



## **DIGITAL MEDIA > WEBSITES, STREAMING, SOCIAL MEDIA**

**CHURCH PRACTICES SERIES**

SEPTEMBER 2022



**GTA Region**



## WELCOME

Over the last few years serving as GTA Regional Director in the Western Ontario District, it became clear that there were some common challenges facing church leaders in the Greater Toronto Area.

As a result, we decided to develop The Church Practices Series to assist our leaders in addressing these challenges in their unique context.

In the following few pages, you will find links to interviews with those with an academic perspective on these challenges and those who have personally worked to address them. In addition, you will find links to resources and a curated summary of what we have seen in our research.

We hope this package helps spark conversation as we work together to see our region impacted for God.

Joel Spiridigliozzi with Jonathan Gallo



## INTERVIEWS

**WATCH / LISTEN HERE:** <https://vimeo.com/750000249/4e217bd38a>



**Mike Fess**  
President & CEO  
MAKE MEDIA  
<https://makedigital.ca>



**Jaime Nelson**  
Lead Pastor, The Summit Church  
WOD Creative Resource Team  
Lead  
[WOD Creative Resource](#)



**Brady Shearer**  
CEO, Pro Church Tools  
<https://prochurchtools.com>

# DIGITAL MEDIA

When considering how to use digital media in your church community, here are a few things to think about.

## KNOW WHO YOU ARE

It is essential to see digital media as another medium of interaction and communication that authentically reflects who you are as a community. As you begin, you must be clear about your vision and mission, your signature ministries, who you are, and what you do. Digital media will amplify clarity or confusion.

## UNDERSTAND YOUR “WHY”?

Make a list of your top three goals for the use of digital media. These goals are essential as you decide what to invest time and finances into and measure success. Articulating your hopes for digital media also allows you to better lead those you hire to help you.

Sometimes our goals require different strategies. For example, the purpose of increasing the number of people who come to our services and helping better communicate events to people in our church might narrow down what we do and how we do it.

In some cases, it is better to start with a Social Media page, and in other cases, it is better to invest in a website first. But, first, understand who you are trying to serve and the platforms they prefer to connect with.

## CONSIDER YOUR RESOURCES

Ensure you are clear about the finances and people required for each element of digital media. Of course, the sky is the limit but understanding your **initial budget**, **ongoing budget**, and **staffing** requirements are very important to slowly and thoughtfully adding new pieces. Here is a sample budgeting tool you can use.

Digital Media Type	Initial cost	What are the ongoing costs?	Who Will Maintain It? / How much will it cost?
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Domain Name</li><li>- Website Creation</li><li>- SEO &amp; Google Listing</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Domain Name</li><li>- Website Hosting</li><li>- Content Creation</li><li>- Maintenance of website.</li><li>- Maintenance of content.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Admin: update events and banners (3 hours a week)</li><li>- Video: update video sermons (4 hours a week)</li><li>- Developer: fix/change website</li></ul>



## TRUST THE RIGHT PEOPLE

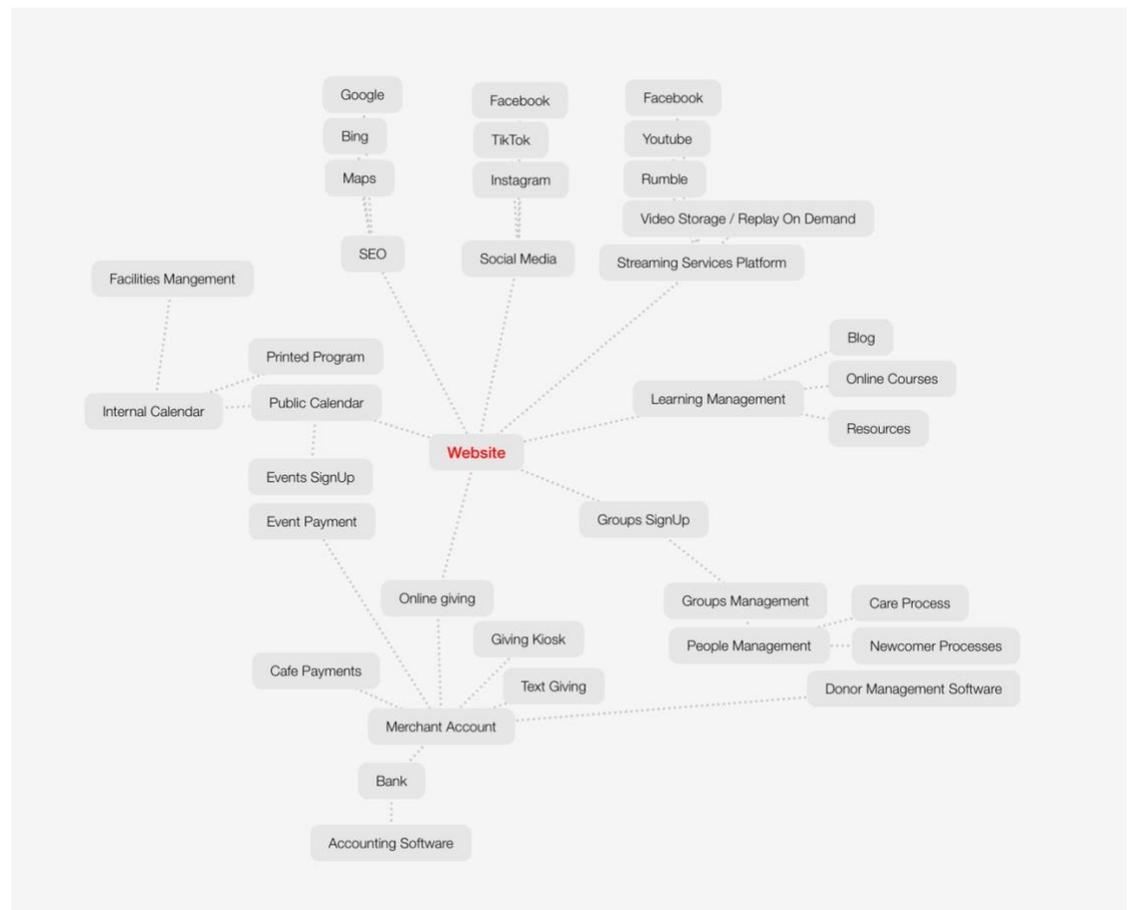
Here are some great questions when deciding who to trust with your digital media investments.

