



March 2009

Development Directions

A free resource for pastors, principals, development directors, volunteers and anyone engaged in the ministry of Catholic development.

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Technology Tools in Catholic Development

By Frank Donaldson, President

As we all know, the advances of technology over the past 20 years have been absolutely amazing. I often wonder how we managed to keep the ship afloat without all of the gadgets and tools and helpful devices that technology can provide. For some of us, the journey has been not only an eye-opener but also a real lesson in learning. Back when I started teaching in Catholic schools in the late 1960's and early 1970's, *technology* was an opaque projector, a hand cranked ditto machine, a film strip projector, and a movie projector and screen to show Shakespearean movies that few students ever understood. In the mid-80's, things began to drastically change when student records and test scores could be housed and tabulated on a PC with a floppy disk.

I really got hooked into the computer world when the Journalism class I was teaching in 1986 got a gift from a local printing company in New Orleans who donated an Apple IIe computer to our class. No one knew anything about it, so I took it home for two weeks and painstakingly learned the basics. I still remember the day when that dot matrix printer churned out the most beautiful newsletter I had ever seen - a one pager with 14 different font types. I thought I was the most creative person that had ever hit the computer world. With all of the type in large caps, I often wondered why people had such a difficult time reading it.

We continue to move further into a world where recent graduates from Catholic high schools can better view the capital campaign video on Facebook or YouTube rather than be sent a DVD from the campaign office. As they grow older, our Catholic school students will continue to develop their skills and create more ways to use technology, and the one question we ask is: Are your Catholic Development and Total Stewardship efforts ready to take on the challenges that technology will demand over the next 5-10-15 years?

Over the past year, we have seen many creative ways that development and marketing efforts in Catholic schools and parishes have utilized technology in order to advance. Obviously, there are hundreds of different processes, methods and tricks of the trade that we could list. However, to make it simple and to the point, listed in this newsletter are some uses that we find are being used quite expertly throughout the country. Again, please understand, this is not a comprehensive list but only an edited one.

In no order of importance, here are some suggestions for Catholic leaders to consider in their development, stewardship, marketing, fund-raising, and people engagement efforts.

- **Your Web Site**

- Obviously, this is a huge piece to the technology puzzle in terms of a Catholic school and/or parish creating a site that can be attractive and useful. Many Catholic institutions have done an excellent job of devoting the resources to not only creating but also maintaining their site on a regular and consistent (sometimes daily) basis. Nothing reads more poorly than the latest parish bulletin being six months old.
- One suggestion we have here is to make sure that your web site is interactive. With a Catholic school web site, please make sure that alumni are offered the opportunity to update where they are and what they have been doing by simply filling in a form and e-mailing it back to the school.
- We strongly recommend you commit the necessary resources to either creating or upgrading your web site to be the best it can be. Over the next 10-15 years, we predict that Catholic school and parish web sites will be the primary vehicle for communication and interaction.
- www.delasallenola.com is an excellent interactive site that has just been totally upgraded over the past month or so. Being my alma mater, I also realize that my opinion is a biased one. Regardless, please check it out and start clicking away at the many options you have to explore this Catholic high school.

- **On-Line Surveys**

- As many are aware, here at ISPD we are very much in favor of "pipelining to the customer." Surveys are a wonderful way to make this happen, and while there are many ways of going about it, there is a site (www.SurveyMonkey.com) that we have used often with our clients to survey parents, alumni, prospective parents, students, etc. We find the service valuable, competent and easy to access. The cost is also reasonable.
- While many surveys still continue to be done in the pews or at parent meetings or with direct mail, we believe that more and more people will be receptive to filling out a survey in the privacy of their own home or office. Over the past five years, we have noticed a shift in the number of people who are now willing to complete on-line surveys.

- **E-mails**

- While this is a no-brainer, we do find that there are a number of Catholic schools and parishes who are not utilizing e-mail to their advantage. E-mail "blasts" to the graduates of the Class of '85 with two paragraphs about what those folks are doing, is a well-read piece of communication. Every parish and school should be capturing e-mail addresses of EVERYONE - parents, alumni, parishioners, visitors to the parish, prospective parents, prospective families coming to Open House, and the list goes on. The ability to categorize people into various groupings allows you to segment your audience rather than sending out an e-mail that is not at all applicable to some.
- It is always refreshing to walk into a parish and ask the person in charge of communication if she/he has the ability to send out an e-mail to all parishioners announcing the start of a long-range planning process, and the answer come back, "Yes!" Or, to go into a Catholic school and ask the development director if she/he can pull up the e-mail addresses of 75% of the graduates in the Class of 1973, and have the same answer.
- Please, continue to build your e-mail database.

