

Chapter 5: Website creation, maintenance & governance

5. Introduction

This chapter examines the technical production and presentation elements as well as the ongoing maintenance of the websites researched, answering objective 3. Quantitative results from the longitudinal analysis are presented first. Following this, content analysis results are given, and where available, interview data which seeks to explain the observed results is included.

5.1 Longitudinal results

To provide background and context for the later parts of the research study, objective 1 was to establish a baseline measure of the number of parishes or churches in England with a purpose-built website. The way in which this was undertaken from January 2009 to December 2011 is given in 3.6 above.

In December 2011 the fifth and final data collection was completed. The results are given in Table 5-1 below. This shows that:

- The number of churches with websites increased during each phase up until December 2010
- The rate of change was different for each denomination
- By December 2011 the increase had largely levelled off.

	Anglican %	Baptist %	Catholic %	Methodist %
Phase 1 - January - April 2009	40	57	37	28
Phase 2 - December 2009	46	67	41	39
Phase 3 - July 2010	48	72	53	59
Phase 4 - December 2010	58	84	63	61
Phase 5 - December 2011	55	84	61	64

Table 5-1 Percentages of churches with websites found (n=400)

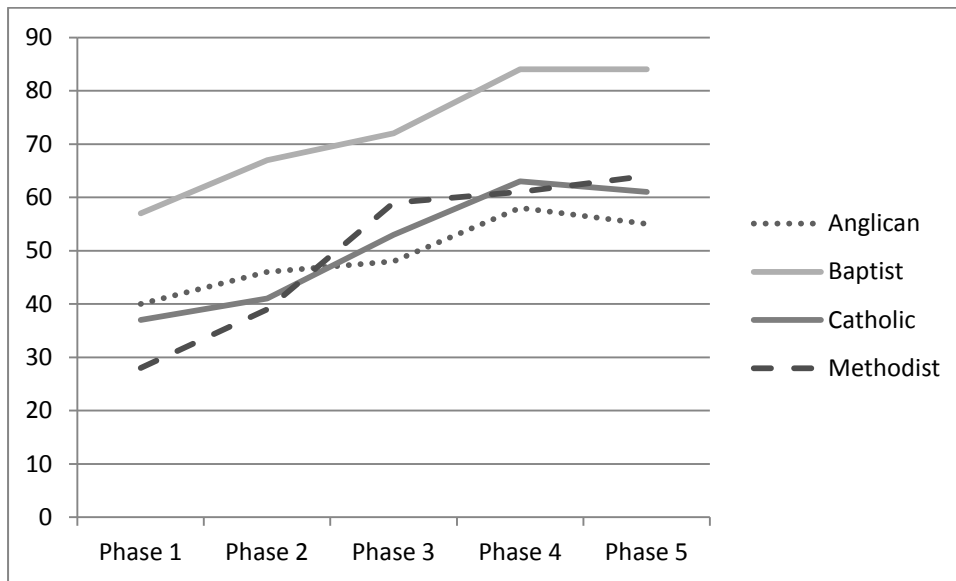


Figure 5-1 Graph showing increase in number of church websites found over time, 2009-2011

Plotting the changes between phases gives an interesting picture in that although all denominations showed an increase, the rate of change is different. From Phase 1 to Phase 2, all showed an increase. During the next phase, more sites were found for all denominations, but the increase was proportionately higher for Catholic and Methodist churches. Between the third and fourth data collection period, the growth in the number of sites stabilised at between 17 and 19%, except in the case of the Methodist churches where there was only a small (3%) increase in the number of sites found. A year later, the rate of change had stalled for all four; with Baptists showing no increase, Methodists a small 5% increase and Catholics and Anglicans showing a decrease in the number of findable sites.

