



Digital Discipleship

A Family Ministries Discipleship Resource



VIRTUES AND VICES

Inside

Navigating a digital life

Pornography: What are we doing about it?

A compilation of articles, ideas and news to help families, parents, children and youth in the digital era.



Family Discipleship Team



Pr Simon Vetali
Family Life Director



Ruth Batu
Children Ministry
Director



Pr John Nebare
Youth Director

Editorial

Virtues and Vices

Welcome to our first edition of the **Digital Discipleship**, a new resource co-created by the Central Papua Conference's Family Life, Adventist Youth and Children's Ministries.

We acknowledge the South Pacific Division's **Adventist Record** and General Conference's **Adventist World** for the original articles and news which are compiled in this edition.

We are excited to try out some of these synergies and see where the good Lord can take us from here.

The main story **Virtues and Vices** covers the benefits and dangers of technologies in the home, school and family circles. We have to admit the core of society is being challenged on all fronts. Our children and youths are being increasingly exposed to the vices of mobile phones and the internet every day.

Then there are the immense opportunities that await the sanctified disciples to use these available means to witness in this tech age.

Finding the right balance is what this edition is about. We hope our families can take this into account.

Feel free to contact us at the Ela Beach Office to offer suggestion in taking forward our Family Discipleship efforts.

May the good Lord find us faithful in witnessing for Him, even in the digital space.

Family Ministries Discipleship Team

What is Digital Evangelism? What is Digital Discipleship? What Does It Mean to Be a Digital Missionary?

Jamie Jean Schneider Domm
Digital Strategist for the North American Division

With the explosion of creative and tech savvy Christians trying their hand at digital mission work, many new terms have been added to the Christian vocabulary to describe this type of ministry. To make sure we understand the differences and similarities between them, it is worth taking time to create clear definitions. As children of God we are all called to do His work, and many find it useful to define their practical role in sharing the gospel—helping to shape their goals, find purpose, and communicate their mission to others.

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age: Matthew 28:19-20.

evangelism

evan·ge·lism | \ i-van-jə-li-zəm \

Evangelism is generally understood as the act of publicly preaching the gospel and the teachings of Jesus Christ to persuade people to adopt a Christian worldview. The word evangelist comes from the **Koine Greek** word **εὐαγγέλιον** (transliterated as euangelion) and originally meant a reward given to the messenger for good news but later came to just mean “good news” (**Wikipedia**).

Evangelism, then, by extension, can be understood as publicly sharing the good news. The way it is packaged and delivered may change, but as long as the gospel is being shared, it is evangelism.

Digital marketing is the promotion of products, services, causes, or ideas in the online space using digital technologies and tools such as the internet, social media, paid display ads, website platforms, and mobile phones.

Therefore, digital evangelism is defined as promoting the good news of the gospel and the teachings of Jesus Christ in the digital space using corresponding technologies to persuade others to adopt Christian beliefs. A digital evangelist is one who engages in digital evangelism as defined above.

With this in mind, how should digital discipleship be defined?

disciple

noun
dis·ci·ple | \ di-sī-pəl \

Definition of *disciple* according to **Merriam-Webster**:
one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another.

In this context, a digital disciple is one who accepts and assists in the spreading of the doctrines of Christ through the use of digital tools in the digital space. If we follow Jesus' example as a model for discipleship, we should expand this definition to include showing genuine interest in people and seeking to fulfill their mental, physical, and spiritual needs before inviting them to follow Christ and adopt His principles.

To do that, we have modified the definition of digital discipleship, as first presented by Rachel Lemons Aitken, Digital Discipleship in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, to be:

Digital discipleship:

a way to build relationships, meet the needs of the community, and advance the gospel message in the digital space, around a digital need or by utilizing a digital tool.

missionary

noun
mis·sion·ary | \ mi-shə-ner-ē

Definition of *missionary* according to **Merriam-Webster**:
a person who undertakes a religious mission.

Religious missions are traditionally seen as a means to promote Christianity, or another religion, in a foreign country. However, a digital missionary is one who shares their faith and beliefs in the digital space with digital tools and technologies, without being physically confined to a single geographical location. Digital missions are evangelistic campaigns that leverage digital tools and spaces for the distinct purpose of attracting converts to the faith. Digital evangelists, disciples, and missionaries all engage in digital mission work.

Digital bible workers utilize digital technologies to share the gospel and stimulate religious thought by creating and packaging content that addresses relevant needs/questions and encourages people to advance in their spiritual journey. Digital bible workers build relationships with those in the broader community, online and offline, and usually within a specific geo-location territory, in order to create opportunities for one-on-one or small group Bibles studies held in person or via digital tools. They work in partnership with a local church and pastor to evaluate the needs of a community and determine relevant opportunities for outreach and service.

They mentor converts in their development of Christian character and commitment to faith as well as train and equip new members for active discipleship roles. This role encompasses a mix of digital discipleship and evangelism to bridge the gap between working in the digital mission field and achieving real-world impact.

We hope you found these definitions useful. Visit our website at SDAdata.org for resources to help you with your digital missions.

Cyber-church: Online evangelism for the digital age. A different kind of evangelism is changing lives in the world of cyberspace.

By Maritza Brunt -

December 2, 2016



Outside the Second Life Seventh-day Adventist Church.
(Photo: Second Life)

Imagine your typical church service. There might be a welcome, prayer and a few songs. A children's story preludes a sermon and everything concludes with a benediction. Now, imagine experiencing all of this without leaving your bedroom. No—it's not Hope Channel or FaithFM. It's church, but unlike anything you've experienced before.

