demographic that is using your content and examine which of your posts are most popular.

## BUILDING A DIGITAL STRATEGY

- Keep your audience at centre of strategy – always think about them.
- Build goals with your content – is it to inform or entertain?
- Build content appropriate to the media (eg Facebook/Twitter/blog).
- Think about creating a content calendar for different seasons.
- Create content for all audiences – young, older, different insights.
- Ensure consistency – don't do too much of one thing.

## MARKETING OBJECTIVES

- Raise awareness.
- Promote your app or product.
- Point people to your page.
- Reach new audiences.
- Boost post.
- Generate signups to events.

## DIFFERENT TYPES OF CONTENT

- Video
- Photos
- Carousels (like Stories)

## CONTENT COPY – CREATING A CALL TO ACTION

- When creating content – ensure speak in your audience's language. Ask questions. Connect with them on a human basis.
- Call to action – click to find out/sign up now.

## FIVE RULES TO WRITE BY

- Shorten content – people have short attention spans.
- Simplify things you're going to say.
- Steer clear of jargon – think of all your audiences.
- Speak with authority.
- Speak in their language.

#### USING 'PAID' OR 'BOOSTING POSTS' TO SUPPORT YOUR STRATEGY

- Complements your existing organic strategy.
- Reaches new people to make them aware of you.
- Funnel social channels
- Raises awareness, interest, consideration, intent, conversion.

#### FACEBOOK/INSTAGRAM – TARGETING WITH PAID SOCIAL MEDIA

- Advertise to a radius around your parish.
- Target certain demographics.
- Target certain interests/hobbies.
- Target followers of your page.
- Retargeting and lookalikes – targeting people who have been on your page and lookalikes of them.
- Use data you already have to find them.

#### MEASURE OF SUCCESS

- You need to decide what your benchmarks are.
- That may be how many people signed up to your call to action.
- Engagements and comments.
- Likes.

#### COSTS AND BUDGET

- Once you have set up a small campaign you will be able to work out how much it costs to drive a clip or a conversion.
- If you only have a small budget, you can work out how much it costs to, for example, drive people to your website.

#### SOCIAL METRICS JOURNEY

- 1. Raising awareness/generating awareness – using content that will connect with your audiences.
- 2. Interest/consideration – engaged users – will generate engagement from your target audience.
- 3. Arrive at your website when you can give them the chance to convert – to be a subscriber or a fan.
- 4. Advocacy – those fans or subscribers will inspire and engage other users.

## TEST AND LEARN APPROACH

- Testing and learning different types of content enables you to see what is and isn't working.
- When creating content test things like: a call to action (sign up, subscribe, like and share), tone of voice, an image, video, which platform is better for your audience.
- Test one thing at a time.
- Use a question/video things that help engagement.

## TIPS FOR PAID CAMPAIGNING

- Don't go too narrow but not too broad either.
- Use Stories – on Facebook
- Combine your audience knowledge and your channel knowledge. Twitter is good for awareness but not actions. Facebook draws together lots of demographics.
- Don't fatigue your audiences with paid campaigns.

## EXAMPLE CAMPAIGN

- Event – after school club
- Reason – offering benefit to community
- Message – focus on benefits
- Target audience – parents

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Research and building audience
- Make sure you stay up to date with audience
- Keep up to date with platforms.
- Try new stuff – eg Stories on Facebook.
- Plan long term strategy to reach and engage – building a community takes time.

## HOW TO MAKE ORGANIC (NON-PAID) CONTENT WORK

- Find out who your audience are and think about what you want to tell them.
- If you spend time finding out about them you can create content for them.
- Run polls – ask people what you would like more of: prayers, reflections, news.
- Ask people in your parish to make sure they are following you and ask them to share the content.
- Use what you already have – photos from services, videos you have done.

## BUILDING COMMUNITY ORGANICALLY

- Start thinking about what you want your audiences to do and what you want to give them.

- If you are giving them a mix of what will interest and be useful for them, then build your audience. If you're giving them what they need then they will keep coming back.

#### CONTENT CALENDAR

- Think in advance of things that you can post on. If you have an event on Friday – post about it Monday, Wednesday and Thursday then afterwards post highlights from it.
- Think about themes - eg Christmas – and how you can build momentum around that.
- The Church of England has a free content calendar for churches.

#### HOW TO DEAL WITH NEGATIVE COMMENTS

- Try to figure out why they've posted it. Your post simply might not be relevant to them. They might just be a troll. Don't comment back but don't delete it unless it's truly offensive.