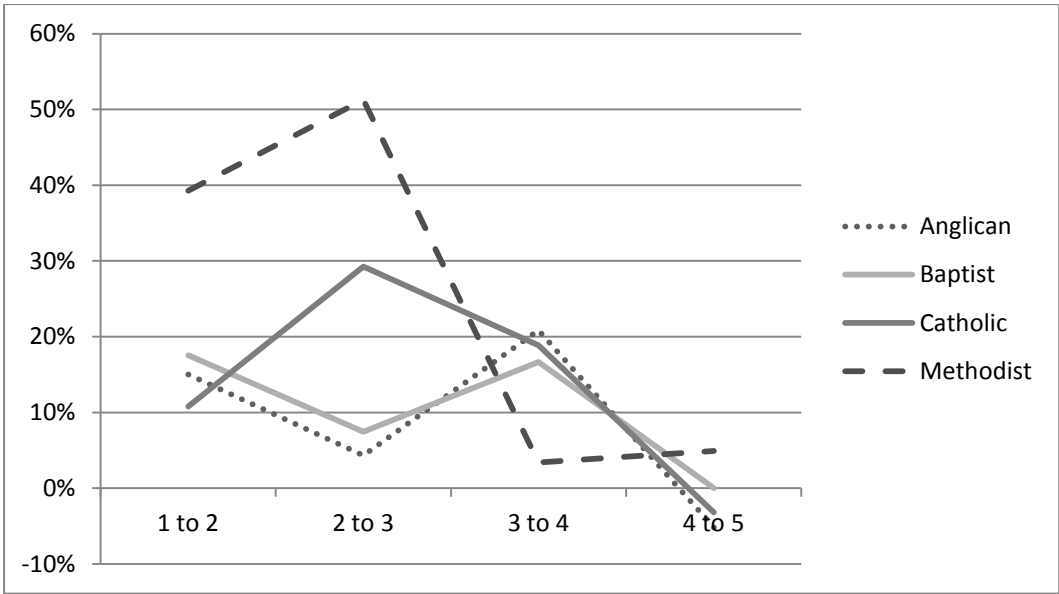


Figure 5-2 Graph showing percentage increases in number of websites found over time

Possible reasons for the different increases and decreases are discussed in section 8.8.1 . Having established the national picture for website prevalence in general, the content analysis results below focus on a smaller region of England.

5.2 Creation details

5.2.1 Church-specific URL

All %	Church-specific URL
Anglican	86
Catholic	90
Baptist	88
Methodist	71
All churches	85

Table 5-2 Percentage of churches with name-specific URL (n=147)

One item of data collected related to whether or not a church had its own URL rather than being listed as a page within a wider or more generic website. In order to have a named URL allocated it is likely that the church leadership will have had to approve the nominal expenditure, thus be involved in the decision-making process.

It is therefore an indication of the involvement of the church in at least the establishment of a website. The majority of sites did have their own named URL.

5.3 Blog-based platforms

All %	Blogging services acknowledge
Anglican	5
Catholic	0
Baptist	21
Methodist	13
All churches	9

Table 5-3 Sites acknowledging blogging service as website platform (n=147)

There are, in 2012, many ways a website can be created without the need for extensive knowledge of how to code HTML. This category counted the sites which acknowledged the use of the service provided by one of the major blog platforms, such as Blogger and Wordpress. Overall, only 9% mentioned or used one of these services. No Catholic sites said they used such a platform, and 21% of Baptist sites did. There are a number of possible contributing factors to the low take-up of the potential for creating sites via a prepared platform:

- Webmasters are unaware of these services
- Webmasters choose to work independently because their skill is in HTML coding
- Inherited sites have not been transferred
- Churches do not want to rely on a secular third-party platform for their websites

5.4 Design

The research is concerned more with the content of the sites than their aesthetic appeal, particularly since the acceptability of different designs can be a matter of individual taste. There are, nonetheless, established conventions and guidelines for websites to adopt. Some relate to ease of use, others relate to exploiting the multimedia potential of the internet and maximising the impact of messages. The placement of the menu bar is an example of the former kind of convention, and the number of graphics or photographs are representative of the latter.

5.5 Construction elements

All %	Menus in standard places	Use of frames
Anglican	92	8
Catholic	85	15
Baptist	82	9
Methodist	67	13
All churches	85	15

Table 5-4 Percentage of churches following accepted design guidelines (n=147)

The majority of, but not all, sites followed web conventions and placed their menu bars or items in standard places. Over time, the convention for navigation bar placement arrived at is that which is, for example, described by the Internet Evangelism Day website: “Typically, bars are arranged vertically in the left-hand margin, or sometimes horizontally along the top of the page” (Internet Evangelism Day 2012).