It's called **Second Life**, an online world where players can create virtual representations of themselves. It differs from other online virtual simulations, such as the popular video game *The Sims*, in that each virtual character on the site is actually controlled by a real person. Freely accessible to anyone with a computer and internet access, activities include exploring the world, building, shopping, trading virtual property and services with other virtual residents, and participating in individual and group activities. And one of these individual and group activities includes participating in a church service.

"The development of online virtual worlds created a new space that allowed people from all over the globe to meet and connect," says Bob Curtice, project coordinator for Second Life from the USA. "But it wasn't long before a few Seventh-day Adventists entered this particular virtual world and had the idea of a mission outreach effort."

In September 2010, the "Bible Prophecy Island" project began, with three members of the "Adventists of Second Life" group starting the first Seventh-day Adventist Church in Second Life. Regular weekly church services have been continuing ever since for online members from Australia, Brazil and the US.

In 2011, the group successfully applied for Global Mission Project funding, using the money to expand the church.

"This church is unique because it can support up to eight services conducted in different time zones each Sabbath," Mr Curtice explains. "In one of the US services, we're currently showing a live broadcast from Granite Bay Adventist Church (California) every Sabbath morning."



Inside the Second Life Seventh-day Adventist Church. (Photo: Second Life)

However, the Second Life Adventist Church is more than just a different way of doing church; it's an evangelism effort that has the potential to reach thousands of online players.

"Of the regular participants in our weekly Bible studies and church services, more than half aren't members and are searching for Jesus," Mr Curtice says. "Use of translator tools allows people of different languages to communicate in real time text chat. People who are homebound found that they could have a home church, be active members and participate in a real way. The church members conduct prayer groups, Bible studies and story hours."

And this technology hasn't just impacted non-Adventists. Zilkron Ahren, an Adventist lay preacher in Brazil, was in a car accident that left him mostly paralysed, with only one hand partially useable. But when he was shown the Church project on Second Life, he was able to preach again for the church service held in Portuguese.

The virtual world has also made a difference in the lives of theology students at Avondale College of Higher Education (NSW). In 2011, Northern Australia pastor Daniel Matteo, then a theology student at Avondale, joined the Second Life site and became actively involved with the virtual Adventist Church project.

“Someone emailed me about Second Life and said that they wanted to put together an Adventist church,” Pastor Matteo says. “They’d constructed a building and were having regular services but were struggling to get pastors to preach, so I organised a roster.”

After preaching regularly, including running evangelistic seminars on topics such as spiritualism and Revelation, Pastor Matteo had an idea—could he use his sermons in Second Life as an addition to his studies?

“I still had to work in a local church but the preaching and Bible studies I did in Second Life contributed to my studies,” he says.

Senior lecturer at the time, Dr Murray House, says it provided the students with extra opportunities.

“Jesus’ commission means that wherever people are found—even in a virtual world—we are to make every effort to reach them with the gospel message.”

“Students could practise their preaching on this and it gave them an opportunity to attempt real preaching scenarios,” he says.

Despite the evangelistic efforts, however, all Adventist participants are acutely aware of the dangers of the online world.

“It is a ‘second life’, and in some cases replaces people’s real lives,” explains Pastor Matteo, adding that he wouldn’t be joining the site again. “It’s addictive, and can be potentially destructive.”

Mr Curtice agrees, saying that addictions to gaming and “role play” games should be taken seriously.

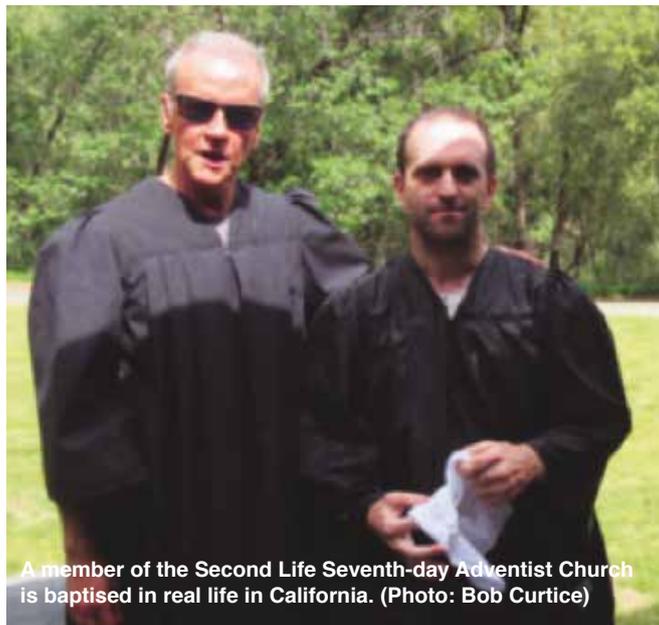
“Second Life is a virtual world and, as such, it allows people in it to have full expression of what is on their mind, for good or bad,” he says. “That is what makes its strongest points and its weakest one.”

But although Second Life is not ultimately a wholesome environment to spend a lot of time in, the blessings coming from this unique ministry are too good to give up. In May, the first baptism resulting from the project took place at Georgetown Adventist Church in California.

A man had been attending the virtual church for the past three years, and felt impressed to go back to his hometown and study for baptism.

“We would never encourage people to join the site for the sake of it,” says Pastor Matteo. “The point was to make connections that then transitioned into real life connections through other forms of social media. There were people playing for 12–18 hours a day, and the fact that we could take a moment to minister to them was great.”

