

Digital trends for churches in 2022

The last few years has seen the digital world change beyond belief. Online meetings are now the norm. Live streaming, for so many parishes, is now just part of the routine. But with this acceleration of digital transformation across the country – and indeed the world – what’s next?

Here, we look at the trends our churches should know about for 2022. You don’t need to do it all, instead think about which could work in your unique local context. What might you try?

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Create an informed digital experience

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Trend 1: Create an informed digital experience

While streaming an onsite service from a phone by the altar serves a role, it’s hard to create meaningful engagement in the act of worship if those at home are just observing the activities taking place in the building.

The phrase ‘digital-first’ might feel jarring in our context, but there’s a lot of we can learn from this industry attitude. What does digital-first mean? Simply put, digital-first means approaching any new opportunity with the assumption that digital is part of the solution.

And the solution should be informed by data – creating an informed digital experience for your community.

Gathering data doesn’t need to be time-consuming research or long surveys for your congregations. Think more about Twitter polls, using the question sticker on Instagram stories or asking a question to your followers in a Facebook post to learn what they’re looking for.

For example, you could ask:

- Would you like to submit prayer requests on social media?
- What would you like us to start sharing on social media?
- Would you like your online services to have a special moment for those at home to engage with?

Answers to these questions may help your church to meet the needs of your online community. When personalisation is another trend set to dominate 2022, their answers may inform your digital solution which supports them to take the next step along the faith journey.

Whether thatâs continuing with Zoom small groups to make it easier for those with hectic schedules to attend, or sharing the audio of this weekâs sermon as a podcast for people to re-listen to on the go, itâs important you donât second guess what will help â ask.

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How can you make the digital experience better?

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Trend 2: How can you make the digital experience better?

Weâre now used to fantastic digital experiences across the board. Where once we might compare experiences from one retailer to another, we now compare a shopping experience to any other online experience. Our expectations have increased dramatically.

This isnât something to be intimidated by.

Instead, what can you learn from the digital experiences you have every day and apply that to your church?

Get the most out of digital technologies so that your time and effort of your leaders and volunteers can be spend on your people, not your processes. Thatâs the trend. Itâs as simple as that.

It also means a more seamless digital experience â or just, experience â for those engaging with you.

We're thinking about what we're rolling out nationally to help with the local digital experience.

Systems like the [Life Events Diary](#), which syncs to [AChurchNearYou.com](#), means couples interested in getting married at your church only have one form to fill in to register interest, and you have all the information to hand to advise them on next steps.

For you, it may be setting up an online donation tools such as [Give a Little](#) and printing out QR codes so that regular attendees, and visitors to your building can give. The [National Giving Team](#) have seen that churches who set up online giving see an increase in regular donations.

Look ahead - are there systems you can get in place now that will improve people's experiences and 'future proof' what you're offering?

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Consider which social media platforms to use

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Trend 3: Consider which social media platforms to use

It can feel hard to keep up with the new platforms. You might see other churches using networks you've barely heard of, and it can be overwhelming thinking your church should have a presence on them all.

But you shouldn't.

During the pandemic, we unsurprisingly saw the number of people using social media explode but it didn't stop - the number is still increasing, with 520 million new users joining in the year to July 2021. That's more than 16 new users every second.

But **who's using what** is the question - a question to ask your existing worshipping community and for you to consider for those you'd love to welcome in.

Instagram and TikTok are typically used by teenagers and young adults. Is this a group you have in your existing worshipping community? If not, focus on the places your community and their friends who you'd love to welcome in operate.

You may find your church is already using the right platform for your community, such as Facebook. There could be ways to use the existing platform more strategically, rather than starting something new. For example, [Facebook groups](#) are an uncomplicated way to meet your local community - join in with existing local groups or [start your own](#).

Remember to sign up to our [Digital Labs newsletter](#) to find out how to be using platforms to grow your worshipping community.

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Time to upgrade your design

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Trend 4: Time to upgrade your design

It's long been said that first impressions are important. Visuals and graphic design can even have an effect in developing preference for the things we buy and places we go.

It might feel as though you need to get an expensive agency to help or use pricey tools online to get this right.

But we can start looking at this simply.

Think about the messages your branding gives:

Are the images you use are using inclusive? Could someone in your local area see themselves in the photos you're choosing? Is the font you're using clear? Are the colours you've chosen helping or hindering someone to read and understand what you're saying?

How you can stand out? You want your post to be recognisable as people scroll through the thousand updates on their social media feed. Think about a bold background with contrasting text. This also helps in terms of accessibility. [Discover more tips here.](#)

Be consistent. Think about regular content you can produce with your branding. Perhaps a quote from this week's sermon each Monday, or a bible verse on your chosen background every week. Help your audience to get to know your colour palette and create that familiarity with your branding.

Want to try the above? There are many online tools to help you create beautiful designs described above, Canva is one that is free and easy to get started with. [Find our more here and try it for free.](#)

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Influencers are here to stay

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Trend 5: Influencers are here to stay

Influencer marketing is nothing new — brands paying those with large social media followers to promote their products.

Is there anything churches can learn from this?

While paying an influencer to promote your church probably isn't a good idea (!), think about using the influence of those following you on social media to reach into your local community online. Could you ask your congregation to share your social posts on their own timeline or into local community Facebook groups?

Word of mouth is still the most powerful form of marketing and it's never been easier to share an invite or recommendation with a friend using social media.

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Picture perfect feeds are over

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Trend 6: Picture perfect feeds are over

This year, the trend for less-than-perfect continues.

The younger generations are getting tired of perfect pictures and shiny captions. Followers are looking for honesty and conversation about what's really going on. Â

For churches, this can mean sharing the stories of those in your community, speaking about the projects you're working on or causes you might be fundraising for.

Daily realities are another way to show authenticity. A day in the life of your vicar on Instagram Stories or maybe even before and after photos while the flower arrangers work on their latest creations!

You could consider letting different members of your congregation share their prayer messages, testimonies and invitations to attend services or events.

What's clear is that this trend makes it more accessible for volunteers to create content for a church's social media channels, and much more engaging for your community.

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As we head into 2022, weâ€™re excited to see what trend you might try. Do remember to tag us in your social media posts.

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What to share on social media this week

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