Frames, in principle, allow a screen to be split with some parts static and others changing independently as users navigate the website. In practice, they rather complicate navigation – making bookmarking and web indexing difficult, and are no

longer widely used. The practical guide to website construction by David (2007) recommends frames are not employed – this is a five-year old guide, which indicates the length of time since frames were abandoned on mainstream websites. The noticeable minority of sites that still have them may be maintained by people with either a lack of current design knowledge, or insufficient time or skill to update an inherited site.

5.6 Photographs and graphics

	Photographs: Mean number per site				Graphics	
	Church buildings	Clergy/ leaders	People not engaged in worship	Other	Any graphics (mean)	Logo (%)
Anglican	4.0	1.5	4.4	2.8	2.8	18
Catholic	2.4	1.0	1.5	3.0	1.4	0
Baptist	1.4	2.7	3.9	2.9	4.5	6
Methodist	2.6	0.7	3.6	7.6	1.8	33
All churches	1.6	3.0	3.7	3.7	2.8	15

Table 5-5 Mean occurrences of photographs and graphic elements (n=147)

5.6.1 Church buildings

Anglican websites have a higher mean number of photographs of the church buildings as shown in Table 5-5. This may be because the buildings are older, architecturally valuable and are thus recorded online in some detail, or because it reflects the tradition of the parish church building being a focus for the congregation. Fewer pictures of the buildings on the other denominations' sites may also be because their designers have heeded guidelines that encourage a focus on the community rather than the facilities.

5.6.2 People

Website creation guidelines such as those by David (2007) suggest that photographs of the church's people are a key element in establishing credentials as a welcoming site and organisation. The number of photographs on each site were therefore recorded.

Photographs of people not engaged in worship, i.e. in any other situation than a church service, were counted. This measure was taken to show the emphasis that is put on the congregation as a community by the website and as an aspect of the welcoming nature of the church. Anglican churches had the highest number; perhaps counterbalancing the number of buildings photographed. Baptists and Methodists had a similar 3.9 and 3.6 mean number per site; Catholics had fewer with 1.5 photographs per site. The difference here could be because of the relative formality of the Catholic church as well as the possible lack of attention to photographs as part of a website. These results are in Table 5-5 above.

All other photographs were counted and the Methodist church had a far higher mean number of 7.6 per site. Baptists have the highest mean number of photographs of their leaders and Methodists the least. The organisation of the Methodist church means that there are fewer leaders per church, so this is a reflection of the off-line reality. Catholic churches have a mean of one photograph of a leader per site which reflects their leadership structure.

The Baptist churches have a higher number of other graphics. Methodists are most likely to have their denomination's logo on their home page and no Catholic site included an equivalent design. Methodists are also most likely to have any other kind of photograph on their website.

5.6.3 Photographs as part of ideal website content

During the interviews, leaders were asked what their ideal website would contain. Wendy (St Timothy, Anglican), Mark (St Michael, Anglican) and James (St Saviour, Catholic) all specifically mentioned pictures as being an important aspect of establishing the sense of welcome. Mark suggested he would like to have a video of the kind of services that happen in his church, because he felt that they were possibly livelier than visitors might anticipate based on their perception of the old church building:

I don't think we have any pictures on ours at the moment of actual church life... I'd like even perhaps a video clip of a service so people have an idea of what we're like, because sometimes it's a bit of a surprise when people cross the threshold (Mark, St Michael).

James (St Saviour) referred first to the pictures of the building when talking about the new site his church was creating. This will include the ability for visitors to have a virtual tour of the inside of the church. He also wants the site to emphasise the liveliness of his churches:

the fact that we have the one in [•] and it's a quiet service, it appeals to older people, it's slightly shorter, there's something about that, and then about the fact [•] is lively, busy, and crowded... so there is something about what you might find if you come. (James, St Saviour).

It is interesting to draw a parallel between this soon-to-be established Catholic site and that of the Baptist church run by Lee. His aim was to remove a lot of the content that focused on the ability to hire the church and its facilities:

you could take a tour through the rooms...it doesn't necessarily say much about the church - [the website is there] because we want to point to the church in order to point to Christ in that sense (Lee, Shelley Baptist)

Here, therefore, are three diverse churches, all attempting to solve the same problem of how to convey a sense of welcome but in different ways –using video, pictures and descriptions. Lee has the least focus on the church’s buildings as the starting point, which seems perhaps to be a direct contrast to James’ approach. However, Lee leads a one–church parish, and James has four communities under his leadership, with varying styles of architecture. So there may be an important role for James to disentangle expectations about Catholic worship from the assumptions people make about the buildings, in the same way that Mark wants video to show the contemporary style of worship happening in his medieval building.