“We would never encourage people to join the site for the sake of it,” says Pastor Matteo. “The point was to make connections that then transitioned into real life connections through other forms of social media. There were people playing for 12–18 hours a day, and the fact that we could take a moment to minister to them was great.”



Mr Curtice also adds that online evangelism should never replace evangelism in the “real” world.

“Second Life is only a place where people in significant numbers are found,” he explains. “Consider it a ‘world’ city in which you will find people from all countries of the real world interacting with each other 24/7. Many of those people would never go to a real world church. However, they might consider checking out a presentation in which their real identity is hidden, to see what it is.

“I see evangelism there as a tool, one more in our hands to reach people wherever they

are. Most of the people currently attending the USA church group services are non-Adventist or estranged Adventists who want to return to the Church. Often they don’t feel they can go to a local church but the gospel works on their hearts with what is presented, linked with the online Bible study courses in the island website.”

Pastor Jeff Parker, director of Youth Ministries for the Australian Union Conference (AUC), was involved with Second Life from 2010, and gave his testimony in the 2011 report.

“I have one unchurched person who has come to our service every week for six months now, and is starting to really understand who Jesus is and also what we teach as Seventh-day Adventists,” he wrote. “Another lady has cerebral palsy and cannot get out of bed so she would never have had an opportunity to come to church in real life. I’m so excited about this outreach method, which has already impacted so many lives. Would we have reached as many with traditional methods of evangelism?”

As those involved speak about their experiences, it’s easy to see how this simple idea was transformed into an evangelistic purpose. That, say the members, is the beauty of media: anything can be used in order to connect others with God.

“Our key Bible text is Mark 16:15: ‘And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature,’” says Mr Curtice. “Jesus’ commission means that wherever people are found—even in a virtual world—we are to make every effort to reach them with the gospel message.”

NOTE: Second Life, like most of the internet, is a secular environment, with some content rated 18+. Adventist Record and the Central Papua Conference recommends exercising a degree of caution and common sense if participating in forms of online evangelism.

For more information on the Church’s involvement with Second Life, contact the Central Papua Conference or the Greater Sydney Conference.



Distraction Level Down, Focus Level Up

Media and character development

Published on: 02-01-2019

Adventist World associate editor Gerald Klingbeil recently spoke with Delwin García, principal of Great Lakes Adventist Academy, a boarding academy located in Cedar Lake, Michigan, United States, about high school students and media use.

Great Lakes Adventist Academy includes a policy in the handbook limiting access to personal media devices (including smartphones) among students while they are on campus. What motivated the school board and faculty to include this policy?

With the advent of smartphones, people are carrying super-computers in their pockets. I use my smartphone for everything. They are wonderful tools. But they can also be tools of destruction. Our young people have such a busy schedule already that they can also be huge distractions. We recognize that on a smartphone young people can access anything they want at any time. A lot of young people already struggle with pornography, media addiction, video gaming. We are doing what we can to help minimize that temptation and help curb that desire to always have a screen in front of them.

Tell us about your experience with this policy.

Most of the parents we talk to about our cell phone policy offer a sigh of relief, or praise, or hallelujah. It's not parents that we have struggles with. We have shared research with our staff, and our team is on board with the policy not to allow students to have their own personal devices. It's the students who have the hardest time wrapping their minds around the fact that they may have to live without their cell phone for 25 days out of the month. I reassure them that no student has ever died from not having their cell phone.

The reality is that after a few weeks or a few months we actually have students approach us and say, "You know what, this is a good thing. I have better friendships now, because I'm not distracted by the pseudofriendships that I have online." We are most likely the only Adventist academy, at least the only academy I know of, that doesn't allow students to have their mobile devices or tablets. We don't allow them, period.

We are living in the twenty-first century, with lots of technology all around us. How are you preparing young people to enter into a media-saturated world?

We recognize that we are in the twenty-first century, and we do provide computers and communication. We have phones in the dorms; the students may use landlines for free. We have Skype stations, where they may interface with their parents "face to face" while they're away at boarding academy. We have computer labs on campus, and all our seniors have computers in their dorm rooms, where they may access Facebook, and they may access the Internet or e-mail. The difference is that the school has some accountability. We own those computers, and we filter the computers. Even though we can't possibly filter everything, there's that added layer of accountability that students know is there.

In your experience over the past years as you see graduates leaving, and sometimes coming back after a year or two for alumni weekends, how do you see resilience develop?

We are trying to teach principles. Some critics of our policy would say, "How can they live out the principles that you're teaching them if you're not giving them access to media?" The reality is that we are giving them access to media, but it's in a controlled environment. The other thing that we've discovered is that as students have a detox throughout the month, the distraction level goes down and the focus level goes up. It's in that time that we can really focus on character development. That's what we're here for as an Adventist school system. It's not just academics, it's character.



Managing Technology

For the good of our health

Peter N. Landless and Zeno L. Charles-Marcel

Published on: 02-01-2019

Our children have just entered their teen years. Many of their friends have smartphones and use them constantly. It seems as if we are fighting a losing battle to manage their use wisely, and also keep to what we judge is reasonable exposure to screen time. Should we keep trying?

Our children have just entered their teen years. Many of their friends have smartphones and use them constantly. It seems as if we are fighting a losing battle to manage their use wisely, and also keep to what we judge is reasonable exposure to screen time. Should we keep trying?

Most certainly, yes! We are living in the most connected era of all time. Yet it seems that people are talking meaningfully and deeply with each other less and less. We recently watched a family enter an airport lounge—mother, father, and four children ages ranging from about 4 to 16 years. As they circulated looking for seating, the 4-year-old, angrily waving his smartphone, was repeatedly shouting: “I need Wi-Fi connection!” The older children had “tuned out” the scenario as they listened to music through their noise-canceling earphones.

