

Websites Mini-Class Script

Click PRESENT

CLICK 2014 marked the 25th anniversary of the creation of The World Wide Web by British computer scientist, Sir Tim Berners-Lee. In just 25 years, 60 trillion individual web pages have been created, and the web has come to define modern reality.

CLICK Computers and the internet are now accessed by fully 46.4% of the world's population, and at least 87% of adults in the U.S. There are over 52,000 Google searches, and nearly 2.5 million emails sent every single second.

CLICK This revolutionary new technology is exactly what Spencer W. Kimball was talking about when he said, "I believe that the Lord is anxious to put into our hands inventions of which we laymen have hardly had a glimpse. When we have used the satellite and related discoveries to their greatest potential, then, and not until then, shall we approach the insistence of our Lord and Master to go unto all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." The internet is an ever-changing landscape, and our challenge is not only to effectively navigate the web ourselves, but to help those who are seeking the truth, find it.

CLICK Our purpose today is to explore how to use Websites as a missionary tool. Online missionary work is about going where people are looking, and being approachable, visible, and likeable when it comes to the topic of faith. This not only applies to the Church as a global entity. It applies to each and every one of us as we use the internet and engage in conversations and communities online. When we participate in missionary work online, we are the digital representatives of the Savior. It brings new meaning to the question: have you received His image in your countenance - have you linked His church's websites in your profiles?

CLICK It should come as no surprise that many people turn to the internet when they have questions or curiosities about our faith. The problem we face is the sheer volume of incorrect and negative information that is so readily available to anyone searching "Mormon" on the internet. What you may not realize, however, is that you can have an impact on what they find. Through complex algorithms, search engines look through billions of web pages to find the best answers to your questions. Part of that involves looking at what's popular - what other people have clicked on in the past. So the more we look for, traffic, and promote positive sources of information about the church, the more those results will appear in the future. As you learn about, look through, and frequent a variety of positive Mormon sources, you help to share the gospel online.

But being a member-missionary on websites isn't just about promoting what's already out there. It's about joining the conversation - and that requires you to become like Moroni - well prepared. There are excellent official resources to help you become more familiar with common questions about the church, and to help you feel more comfortable discussing gospel topics. Mormontopics.org, Mormon Newsroom 101 and LDS.org's gospel topics section are just a few of the most comprehensive websites available. As you study and learn more about how

to answer common questions about the church, you will feel more prepared going into gospel conversations online. And the more you study and implement gospel living in your own life, the more the quality and credibility of your missionary contribution will improve.

CLICK So how can you join the conversation on websites? One way to quickly and easily share your faith is by writing reviews. With this in mind, try writing a review for the Book of Mormon, or your local church building or temple. Although you may not think of searching for a new church when you travel or move, others do, and rely on positive reviews to help them.

You can also join the comment stream on news stories related to Mormonism. Often these comments are filled with hate speech, anti, and arguing. Bring a positive voice of testimony and personal experience to the conversation, and help a future reader see the happiness you enjoy from living the gospel.

In addition to writing comments and reviews, there are many websites, like Yahoo! Answers, Wiki Answers, and the LDS.net forums, where people ask faith-based questions: everything from how to find a purpose in life, to basics about religion, to more specific questions about the history and beliefs of the restored church. As you become more comfortable with the resources available to you online, and more confident in sharing your testimony online, you can do a great work by answering these questions. Adding positive and clear answers to sometimes difficult questions can make a big difference to those who are sincerely searching for the truth, and can build relationships that help others move toward conversion. Those who learn about the gospel online tend to stay active in the church - and websites provide many opportunities to connect naturally with people who are already searching for the truth.

CLICK As you find these individuals, the full-time missionaries are ready to help you in your efforts to share and teach the gospel. Posting a link to mormon.org/chat, where the missionaries are available to chat online, can be a great way to help honest truth-seekers learn more. Share LDS videos, quotes, talks, articles, and stories of your personal experiences to others. Invite them to learn more, and connect them with the church's official missionary force. Now really is the time to work together with the missionaries to bring souls unto Christ.

And as always, remember that your online missionary efforts must be guided by the Spirit. It may be difficult to appreciate or understand the impact you are having in the lives of those who see what you post. But as you follow the Spirit, you can be an instrument in the Lord's Hands to bring about His purposes. Remember by small and simple things, great things are brought to pass.

As members of the church, when speaking about our Savior, we are also representing Him. In the talk, "A Word for the Hesitant Missionary", President Uchtdorf teaches, "There is so much incivility in the world today. Because of the anonymity of the Internet, it is easier than ever to say toxic or grating things online. Shouldn't we, the hopeful disciples of our gentle Christ, have a higher, more charitable standard?" Never engage in arguing online. As we follow the counsel of our leaders, and the example of our Savior, in reaching out in kindness to individuals, we will feel much more confident in our contribution to the missionary effort.

CLICK Technology is playing a larger role than ever in both spreading and teaching the gospel. One example of this is Derick, a man who was searching for truth and found LDS.net, a website with both information about the church, as well as a social forum where people can ask and answer questions about the gospel. Of his conversion, Derick said, “out of all the billion websites on the net, I was led to LDS.net to discover the amazing power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ...I needed the support from LDS.net to build up my courage to visit the missionaries and go to services the first time.”

Whether you realize it or not, people are searching for answers online. Derick was baptized in March of 2008, and while his story is remarkable, it is not necessarily unique. Stories similar to his own are increasing as the role of technology in missionary work grows.

CLICK President David O. McKay taught, “Every member a missionary.” As missionary work is evolving, member-missionary work is evolving right alongside it. As we utilize pro-LDS resources and websites to become knowledgeable and approachable on gospel topics, we become more effective missionaries both in person and online. Not every interaction, post, review, or chat will lead to visible and clear success, but it will make a difference. We never know who is ready and looking for the gospel, or who is looking for more answers from a member of the church. But what we do know is that as we follow the counsel of our church leaders to “join the conversation”, keep the Spirit with us, and act on the opportunities that this online mission field presents, we will, as President Kimball taught, “approach the insistence of our Lord and Master to go unto all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”

CLICK for Q&A

CLICK for During Activity