What is worth noting is that for this aspect of websites there is agreement in principle that non–text elements would be useful, and the leaders’ opinions are in accordance with established design advice and practice. The content analysis suggests that churches still have some way to go to actually implement this advice. This could be in part because the website creators are still mostly amateur – the next section presents results from the content analysis which investigate this claim.

5.7 Professional creation

All %	Credits to a professional design company
Anglican	20
Catholic	35
Baptist	21
Methodist	17
All churches	22

Table 5–6 Credits to a professional design company (n=147)

To establish the extent to which church sites were being built in-house or by professional web designers, the presence of credits or copyright statements was coded. Between a third and a fifth of sites by denomination had an acknowledgement that suggested there had been at least some input from a professional firm, as given in Table 5-6 above, with the overall figure at 22%.

There are many possible reasons why a church would choose a professional design company. They may have no in-house expertise and/or prefer to have the site supported as a paid-for resource. The leadership may have preferred the possibilities for a more sophisticated site than could be created by a keen amateur. Or it may simply be that the marketing for a particular company arrived at a particularly opportune moment and the leadership decided it would be an appropriate investment.

5.7.1 Status of webmaster

In the interview sample, two of the 16 churches had paid for their sites to be created – one by a student, (East Methodist) and the other by a design company (Shelley Baptist). That is a slightly lower proportion – 12.5% – compared to the overall 22% of the content analysis samples. It would appear the majority of websites in both samples had been created by volunteers. Lee (Shelley Baptist), with his interest in blogging, had created a separate blog from the church website. Benjamin (Valley Methodist), who has had a number of years of experience in digital communications, created the website for his area and this is maintained by a paid, part-time administrator who had been trained to update the website on behalf of the 21 individual churches in the circuit. All other church websites in the sample were maintained by volunteers, a minority of whom were involved in online work as

their day job (for example, those working on the High Road Methodist church site).

Benjamin said, in explaining his experience of ‘enthusiastic amateurs’:

it's how we all started to learn, and these days if you want a very whizz bang website you've got to pay for it and churches are not flush with money.

(Benjamin, Valley Methodist)

5.7.2 National involvement

The variations in skill, quality and commitment led some to question why the church nationally did not provide assistance with church websites. Michael (national communications officer) outlined his organisation’s difficulties with providing support at an individual church level. First, that the church organisation is not intended to function in that way – each church is autonomous and can make its own decisions. Secondly, and of more practical significance, is the level of resourcing – Michael’s organisation would struggle to find resources to adequately support thousands of churches’ likely IT problems. Finally, providing a template would involve endorsing a particular provider, which the church could not be seen to do without compromising commercial impartiality.

One local body represented by Murray (regional communications officer) provides encouragement and advice on a one-to-one basis, but only in the short term. Advice is also available via their website. Benjamin (Valley Methodist) has also provided training for his local area. There is a level of support available from the church, therefore, but not perhaps at the very basic level some interviewees would have liked.

5.8 Maintenance

5.8.1 Currency of websites

...it's like church noticeboards, if you don't keep them up to date it appears that we are always behind the times (Benjamin, Valley Methodist)

One area of interest is the frequency of updating of information on websites. Churches work on various time cycles – weekly services, monthly rotas, Anglican seasons.¹⁷ Seasons include the major festivals such as Easter or Advent. Weekly notice sheets are common within many churches. Regular updates to a site suggest there is an investment in and understanding of the importance of the website as a channel of communication with the congregation and wider public.

5.8.1.1 Calculating the currency of information

The intention was that each site would be coded for the date last updated. However, very few sites gave such a clear indication. The scarcity of information meant a change of approach for analysis was necessary. Other measures were used instead where they were present as an indication of the last change in content. It had been intended to calculate the number of days since the last update at the time of coding, allowing for the anticipated weekly cycle. In the absence of a date the other measures used were:

- Most recent/ forthcoming event dates
- Date of weekly notice sheet available
- Whether a monthly calendar was current

¹⁷ Please see the definition in the Glossary

- Dates of news/ announcement items

The variety of ways in which the currency could be indicated meant that a simple count of days elapsed could not be calculated. Therefore the sites were assigned to one of five categories representing the length of time since the last update:

- Less than a week
- More than a week but less than a month, or in the current month for calendar/ newsletter
- Over a month but less than three months
- Over three months
- Not possible to determine

The results are shown in Table 5–7 below.