It’s not uncommon to see families in restaurants glued to their devices. Perhaps they are texting each other? We hope so, because they don’t often speak.

Social media is helpful in keeping friends informed and updated. The Internet provides a treasure trove of helpful information at our fingertips. These advances need to be discerningly, carefully, and wisely used. For all the good information out there, dangerous and damaging disinformation also exists. Additionally, the way these tools are used can lead to unwanted consequences, including “Facebook depression,” cyberbullying, pornography, and screen addiction.

- Taking phones to bed is unhealthy, depriving us of sleep and rest.
- Incoming alerts can disturb sleep and increase the concern of “missing out” on what’s happening, therefore raising anxiety. Increased daytime tiredness follows.

Consider

- Increased anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem follow inadequate sleep.
- Unmanaged and bedtime social media use can specifically increase pressure to be available at all times and further disrupt healthy sleep.
- Dedicated, device-free family times are needed on a regular basis. Family meals provide such an opportunity and yield healthful benefits.

Keep working to keep screen time optimized and healthy in the family. Parents need to lead by example. Our children may wish that parents would get off their screens and just talk with them.

We recommend an excellent edition of *Adventist Review*, available in the online archives. It is themed “Rearing Children in a Technological World: What to Do, What to Avoid,” October 27, 2011. It is informative, balanced, and an excellent resource—all the more relevant today than when it was first published.

When it comes to God’s wise instructions, God’s people should “impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (Deut. 6:7, NIV).

Let’s keep speaking with our children, communicating with them, unconditionally loving them, and even understanding them. They are the church of today—and they are worth it!

Peter N. Landless, a board-certified nuclear cardiologist, is director of Adventist Health Ministries at the General Conference. **Zeno L. Charles-Marcel**, a board-certified internist, is an associate director of Adventist Health Ministries at the General Conference.



Digital Discipleship: Virtues and Vices

Feature Story:

Navigating a Digital Life

Kids now search Google, YouTube, and a myriad of social networks to inform and educate themselves.

Published on: 02-01-2019

While I am responsible for Adventist Review Ministries Media Lab and deeply involved in cutting-edge media and technology, I grew up as a missionary kid in Madagascar and West Africa and was not exposed to high tech until I was 17 years old. Fun and games centered on building toy cars and other trinkets from scrap. I wouldn't exchange my childhood experience for anything, because it developed in me the ability to think creatively, very much outside of the proverbial "box," to find different solutions.

In the United States' Silicon Valley, high-level executives are seeing firsthand that too much technology exposure has the potential to harm children. Some even say that social media platforms and gaming designers create addictions in otherwise normal individuals. Employees of tech giants such as Google, Apple, and Yahoo are sending their children to schools where teachers prefer a more hands-on, experiential approach to learning that contrasts sharply with the increasing trend toward filling classrooms with the latest electronic devices. Instead, these campuses look to the role of imagination in learning with a more wholistic approach.

In our digital age, technology is increasingly a huge part of our lives. But navigating it effectively (for with the good comes the bad) is very important to Christian parents. What are the benefits, and what are the pitfalls? Read on to hear perspectives from parents, educators, and tech professionals as you seek ways to make technology a help rather than a hindrance to your child's mental, emotional, and spiritual development.

—Daryl Gungadoo, United Kingdom

What's a Parent to Do? Set an Example

I am a mother of a 6-year-old and a 4-year-old. They get very limited screen time.

When they do, it is for when we are on airline flights (they can use a tablet) or when they are sick at home (they can watch a couple episodes of their favorite show). Other than that, they can watch an occasional episode of a cartoon or the Sabbath School lesson story.

While we understand that technology is present in their lives and will remain so, we also believe there is a time and a place for it. They will eventually learn everything they need to learn when it comes to electronic devices and their use, but they have only a very short period of time in their lives when they are able to play, to enjoy the outdoors running free, to get dirty and actually enjoy it, and to experience the world around them with all five senses.

Screens are highly addictive. Once you give in, it's easy to get hooked. This is true not only of children but also with adults. Everywhere we go, we see people looking at their phones, blank expression in their eyes, immersed in a never-ending scrolling loop. Many are parents. They have little children standing next to them, craving their attention. They ask questions to which parents reply with "aha," "mmmh," without really knowing what their kids have asked in the first place.

If we are so addicted ourselves, how can we expect our children not to be?

Electronic devices are an easy and inexpensive babysitter. Media provides such instant gratification and high level of stimulation that it is difficult to switch off. After two hours of videos, how can kids be expected to "go and create something"? The more screen time we give, the more they want. It's like a drug.

We grew up with no technology whatsoever, so we went outside and played with other kids. Real games, real interaction, and real conversations and problem solving. Nowadays it's more and more obvious how people hide behind the "safety" of the screen to be who they would like to be in real life but don't dare for fear of rejection and many other reasons. We are losing the ability to connect with other human beings, of being present without having 20 parallel conversations via Messenger, WhatsApp, Telegram, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and so on. What has happened to just being in the moment and enjoying it, giving our full attention to the person we have in front of us?

It's not fair that for our own convenience our kids are going to miss out on that. They are going to miss out on real friendships, on real experiences, and most important, on a real childhood, where they spend quality time with their parents, laughing, playing, reading, talking, loving, and feeling loved.