- **On-Line Giving**

- Tied into your web site, we recommend that you offer the opportunity for people to give to your Catholic school/parish on-line. Three beliefs we have here at ISPD:
 1. People will do it.
 2. They have been doing it in earnest for 5-10 years.
 3. The number of people participating in this kind of giving will increase as we move forward in time.

- As we announced at our recent Webinar on February 23rd, one of our former clients - Christ the King Parish in Milwaukie, OR - has an excellent on-line giving plan. Set up by their development director, Kellee Harris, you can read more about this in the September/October 2004 *Momentum* magazine from NCEA.

- **Desktop Publishing**

- Although not everyone is skilled in desktop publishing, this is another way to use technology to save money. This topic is certainly not new, but we find that some schools and parishes have stayed away from it because the learning curve is too steep. With the advances in software today, and the user friendly packages out there for under \$250, we have no doubt that you can find an excellent program in order to create flyers, brochures, announcements, one page newsletters, etc.
- I started out back in the 90's learning how to use Aldus Pagemaker. It is a great program, but it did take a while to learn. When Microsoft Business Office came out, there is a desktop program called Microsoft Publisher that is part of the bundle. Although it may cost an extra \$200, I would encourage you make sure that that software package is on your computer. It is simple; it can be learned in a few hours; and, it can be mastered in less than a week. Publisher has the ability do most anything from a publication stand point. Once you have your document camera-ready, then you can run it off on a color printer at the parish and/or school.
- Speaking of printers, the prices have dropped dramatically. Of course, the reason for that is because of the color print cartridges that you have to replace every month or so at \$25 a pop. Please do your research, but keep in mind that desktop publishing is a great way to create simple documents in house.

- **Virtual Tours of Your New Facilities/Master Plan**

- There are many people who are very visual. By that I mean they really can learn better when they see something unfold before their eyes. Back a few years ago, we were working with a parish managing their capital campaign to build a new church. It was somewhat of a controversial project, because the seating in the new church was in the shape of a horseshoe, and there were a number of people who simply did not understand the value of that arrangement. Working with the architect, we were able to come up with a virtual tour of the new church and surrounding facilities that made all the difference in the world. Loaded onto a DVD, the virtual tour guided people through every room in the new church, took them up on the altar, brought them to the baptismal font, sat them in a pew in the middle of the church, and had them stand in the choir loft. The use of this technology sold the parish families on the new configuration of seating. The campaign went over its goal.

- **GoToMeeting.com / GoToWebinar.com**

- For those of you who have attended one of our Webinars, you know that the ability to meet with a bunch of people at the same time is as easy as a click of a button. In today's society, it is sometimes difficult to get people together. GoToMeeting or GoToWebinar are two excellent ways to make this happen. The cost is reasonable; under \$100 per month for a subscription and you can schedule as many meetings/webinars as you wish.
- Some of the ways you may be able to utilize this:
 - An occasional board meeting
 - Alumni reunion organizational meetings
 - Alumni informational meetings by class
 - Hosting a Webinar to present budget information
 - Hosting a Webinar to educate parents and teachers in technology
- The list is endless. I encourage you to do your research on this important tool.

- **People Relationship Software**

- We know that many Catholic schools and parishes are already set up to move forward with excellent database packages. The Raiser's Edge, Parish Soft, PDS (Parish Data System), and others continue to be purchased for many reasons. One software package we recommend at ISPD for those who are looking for people relationship software or those who are just starting out in parish and/or school

development is ACT. This is a software package for under \$500 that is great for managing people and the relationships you have established and will establish in the future.

- In the future, as we all know, it will not be enough to just have basic information; we will need to set up user-friendly applications that can give us information at the push of a button. One parish we were working with recently had received a gift of some pews that another parish was giving away. Due to shipment, about 10-12 pews were damaged. Within a minute, the parish office had the list of 28 carpenters who were then called to come and help put the pews back together.