Category/ Denomination All %	<1 week	>1 week < 1 month	>1 month < 3 months	3 months +	Not possible to determine
Anglican	41	35	3	9	12
Catholic	55	15	0	20	10
Baptist	24	27	6	12	30
Methodist	31	15	8	12	35
Overall, all denominations	37	27	4	12	20

Table 5–7 Currency of websites: percentage of sites in each category (n=147)

For the Baptist and Methodist sites, the most frequent observation is that the site’s currency cannot be determined. Within the Catholic community, more sites – over half – are more frequently updated than not. This is also true of the Anglican churches, but the difference is not so marked. 41% are up-to-date within a week, but 35% – a third – are only up-to-date to the current month.

Taken together across all denominations, a noticeable proportion were over three months out of date and a fifth gave no indication of when their content was last

updated. The Anglican churches classed as ‘over three months’ out of date included two sites that were several years out of date at the time of coding. It is possible that these are no longer the current church website. However, the URLs were obtained via the official Diocesan links, so if the churches’ site has changed, this has not been notified to the Diocese. This is possibly indicative of the regard with which the website and the processes around it are held by the church if this key piece of communication policy has been neglected. It could also be that the Diocese has not maintained the church links page.

5.8.2 Currency and professional design

Currency of site – time since last update as per Table 5–7 above	Number of sites with a credit to a professional in each category (all denomination)	%	Percentage of population of all sites (Table 5–6 above)
A less than a week	15	48	37
B >1 week < 1 month	8	26	27
C >1 month < 3 months	2	6	4
D 3 months +	3	10	12
E Not possible to determine	3	10	20

Table 5–8 Currency of websites compared with credits to professional designers (n=147)

One aspect explored was whether sites professionally designed might be more current – if professional design is a marker for the level of commitment to the site. Of the 31 websites with such credits, 48% were updated weekly, compared to 37% of all websites. The percentage updated monthly was similar – 26% compared to 27%.

It is possible therefore that a church which uses a professional designer is prepared to spend more resources caretaking its site – more was invested in its creation, so more is expected of its contributors, and it may have a higher profile within church communications. Conversely, the churches who have paid for a professional site but are not keeping it updated are losing out on their investment. This could be

explained by a change of personnel, meaning that the site is no longer viewed as an integral part of the church's work. Or, it could be that there was enthusiasm within the organisation only for the project's initiation, and the day-to-day maintenance had not attracted sufficient volunteer input.

A custom URL, an up-to-date site, consistent design and good use of graphics are all important parameters. They signify the professionalism with which the site has been approached – whether or not it has been created by a volunteer – and how it might compare with others published on the internet. These are not particularly complex or expensive aspects to address in the process of creating and maintaining a website, but the first conclusion from the available content analysis data is that there is further progress to be made in many areas. These results show that many church websites are not frequently updated and in many cases are presenting old information. This does not create a favourable first impression of an organisation. The interviews suggested a number of reasons why sites were not receiving the input that might be expected for a key communication medium.

5.8.3 Working with volunteer webmasters

The reliance on volunteers had caused problems for some of the leaders in the interview sample. All three of the webmasters interviewed had volunteered themselves for the post, based on experience gained elsewhere in creating websites. Howard (Gate Ecumenical) had enlisted the help of his daughter, who was a full-time web designer. Alan (Bridge Baptist) had been paid for his work on websites elsewhere, although this was only a hobby and not his main employment. Oscar (New Life Baptist) also manages the church computer for presentations during services.

The three agreed that on the whole, they were left to their own devices when creating and subsequently maintaining the site. Howard said that the site for his church had mainly been ‘built on trust.’ The church he attends has a very democratic structure with a church meeting which oversees the governance of the community. This meeting had approved the website when it had been proposed by Howard but subsequent maintenance was left to him. Howard would ‘occasionally demonstrate it to them [church meeting] to remind them what's going on.’