We want to create an environment for our children to develop the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control [Gal. 5:22]). An excess of screen time is definitely not conducive to Galatians 5. On the contrary, we observe children lacking in social skills and language skills, impatient, aggressive, and having emotional development delays, shorter attention spans, and even health challenges. The most important question we have to ask ourselves then is, "What is screen time displacing in our children's lives?" When we look at the answer to that, how can we not act?

—*Asun Olivan, Spain*

Is Tech Friend or Foe?

As a school principal, I cannot deny that computers have become an integral part of modern education.

At Newbold School our children use laptops for a variety of learning purposes. Our teachers use them to plan and teach lessons, and our administration system is conducted online, all with excellent results. The Internet alone has opened up a world of instant information that allows children to explore their learning independently and to improve their knowledge.

But we all know that computers are not restricted to learning, and this is where problems can arise. The main problems are often associated with the entertainment and social media aspects of computing. These can have a profoundly negative effect on the development of children's social awareness and their ability to keep themselves safe.

Although hugely popular, social media is not without its problems. On the one hand, we can connect with friends from the past, foster online connections with friends of other friends (usually whom we've never met in person), and keep track of anyone who allows us to follow them. We can join chat rooms and talk with people from all over the world. Many people take online interaction even further, using it for dating, listening to music, watching movies, and for shopping. Much of youth culture (particularly early to late teens) is closely linked to social media and gaming, which in turn can negatively affect how young people interact with others.

Equally so, high-speed clicking from site to site on electronic devices can lead to impatience in the real world. The ability to click past something that is irrelevant or takes too long to read can't be applied to our dealings with human beings directly in our presence. And that can result in excessive impatience with the real world, leading to an inability to cope with the slower pace of "real time." The volume of communication through computer devices is also creating an evolution of language and the way the written word is presented. Children have to be taught how to separate formal language from informal patter exchanged through social media, often accompanied by emojis that replace words entirely.

One aspect of change that is extremely worrying is safety in our digital lives. It is all too easy for unscrupulous people to groom children into agreeing to dangerous meetings. Grooming for sexual abuse and drug running has become so common that all school staff personnel need to have regular training in order to teach children how to protect themselves online. Fortunately, it has now become a crime in the United Kingdom to groom a child online, so police can immediately

make arrests based on inappropriate sexual messaging. Parents should take this threat seriously and always set up strong parental control settings on their children's computers to ensure their children are safe while using them. The thought of an unwelcome stranger in one's house, even if it is a virtual presence, is indeed frightening.

Although the use of various tech can present serious threats, it is also extremely valuable, and it is here to stay. Indeed, we should not wish to get rid of it all, as it can help us create and learn amazing things. It is never computers or the Internet that cause problems, but rather the people who use them. Using a computer as a tool that we control rather than allowing it to control us is the first step toward a healthy relationship between humanity and the Internet.

We should teach our children the importance of time management, good manners, and how to keep themselves safe while using tech. Like anything else in life, a computer is only as dangerous as we invite it to be.

—*Jaki Crissy, United Kingdom*

Games Aren't Always Just That

As a Bible-based media start-up entrepreneur and a father, the best thing I can do is ensure that the media I create and the media that I allow my child to consume will be wholesome on many different but interconnected levels. While the physical effect of devices on our children (eye development, biological tissue damage from emanating radiation, WiFi, data frequencies) is of utmost importance, the content that they consume has the power either to weaken their moral compass and relationship to God or to strengthen it.

Apart from the more obvious red flags within kids' programs, there are more subtle areas of content that slip our attention and can have a long-lasting negative impact on our children. These can be separated broadly into two levels: production level and story. As parents we should examine the media we allow our children to consume through specific lenses.

At the production level, besides staying away from programs that have too many flashing lights and excitable and complex high-tempo music, the timing of each scene is often overlooked. Research has shown that for small children, scenes that last only three to five seconds and then cut to a different scene can cause attention deficit issues. The ideal length for scene sequences is 20 seconds. New emerging technologies, such as virtual reality, can present more natural media consumption, where viewers control the exact framing of the action, because their device acts like a portal where they can look around at the present world.

At the story level it becomes trickier to weed out negative programs, but here are a few clues to look for. Is the emphasis more on entertainment rather than the moral of the story? The aim of all media should be to inform and to deliver a message. If the message is more of one of being entertained, then questions should arise in our minds about whether we should allow our children to consume this or not. Are the antagonists portrayed in a way that children will find attractive and cool, even though their actions may be wrong? We have to be very careful here. The enemy of our souls wants us to be attracted and drawn to rebellious attitudes and wrongdoing. We need to teach our children how to reject the wrong and choose the right.

Research has shown that when we watch or engage in media, what we see goes straight past the moral filter of our brains. At a core level we cannot tell the difference between wrong or right, fact or fiction. Consuming media is a bit like dreaming,

The content that they consume has the power either to weaken their moral compass and relationship to God or to strengthen it.

but we are fully awake. The action we see on the screen gets translated into our subconscious as something that we are doing. So when we witness a violent act on the screen, at the subconscious level it is as if we are doing this act ourselves. It becomes more solidified if the main characters are carrying out these acts. This is even more so in games, as part of the gameplay involves players committing acts that they would be imprisoned for in real life. The secular world does not acknowledge this connection for obvious reasons. But as followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to be more careful and wiser about what we put into our bodies, for by beholding, we become.

—Karl DaSilva, Scotland

Digital Media Can Shift Culture

I grew up in a different age, a time when library books had index cards stamped with due dates before you went home with them. When we needed the ultimate authority on certain subjects for homework, we went to the library and the reference section where we'd look for Encyclopedia Britannica. Kids now search Google, YouTube, and a myriad of social networks to inform and educate themselves.

