Inform, Invite or Ignore?

English Christian Churches and their approach to online communication

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- To what extent have English Christian churches established a distinct individual web presence?

- To what extent do churches and church leaders use email, websites and social media tools to find and publish information?

- To what extent have traditional notions of hierarchy and authority been affected by online sources of information and communication?

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1. Background study: How many churches have a findable website?

2. Content analysis: What's being published on websites?

3. Interviews: Why? What governs current practice?

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Literature review: themes

- English religion and internet use
- Religion online & online religion
- Online religion: England & America
- Cross-cultural research
  - Christianity in Korea; Buddhism in Japan; Islam in Singapore
- Communication Research
- Web 2.0: social media and the Church
  - Blogging as religious practice
- Church websites
- Religious Authority online

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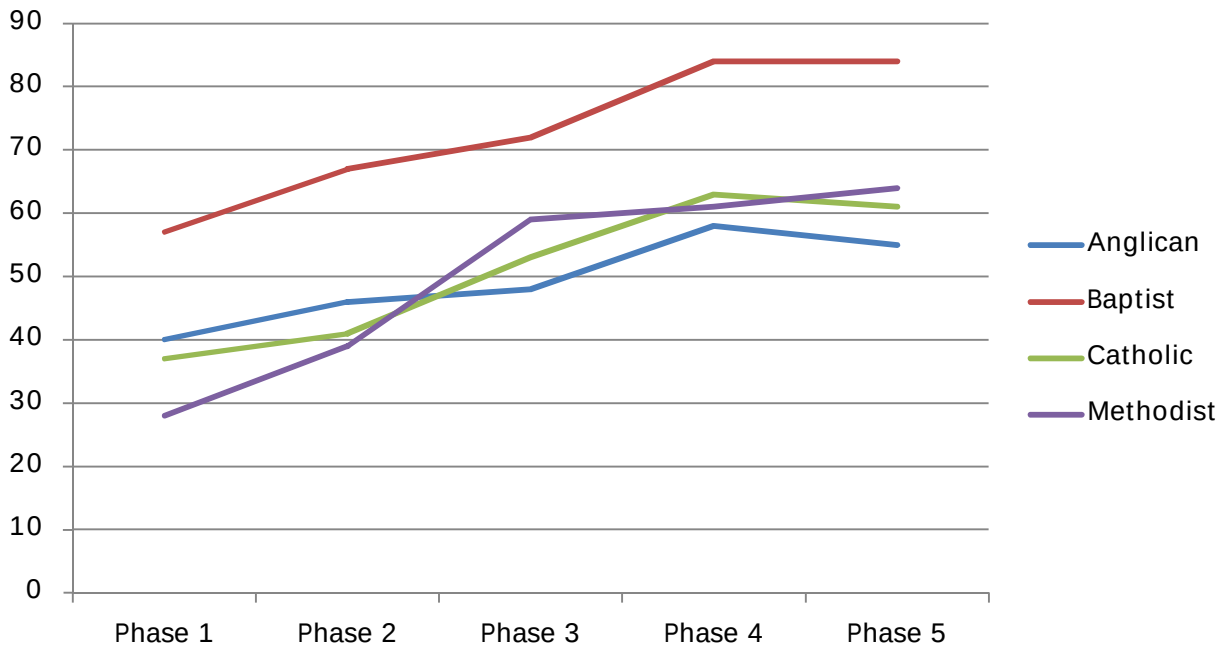

Number of churches with websites found over time 2010-2011

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part two

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Content Analysis

Not about design or presentation

Looking for certain types of content

- Directions & contact details
- Newcomers' welcome
- Statements of faith
- Interactivity

Diocese of Chelmsford

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Church as information provider

Popular

- Genealogy & Architecture
- Rites of passage
- Service times and maps

Not so popular

- Explaining services
- Explaining faith
- Newcomers' information
- Interactivity

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External links

1074 links categorised

Half of all links go to 18 ‘organisations’

