Social Media and Internet technologies are an integral part of our lives in the 21st century. The same should be true of our congregations and the ministerial approaches of religious leaders. This course will describe the contemporary technological context of the U.S. in which ministry occurs. It will address potential worship innovations, community interactions and spiritual practices around the use of Facebook, Twitter, blogs, video and other technologies. The course will creatively explore the potential strategic advantages of such technology as well as ways to avoid possible roadblocks to incorporating these technological features in the life and functioning of any congregation. The course will also engage in hand-on exploration of these tools, assessment of a church’s tech use and the creation of a social media/technology strategy for the congregation.

The profound changes happening in the way individuals communicate between and with each other have necessitate new ways of thinking about the process of interpersonal and theological communication. The power of instant communication, social media, and the Internet culture require shifts in the way we think about ourselves, our relationships, and our communities. A new skill set is required in order to communicate effectively about self, community, congregation, and God. Leaders of faith communities need both to understand and to use these new paradigms to be effective participants in contemporary social and religious discourse. Guest speakers will include a number of leading authors and clergy in the field as available.

June 23-27 9-5:30

Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an awareness of Internet and social media tools
- Have developed some basic proficiency in using these tools
- Understand and begin to develop a distinctive identity and “brand” of their ministry setting
- Identified the multiple ways that these technologies can be effectively applied to the various aspects of ministry to enrich internal and external communication and facilitate ministry.
- Have shaped a plan for utilizing Internet technologies and social media culture in their ministry context
- Understand the theological, ethical and cultural issues implicit in these new media tools
Required Reading: (I strongly encourage auditors to do the readings to be better equipped to participate in the class discussions)

*Click 2 Save* by Drescher & Anderson  
**ISBN-** 0819227749

*The Social Media Gospel: Sharing the Good News in New Ways* by Meredith Gould  
**ISBN-** 081463558X

*Social Media Guide for Ministry: What It Is & How to Use It* by Nils Smith  
**ISBN-** 0764498894

Several articles and chapters electronically available prior to the course

Class Attendance and Participation:

Given that this course is a short intensive, attendance at all course sessions is mandatory, and absences will reflect negatively on a student’s grade. In case of emergency or illness, please notify the instructors immediately. Active participation, including in large and small group discussion, is required for everyone, even those auditing the course.

A word about laptop computers: we understand that people learn in varieties of modes, and that for some people multi-tasking feels both comfortable and effective as a form of learning. We reserve the right to ask you to close your electronic devices if anything you are doing is distracting to your colleagues, or appears to be interfering with your effective participation in the class.

Course Assignments

Timely completion of all assignments is expected of all students. Late work may or may not be accepted, at the instructor's discretion. A reduction in the grade should be expected for late work.

The following assignments are required:

a) Branding essay: write a 2-4 page reflection that articulates your ministry’s “brand,” distinctive identity, or "elevator speech."

b) A technology audit of ones ministry setting

c) Class and evening work to experiment with the Internet and Social Media tools we are discussing.
d) A final project that describes a tech/social media strategy and implementation for one's ministry setting. Optional for auditors, required for those taking the course for credit.

Special needs

If you have any special learning needs that I can and should accommodate, please let me know as soon as possible.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is any act that represents someone else’s work as your own whether intentionally or unintentionally. It is an offense against academic honesty and as such, subject to disciplinary action. Various steps may be taken in response, and these are detailed in both the student handbook and the catalog. If you have any questions at all about how to handle a particular resource, please ask us. We’re happy to work with you on ensuring that your work has academic integrity.

****It is expected that students will bring a WiFi enabled laptop or tablet to all class sessions.

Daily Session Topics will include, among others:

Introduction

The cultural reality – the technological world we live in.

Just how technological are America's churches?

What do the changes in technology/social media mean for congregations, for denominations, for individual believers and recruitment of future generations?

How to begin - setting up a tech team at your church

Identity, Vision and Branding

Enhance the Internal Dynamics:

Becoming more Efficient with Everyday Functioning

Enhancing Interaction and Build Community
Increase Involvement
Incorporating Technology in Worship

Create Bridges between Inside and Outside:
  Connecting to your Community
  Cooperating with your Causes
  Creating a Resource for the City

Augment Your External Presence:
  21st Century Advertising
  Stealth Evangelism
  Making your Values Known

How to manage the Digital Divide in your congregation
Theological reflections on the role of technology and the nature of the congregation
Create a Tech/Social Media Strategy & Implement it.