In the islands of the South Pacific digital media has had a huge impact on everyone, impacting the very fabric of Pacific Island cultures. There have been reported cases of abuse by men toward their wives stemming from spending too much time on Facebook, rather than having the evening meal ready on time. Petty differences not spoken about publicly are aired on social media instead of being discussed face to face. There is a way that issues are dealt with, and using social media is inappropriate in many family situations.

I can speak only from an indigenous Fijian perspective and share a very small angle of a global phenomenon that I believe we have yet to truly understand. The consumption of digital media within the islands has created a generation of insatiable consumers. The saying "Ignorance is bliss" no longer applies when young people are bombarded with advertising for the latest gadgets, clothes, food, motor vehicles, social activities, etc. Children in the islands are impacted by social media just as much as their counterparts in other parts of the world. The mistake is often made thinking that life in the Pacific Islands is slower, more laid-back, and less sophisticated. This may be true in certain places, but if you live in more urban centers with a data plan on your phone, you have the world in your hands.

Children in the islands used to be seen and not heard. But with the arrival of digital media, it has propelled them onto a platform that they are still (like the rest of us) trying to control.

They may not be as addicted to gaming in the same way as their Australian and New Zealand counterparts, but they aren't that far behind. Young people throughout the Pacific actively update their WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram accounts at a quick pace.

Digital media has also changed some of the cultural practices of the region. For example, when there is an engagement, the birth of a child, or a death announcement, certain traditional protocols are followed. But the entry of social media and digital devices is having an impact on how these significant life events are communicated and celebrated.

It may seem as if the impact of digital media has been totally negative, but it is not completely so. Digital media has given Pacific Island young people an avenue through which they may level the playing field with the rest of the world.



The important issue, however, is how parents actively communicate with their children about appropriate uses of this resource.

Digital media is not going away. So the skill set that needs to be learned is how to use it effectively. I have been encouraged in seeing how Fijian youth have used social media to invite and inspire friends to attend church youth activities. Social media is fast becoming the most effective way to reach our young people, so it is in the best interest of parents and those who work with children to understand where the children are and guide them on how to best approach this journey.

—Litiana Turner, Fiji



Pornography: What are we doing about it?

Danijela Schubert – 31 January, 2019

In the US, 90% of children aged between 8 and 16 claim to have viewed pornography on the internet. The biggest question, according to Dr Danijela Schubert, is what we're doing about statistics like these, and how we can stand up for our children.

I was around 10 years old and playing happily outside our four-storey apartment building with the girl from next door who was about a year younger than me. At the time, I did not realise that what happened next would be so significant.

We went to the foyer of the building next door and found an older boy, perhaps 16-18 years old, calling us in to show us something. What he wanted to show us surprised us and scared us, as he unzipped the front of his pants and exposed himself.

Both of us ran out of the building and I told my mum what had happened. Later, we passed that young man on the street and I told my mum that he was the one. She found out where he lived and we both went to his house. My mum exchanged some strong words with his mum and he never bothered me again. But I remember him forever and every time I pass by his house, I remember what happened. This event has left a scar on my memory.

Unfortunately, this was only the first experience of this type that deeply affected me as a person. The next two were more devastating.

My brother, who was eight years older than me, purchased a pornographic magazine that he used to help him satisfy his sexual needs. I found that magazine and kept coming back to see the images. It was very addictive. My body was reacting to what it saw and wanted to see it again and again.

This time I did not say anything to my mum. Or anybody else. Later, I was cleaning offices in a big shipyard during summer vacation. Several men who worked in the building had time on their hands and invited me to watch something "interesting" with them. I was curious.

This was the time when videotapes started to be produced. I was about 16 when I saw a full-length pornographic movie. All of these events had a lasting impact on me.

We tend to think of pornography as only a male problem. It is not. In Australia, in 2006 it was "found that 93% of males between the ages of 13-16 and 62% of females have viewed pornography over the internet".¹ That was 12 years ago. A lot has changed since then. I dare say, not for the best.

There is, however, a difference in how pornography is experienced by male and female teens exposed to it. Older teen males tend to find it exciting, arousing and amusing while females express shock and distress. Males are more likely to deliberately seek pornographic material and more frequently. Exposure to younger children (9-12) of both sexes is particularly distressing to them.

These exposures deeply affected me. For years those images kept replaying in my mind. They affected how I saw myself, how I saw others; it affected my relationship with my boyfriend and husband later on.

If pornography was a problem more than 40 years ago when I was young, it is almost unimaginably a bigger problem now. Accessibility of such material is far easier today than it was then. In the US, 90% of children aged between 8 and 16 claim to have viewed pornography on the internet.² Ninety per cent! From as early as eight years of age!

There are many studies showing the negative, long-term effects of pornography on young people.

Pornography is associated with:

- Unsafe sexual practices.
- Sexual dissatisfaction, anxiety and fear.
- Increased levels of self-objectification and body surveillance.
- Stronger beliefs in gender stereotypes, more likely viewing women as sex objects.
- Sexual aggression.
- Physical and verbal aggression, predominantly by men towards their female partners.

Remember
as a parent you are
the most important
and most influential
person in a child's life.

Those who have been unwittingly exposed to pornography experience strong and lasting negative emotions, which are difficult to overcome. Anger, embarrassment, disgust, disturbance, fear, sadness, shock, sickness, surprise, repulsion. It is rape of the mind.