Alan (Bridge Baptist), in a more traditional church, also had main responsibility for the website, having originally created it in 1996. For his church website:

The bulk of it is written by me, it's mainly me that decides what should go on and I actually write the text. When I have anything that I am a bit unsure about I take it to the leadership...and I think they have almost always said yes, but it really is down to me, nobody else really contributes anything or even comes up with suggestions. (Alan, webmaster, Bridge Baptist).

For many of the leaders, the website and its support volunteer were inherited from the previous incumbent and was a work in progress. This arrangement was not always satisfactory if the volunteer webmaster was either busy, limited in skills, or unwilling to change their direction or mode of working.

Lee (Shelley Baptist) described a situation whereby his webmaster was difficult, “resenting intrusion into his domain” but neither Lee nor the webmaster are sufficiently expert to alter the hard coding of the website. Two specific examples of the problems this caused are as follows. First, the publication of information on the website was erratic. The interview took place in January and Lee was annoyed that no Christmas information had appeared on the site. Second, the hard-coded

graphics of the site featured a group of people, many of whom were no longer church members. No-one had the expertise to be able to alter the graphics.

Gayle talked about convincing her webmaster to add more forward-looking dates and how she felt she could not ask him to step down, but that if someone new were to take over, things would improve. Kester phrased his response very carefully when he suggested the previous webmaster had been “very kind to agree to not carry on doing it.”

There is evidence that even where the leader is engaged with the website, the reliance on volunteers means change can be stifled for lack of time, willingness or expertise. A further barrier may be that leaders do not want to over-burden their volunteers, and so possible ideas are unexplored. Robert (St James, Anglican) said that he had used his Gmail account to publish photographs instead of asking the webmaster to upload them, as this would be too time consuming.

5.8.4 Available training and guidance

Interviewees were also asked for their experience of training or guidance in websites or online communication since the majority of the work is being done by volunteers. It is interesting to contrast the responses received. Certainly for the Methodist and Anglican churches, training is available at Diocesan, national and circuit level – the interviews with Murray, Michael and Benjamin make this clear.

Robert did not think that much of the Diocesan training was relevant to him in his inner city, poor parish. He also felt that the training assumed that one would have access to and expertise in setting up IT equipment. He would have looked for more basic guidance with hardware and software. Colette and Gayle both said they had

not been on any formal courses or received any guidance; whilst Colette's web team had had training, this had not been via the church.

Benjamin had organised media training locally for Methodists and has been involved in national events to promote online communication. He was aware of the need to think beyond replicating a notice sheet online, and to make a website interesting and dynamic. Kester had not received any formal training from the Catholic church on website creation or maintenance, but had benefited from being in a parish previously with a very good website. He was therefore aware of the importance of a good site:

but it was just knowing the importance of it, that there's no formal training on it. I suppose to me it would seem a fairly sensible thing for the diocese to say we would encourage all of our diocese to have websites, we'd even put a day on to help you get into it (Kester, St Bride)

More than one leader when asked about online training responded in terms of safeguarding children. This seems to be the way that most sessions that deal with the internet are presented – or that is the only training that the leaders attend that talks about online communication. If discussions about using the internet are only held in the context of safeguarding policies, highlighting the dangers, that would surely impact on participants' perceptions of the web as an unsafe tool.

Others were unaware of places to go for advice or guidance and left it to their webmasters, and this was echoed in the opinions of the three webmasters interviewed. No leader said that training on digital communication had been part of their ordination training – understandable for some of the older leaders who would have trained years before the internet became popular, but less so for those who

were newer in post. Clergy have busy, complicated and multi-faceted roles in their community. It would be impossible for them to become expert in everything related to the running of a church. However, a basic accurate awareness might be a factor in ensuring good decisions are made regarding churches' websites. Mark summed up the situation as it appears when he said:

I think there are occasional trainings...but I've not been on one and nobody's talked to me about setting up a website. it seems to me that every parish does their own thing. (Mark, St Michael)

Michael, the national communications officer, said clearly that there were nationally-organised training courses available.

5.9 Governance

One aspect that the interviews were intended to address was the level of consultation and evaluation to which each website was subject. For James (St Saviour) the website is not part of his daily concern and he did not sit on the committee that oversees communications for his church:

it's a volunteer who does it and about the only contact that I have that's through my secretary (James, St Saviour)

Yet, he had picked most of the hyperlinks, based not on systematic appraisal but on serendipity:

I guess things come my way and I think 'that's really interesting,'...if I think it's something that people might be interested in and might find useful and helpful I suggest it. (James, St Saviour)

So on the one hand, the leader admits to having limited contact with the site creator, yet on the other, is responsible for one key aspect of the site's content.