- 1) Show me your portfolio. What have you personally worked on?
- 2) Share your references with me. Who can verify what you have done for them?
- 3) Can you put in writing a timeline of how long it will take for this solution to get implemented?
- 4) What are the terms of the contract? How long am I tied to using your services?

The WOD Creative Resource Team is a great team to help identify the right vendors and services for your church.

## DOES EVERYTHING CONNECT?

The more pieces connect, the more automated, and the less ongoing maintenance there is. Therefore, it is crucial to get a big picture of all the details you might want to implement over a few years and make decisions based on the big picture. Here is a sample of what that can look like.



## WEBSITE

There are several different ways that you can approach your church website. You can use pre-designed template services such as Subsplash.com or Nucleus.church. Some church management software, such as PlanningCenter.com, even can build websites internally. The benefits of these services are that they make it easy to get started quickly and don't require too much knowledge to keep up to date. In addition, they often have a suite of features, such as online giving already integrated.

Alternatively, a website professional can help to build a custom website that reflects your church community. Ensure that it is created on a content management system that makes it easy for a person on your staff or dedicated volunteer to keep up to date. Some website professionals offer plans to help you manage your site beyond the initial design and configuration. Custom sites offer you greater flexibility but may also require a more flexible budget.

It is vital to ensure that you consider SEO (Search Engine Optimization) services as a way for your church to appear higher in an online search. Having your church listed on map services also helps people in your area discover more about your church.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Statistics tell us that over half of our world is connected through social media websites. Friends, family, co-workers, acquaintances, neighbours, advocates, members, clubs, businesses, and churches have all found social media a valuable tool in different ways. So what should you use? Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Telegram, Pinterest, Snapchat?

It is essential to focus on your goals and engage with social media platforms that best help you reach them. As an example, if your goal is to get more people to visit your church, you might want to consider your social media pages as a way that people may get a glimpse of what your church community feels like from afar. As a result, ensure that you post plenty of pictures that reflect who you are as a community and what you do if your goal is to communicate with your church family. For example, you could create a page that only offer your church family and post announcements that reflect what is in your weekly program.

Managing multiple social media channels can be difficult. Consider investing in a social media management platform such as Crowdfire, Hootsuite, or Buffer to plan your social media posts, manage conversations, and push out posts simultaneously.



## STREAMING SERVICES / VIDEO HOSTING

Having your services streamed live or available for playback continues to benefit churches in our region. Not only does it help new people decide if they want to attend your church, but it can also help regulars who might away continue to feel connected.

Online streaming can be as simple as broadcasting live from a cell phone to Facebook or YouTube live. However, understanding some of the required elements can help you decide what you might need to start.

**Video Source** – a camera or suite of cameras connected to a video mixer

**Audio Source** – a microphone or sound mix sent from a soundboard

**Encoder** – a device/software that takes audio and video signal and converts it to a stream of data for the internet.

**Streaming Service** – a platform that broadcasts your feed to a particular audience. Youtube.com and Facebook.com offer free broadcast services with some paid options. In addition, services such as daCast.com and Resi.io offer streaming services that can simultaneously broadcast to both YouTube and Facebook and your website or a more sophisticated online platform like ChurchOnlinePlatform.com.

## LEARNING MANAGEMENT

An emerging piece for church leaders to consider is using digital media to streamline and manage online learning and training. As families work multiple jobs and manage school and family activities, attending church multiple times per week becomes increasingly challenging. Church leaders must consider how they might offer training for volunteers and discipleship classes in a way that fits overlapping schedules. Learning management platforms can be used to take pre-recorded courses on demand. Platforms such as Learndash.com, Teachable.com, Thinkific.com, Podia.com, and Learnworlds.com help you set up courses differently.

## ONLINE GIVING

Offering online giving as an option should be considered alongside how people give in-person, pay for their drink in your church café, and register for events online with your church management platform. Each electronic payment option requires signing up with a different merchant account. Your bookkeeper must reconcile each account and donation information updated in your donor management system. In the long term, it is best to look for services that can cover more options and automatically connect with your donor management system and accounting software. While shopping for a solution, consider your transaction fees and how manual input can increase your overall bookkeeping costs.