So the question comes to mind: What are we doing about it? I'm glad my mum stood up for me back then. We need to stand up for our children. There are different ways to do that:

1. We need to be vigilant, monitoring what our children are viewing on the internet as well as in magazines. Set up rules and stick to them. Some rules could be that children:
 - will not have a mobile phone until a certain age, or at least not a smartphone.
 - will use a computer only in the presence of adults.
 - will not use smartphones or computers in their bedroom.

Remember: as a parent you are the most important and most influential person in a child's life.

2. We need to foster warm, open and communicative relationships with our children. I remember when, as we were washing the dishes one day, my teen son asked me, "What is our Church's view on foreplay, Mum?" I was a bit shocked, but did not show it. We had an interesting and open conversation, and the dishes were done in no time.
3. Help them to think critically, to evaluate what they are seeing/doing/listening to. Ask questions such as "Who made this? What does it mean to you? What do you want to do as a result?" Help them to evaluate what they read for school, what they watch on TV. Make it a habit. Porn will be one of those issues you will discuss.
4. Educate ourselves about the issue. Technology is changing. If we want to help our children navigate through life, we need to be up to speed with their world. Furthermore, learn about the pornography industry as well; learn the effects it has on children's brains and their development.
5. Provide support to those exposed to the evils of pornography. This could be your child, other children, young adults as well as adults in the church or neighbourhood. Young women and men featured in pornographic materials also need help and prayers. Many of them are sex slaves.

Pornography is another evil in the quiver of the thief who "comes only to steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10). Let's work together to "overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21).

Dr Danijela Schubert is Women's Ministries leader within the South Pacific Division's Discipleship Ministries Team.

1. Quadara et al. The effects of pornography on children and young people. Australian Government, Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2017. Accessed online.
2. An Overview of Research on the Impact that Viewing Pornography has on Children, Pre-Teens and Teenagers, Bravehearts Foundation Ltd, 2017, p 9. Accessed 27/9/2018.

First-ever Center for Digital Evangelism established in the Philippines Adventist church opens its doors to digital ministry

Nov 12, 2018 | Silang, Cavite, Philippines | Southern Asia-Pacific Communication department



In line with the Adventist World Radio's (AWR) continuous effort in sharing the Good News to unreached people groups, the Southern Asia-Pacific headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist church inaugurated the first-ever AWR Center for Digital Evangelism in Silang, Cavite, Philippines.

The first of its kind, the Center for Digital Evangelism (CDE) purposes to connect to radio contacts, leading them to in-depth learning about Jesus through Bible studies and online evangelism, finally leading them to baptism and discipleship. As more CDE's are planned to be established in other regions of the world, AWR seeks to partner with Adventist regional offices and institutions to advance the growth of the church's online influence.

media sites like Facebook, WhatsApp, Youtube, Instagram, and more are some of the avenues through which digital evangelists can reach out to a huge population within this existential space.

It is also the objective of this center to utilize social media as an additional tool for evangelism. Social

Administrators and guests from AWR headquarters, the Southern Asia-Pacific Division, and union were present during the inauguration and ribbon cutting for the AWR Center for Digital Evangelism. Citing the huge number of calls and text messages received daily through ongoing radio programs and social media outlets, AWR desires that these communication efforts by listeners and seekers "will not fall through the cracks" but will serve as the beginning of their spiritual journey.

"There are thousands of people around the world, intentionally listening to our programs, but most of the time it ends there. We need to find a way that we can connect to them, make friends with them, and make them feel they are cared for. That is where the Center for Digital Evangelism comes in," said Kyle Allen, vice president for Adventist World Radio.

"We have not been responsive to thousands of people who connect with us daily from different parts of the world after they have listened to our programs. The Center for Digital Evangelism will serve the purpose of responding to comments we received within minutes in multiple languages," Allen added.

After successful efforts in Africa, the Philippines, and Japan, AWR leadership saw the need for this center to be established to cater to the growing needs of listeners.