Top three non-hierarchy

christian aid

rejesus.co.uk

Alpha

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part three

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18 interviews with

- 12 Essex clergy
- 3 Church webmasters
- 3 Interested parties

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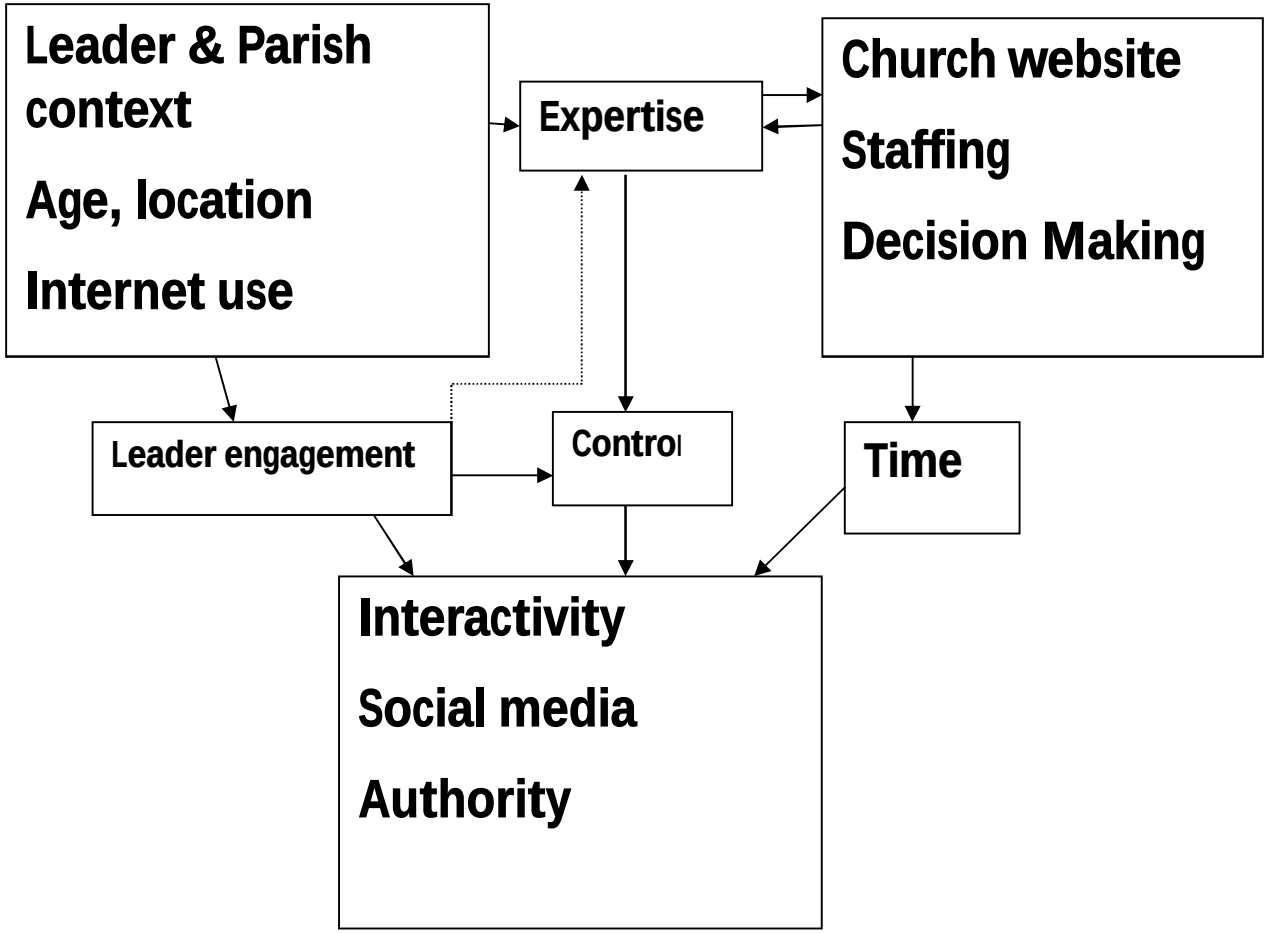
Leader & Parish context
Age, location
Internet use
Expertise
Church website
Staffing
Decision Making
Leader engagement
Control
Time
Interactivity
Social media
Authority

to sum up

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