

MEETINGHOUSE TECHNOLOGY

Newsletter



February 2011

Introduction

Welcome to another edition of our monthly *Meetinghouse Technology Newsletter!* This edition will discuss some of the changes to meetinghouse Internet use that are planned for 2011.

Remember that the most current information can always be found on our "Meetinghouse Technology Wiki" (mhtech.lds.org). If you haven't visited this site yet, please do so soon, and consider contributing your experiences and knowledge to make this site more helpful and useful to other stake technology specialists around the world.



Featured Topic

Meetinghouse Internet Use
Technology plays an important role in helping the gos-

pel "go forth...into all the world, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth" (D&C 58:64). The Church has encouraged priesthood leaders, members, and missionaries to use technology to further the purposes of the Lord (see "Sharing the Gospel Online", <http://lds.org/church/share?lang=eng> and "Internet Usage Helps for Members", <http://lds.org/pages/internet-usage-helps?lang=eng>). Recently, an announcement was sent from Church headquarters to facilities managers indicating that, as of January 2011, the costs for implementing the Internet in a meetinghouse, including installation costs and ongoing operational costs, would be paid for by the local area office, not by stakes. Stake technology specialists should now work with their facilities manager to move the management of those costs to the local area office's budget.

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Tips & Tricks

New this month on the "Meetinghouse Technology Wiki," you will find two short (8- to 10-minute) training videos. These videos demonstrate some important details about setting up a firewall and extending the network to other parts of your meetinghouse. Watch for more videos on the wiki in the coming months.

Local Highlight

Note: Guidelines for technology vary by area, and not all solutions are appropriate in all areas. Please be sure to check with your area office before implementing any new solutions.



In student wards, it is always a challenge to identify and keep track of new members. This month, we would like to highlight the **BYU 229th**

Ward of the BYU 20th Stake, which is using technology to help leaders meet and fellowship new members.

Each week, this ward has anywhere from 2 to 10 new people in attendance. Members called to a fellowshipping committee greet everyone as they arrive and identify new members. A member of the committee sits with each new member during sacrament meeting and invites the new member to meet with the bishop and other ward leaders after church. During this meeting, pictures are taken of each new member, and these pictures, along with contact information, are printed on a "New Member" sheet is given to each ward leader.

The pictures are immediately added to a membership photo directory, which is printed quarterly and distributed to all members of the ward. The "New Member" sheet is used

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It is hoped that this change will allow the Internet to be brought to more meetinghouses worldwide. The potential of increased Internet availability will grow as new technologies and tools emerge and as those tools are offered, encouraged, and supported by Church headquarters. Many local leaders are finding new ways to use these technologies for appropriate, worthwhile purposes to bless the lives of the Saints in their area.

Technology has become an important part of communication, teaching the gospel, keeping records, doing family history and temple work, administering in the Church, and ministering to those in need. The Internet can save time and energy and reduce burdens related to travel and finance. The 2010 Church handbook says, "Even where automobiles are widely available, leaders should be sensitive to the cost of driving long distances. In some instances, such as conducting high council business, leaders may use conference calls, e-mail, and the Internet to reduce costly transportation" (*Handbook 2*, 17.2.2). However, any use of technology should supplement and not replace opportunities for person-to-person contact and personal communication.

Stake technology specialists may work with the facilities manager to install the Internet in meetinghouses in the stake as directed by the stake president.

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to enter information about the new member into a Google Docs spreadsheet that ward leaders have secure access to over the Internet. Leaders update this spreadsheet to indicate when they have visited a new member, when home teachers and visiting teachers are assigned, and so on. Using this collaborative online system, leaders can quickly and easily identify new members and ensure that they are visited. The ward also has a Facebook page that features pictures of past events, conversations, and information on upcoming activities.

The efforts of the BYU 229th ward are a great example of using technology to enhance, rather than to replace, person-to-person contact. Remember that "when used appropriately, electronic communication...can help Church members coordinate the work of the Church, strengthen faith, and minister to the needs of others. However, electronic communication should not replace opportunities for in-person contact" (see "Personal Internet Use in Church Callings," <http://lds.org/pages/internet-usage-helps?lang=eng>).

How has your stake or ward used technology to bless the Saints in your area? Share your story with us at MHTechNewsletter@LDSChurch.org, and we may use it in an upcoming newsletter!



Subscription Information

To receive this newsletter directly to your inbox, subscribe to "Meetinghouse Technologies" with your LDS Account. For instructions on how to do this, see the meetinghouse technology e-mail list page on the "Meetinghouse Technology Wiki" (mhtech.lds.org).