The way control operates for Thomas (St Margaret), is also informal, with the webmaster having free rein under Thomas' oversight:

[the webmaster] would generally take requests from anybody, if he thought there was something dubious or something I might not want to be on there then he would consult ... I basically have an overview of the website so I know what kind of things goes up there, ... but in those kind of cases he would say would you want it up there, and I would say yes or no, so I am sort of a, a bit of a backstop. (Thomas, St Margaret)

Lee was more explicit in his appraisal of the situation and less than ideal relationship between himself and the webmaster:

it always seems to me that the webmaster of the church is... not necessarily someone who's easy to deal with ...particularly if you require html coding and so forth, it's not something that the normal minister or church leader is going to be au fait with (Lee, Shelley Baptist)

Helen admitted:

I think we've generally just gone with the flow, and its turned out all right and because [•]'s very good at not just the graphics but putting the words, the content – it just works somehow (Helen, Central Baptist)

None of the leaders described a situation where the website was evaluated or monitored on any formal basis. Where websites could come under scrutiny varies by denomination and because of individual arrangements. The Baptist and Methodist

congregations could discuss the websites at their church meetings, which tend to be democratic, whereas the Anglican and Catholic churches tend to have a more hierarchical structure with a church council meeting. However, the frequency with which the website is discussed at any church seems to be less to do with the denomination and more to do with the attitudes of the leaders. If it is not added to the agenda, it cannot be discussed.

Approaches vary from the site being set up with no discussion (Helen, Central Baptist), to initial discussions regarding the launch of the site but nothing ongoing (Wendy, St Timothy; Howard, webmaster) and a third set with occasional discussions on the site:

It's just not come up on the agenda with other things at leadership. It might be that you have sparked that off in my mind that we should, at some point, actually acknowledge it. (Helen, Central Baptist)

Kester, who leads a Catholic parish, has a very clear idea of the purpose of his site and it is regularly discussed at quarterly meetings, where the statistics are examined. James, another Catholic leader, has much less involvement. St Saviours' website is considered only by a sub-committee of the church, and James does not chair these meetings. However, few other churches appear to have formal discussion of the website and its role in the life of the church. The prevailing attitude seems to be that once the site has been established, it can be left to its own devices. This is reflected in the lack of evaluation or review of the purpose or content of the websites as discussed in the next section.

5.9.1 Evaluation

For many of the churches, feedback and evaluation appears fairly rudimentary. The three webmasters made reference to using hit counters and page view statistics to gauge the level of interest in a site:

we've got a counter on it so we know how many people look at, visit it, but we haven't gone much further except by what we hear by word of mouth really (Howard, Gate Ecumenical)

One, Alan, said that another useful source of feedback was comments from people who attended his church because they had found it via the website:

we get feedback because ...[we] will ask them why did they choose us, and quite often they will say we found you on the web, we were attracted by your website, it sounded like a nice church, and so on. (Alan, webmaster, Bridge Baptist).

Whilst this is better than no feedback, it is always going to be biased towards those who did find the website inviting, and against those who never discovered it or who were not encouraged to visit by its content.

Helen worked with a colleague who had benefited from communications training in a previous role and who had sought to influence their standing in Google rankings because there were increasing numbers searching for a church via the web:

... he said we've got ourselves to the top of the list and knew what that meant and was excited about it. I was like, 'oh great ok...' (Helen, Central Baptist)

Kester's church discuss the website at their quarterly meetings, including looking at the page view statistics. For Gayle, the annual church meeting was the place where

the membership had an opportunity to discuss the organisation's digital presence. Robert was aware of the number of hits the site received, but his church leadership did not receive this report. Within the other churches there were no formal mechanisms for evaluating the websites as part of the churches' governance or leadership structure. For the majority of churches, therefore, the pattern seems to be that the site was discussed at its creation but is now left to be looked after by volunteers with little or no formal evaluation.

The foregoing results have shown how churches are creating their websites, how up to date they are kept and other aspects of the maintenance and evaluation of the website. The next chapter examines the information actually published and attempts to understand how the websites reflect the churches' understanding of their role as information providers.