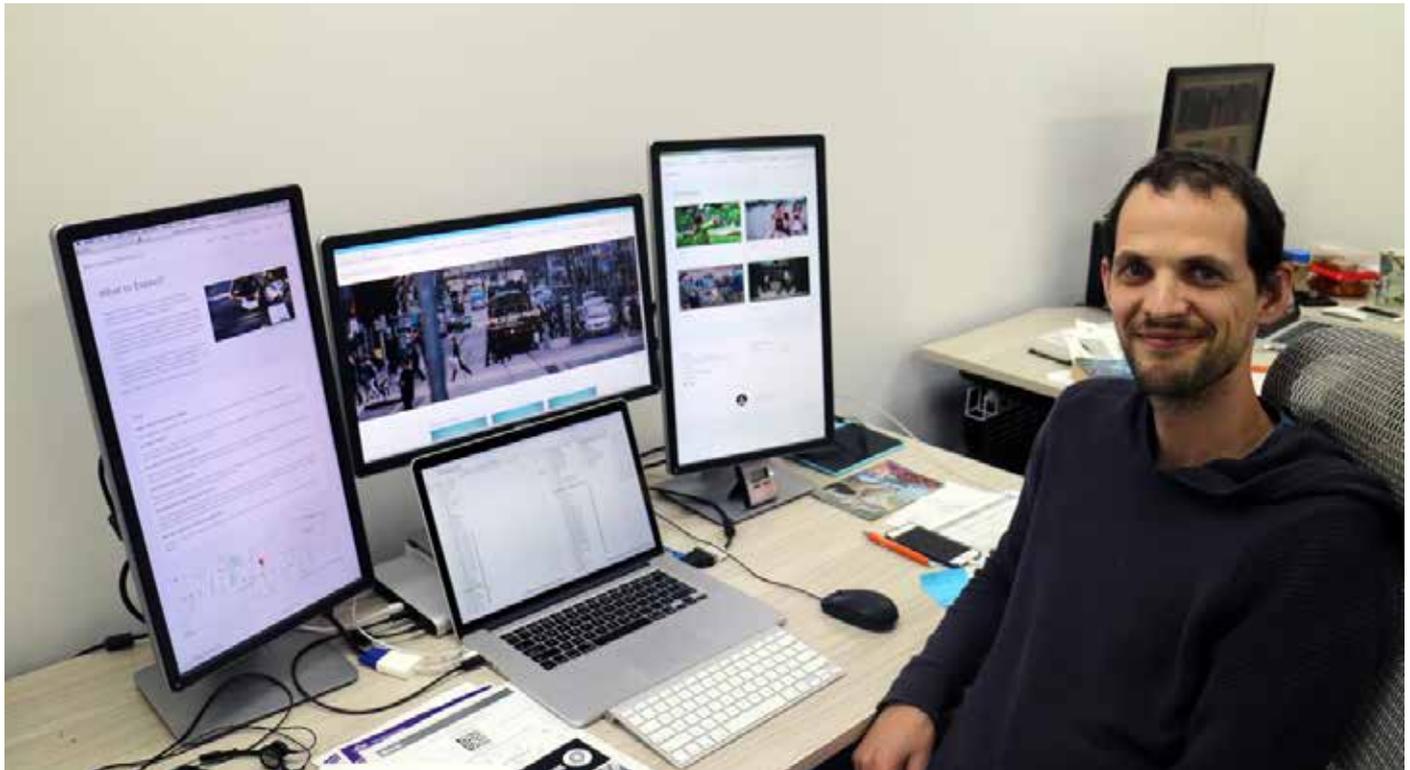
"The first phase of this Center for Digital Evangelism focuses its attention to India and the Philippines. A pioneering group of 4 to 8 digital missionaries will head to the Philippines for a year of mission," said Karen Glassford, AWR Center for Digital Evangelism director. "They will be trained to facilitate evangelism over the phone and on how to make each call count for more conversations in the future," she added.

"One radio program can lead to engagement, which can then lead to offering a prayer or studying the Bible. There is an unlimited possibility of sharing Jesus with just one call," Glassford shared. She is the newest addition to the AWR family as she was hired to assist in the continuous development of the institution through the Center for Digital Evangelism.

The CDE will commence its operation in January next year when all logistics, permits, and digital optimization of the call center hub will finally be up and running.

New website creator for Adventist places

By Scott Wegener
May 31, 2018



Dan Lewis, lead developer of Adventist Place.

Adventist Media’s new website creator, Adventist Place, is now available for use throughout the South Pacific Division (SPD).

Designed especially for smaller churches, schools and missions without a tech-savvy webmaster, Adventist Place is a fully subsidised, easy-to-use website creator for any officially recognised Adventist entity within the SPD.

Adventist Place is a simplified and modernised alternative to the netAdventist website platform the SPD hosted and supported between 2007 and 2017.

“When we needed to move forward from netAdventist we created a Simple Church webpage service as an easy fall-back option for churches who weren’t able to organise a modern website presence on their own,” said Daniel Lewis, lead developer at Adventist Media.

“However the feedback we received showed it was too simple for many to be practical. This led us to rework the service into the much more comprehensive Adventist Place website creator. It’s still simple, from a design and management point of view, but now flexible enough to allow hands-on creation of a reasonably comprehensive and creative web presence.”

The website can be built as a basic set-and-forget information site or regularly updated with events, bulletins, podcasts and videos. It allows churches to integrate content from their existing social media pages with their websites and a built-in stock photography feature helps webmasters apply professional images to their pages.

Adventist Place was developed and is supported by Adventist Media.

“We’re providing this service to make sure every Church entity in the SPD has the opportunity to create a great-looking website without needing to be a web developer,” said Adventist Media CEO Calvin Dever. “The aim is to help churches progress from having a website that looks old or has out-of-date information—or that don’t have a website at all because it’s all too hard. This service makes it easy for churches to have a neat-looking website to represent their church.

“Adventist Place is part of a larger digital platform that we are developing that also includes Adventist Cloud, AdHub and Discovery-Hub. We’ll work on tweaking Adventist Place as more feedback comes in and technology moves forward.”

To find out more, visit: place.adventistchurch.com.



VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is to be a...
SPIRIT-FILLED *always Growing* **EXCELLING**
and **LEADING** in all aspects of our ministry

MISSION STATEMENT

To ***make disciples and to witness*** in the context of the **Three Angel's message** through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit

DIGITAL DESCIPLESHIP

A compilation of articles, ideas and news to help families, parents, children and youth in the digital era.

Executive Editors

Kove Tau
Rex Koi
Maxwell Lassah

Editor / Communication Director

Russell Woruba

Editorial Team

Russell Woruba
Ottoa Sepuna
Estelle Roah
David Gorua

Contributors

Simon Vetali
John Nebare
Ruth Batu

We acknowledge the **Adventist Record** of the South Pacific Division and **Adventist World** of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists for the original articles in this edition.

Art Direction & Design

Ottoa Sepuna



PNG WIDE OFFERING

JUNE 1 2019

You are invited to support in giving towards the new Central Papua Conference office complex

LET US RISE UP AND BUILD
Then they set their hands into this good work
Nehemiah 2:18



Central Papua Conference