- **New Parishioner Registration/Prospective Parent Information**

- An integral part of your web site needs to be interactive, as we mentioned above. Important processes like new parish families being able to register on-line and prospective families being able to request information about a Catholic school, are wonderful ways to put technology to its full use.
- The bottom line to all of these suggestions is to make sure you have the expertise to make all of this happen. Yes, it may take more dollars than what you might have budgeted, but we strongly believe that the "pay off" will be well worth the effort in years to come.

- **E-Mail Newsletters**

- One last suggestion that is becoming more and more popular: Why not have a Pastor E-mail newsletter go out once per month to all parish families? Why not have a President or Principal E-Mail newsletter go out once per month to all school families? Or prospective families?
- There are many ways that you can build this distribution list if you don't have that process already in place.

In conclusion, technology will continue to advance, and that is an understatement. In the Catholic Development world, there are and will be many different tools that we can all utilize in order to expand our resources and advance our mission. The first step takes place with the commitment from the leadership to make the resources available - both financial and human. I have no doubt that ten years from now the changes will be astonishing. Whether or not we take advantage of those advances will depend upon whether we elect to be reactive or proactive.

ISPD Webinar Back by Popular Request: "Successful Catholic Development in Tough Economic Times"

With the success of our Webinar on February 23rd with over 500 people in attendance, we will once again offer this same topic on **Thursday, April 2, 2009**, from **10:00 AM - 11:00 AM CENTRAL STANDARD TIME**. This is a free Webinar, and all you have to do is visit our website at www.ISPD.com and register. Other Webinar offerings are also listed on the ISPD website. We invite you to join us.

- [Visit our Website to Register for a Webinar Today!](#)

ISPD 15 MIN Educational DVDs on Catholic Development Free upon Request

- *An Introduction to Long-Range Planning for Catholic Parishes*
- *An Introduction to Long-Range, Strategic Planning for Catholic Schools*
- *An Introduction to ISPD's Total Stewardship Process*
- *Creating the Strategic Plan for Development for Parishes and Schools*
- *Inviting, Involving, and Engaging More People into the Life of Your Catholic Parish*
- *Getting Ready for a Capital Campaign, Part I*
- *Implementing a Capital Campaign, Part II*

To receive your free 15 minute DVD, please visit the [Resource Center](#) on our website.

ISPD OFFERS FREE SERVICE: A Place for You to Announce Job Openings in Catholic Development, Advancement and Total Stewardship

ISPD is pleased to offer a free service to any Catholic parish, school or diocese. We have a new button on our website entitled [Development Job Postings](#). By clicking on this button, visitors can go directly to this page and view job announcements and opportunities from area Catholic institutions. Twice per month in our two newsletters, ISPD will highlight this opportunity and invite readers to view these announcements. These newsletters reach over 11,000 Catholic leaders by e-mail each month.

Each announcement should be no more than 200 words and should invite people to submit a resume to your specific address (e-mail or physical). We ask that you mail new requests (with the announcement attached in a Microsoft Word document) to ISPD@aol.com, including the name of your contact person and a telephone number where we can reach you, just in case we need clarification on the announcement. Announcements will be put in alphabetical order by institution.

- [Click here to read more about these job opportunities in Catholic development](#)

CATHOLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT TALK

ISPD is your Catholic School Enrollment Solution for maintaining and/or increasing the quantity, quality, or diversity of your elementary or secondary Catholic school enrollment. *Catholic School Enrollment Talk* is our free monthly online newsletter for anyone interested in Catholic school enrollment solutions.

- [Subscribe today!](#)

SPRING 2009 WORKSHOPS ISPD WORKSHOPS DELVE INTO DEPTH

The one and two day workshops presented by ISPD offer Catholic leaders throughout the country an in-depth experience on a specific topic. For more than twenty years, ISPD has been this country's leader in offering process-driven workshops that are practical, affordable, and

interactive. 98% of all ISPD workshops receive a rating of 4 or 5 (out of a 1-5 rating system) by those in attendance. This spring ISPD will be presenting workshops on capital campaigns, engaging more people into the life of a Catholic parish, the best first steps in Catholic Development, enrollment solutions, long-range planning, and much more. Please visit our web site at www.ispd.com for the latest information and also to register on line.

ISPD Also Conducts On-Site Workshops

Offered to Catholic schools and parishes within a single diocese, these workshops are designed to meet your specific needs.

- [Check Here for More Information on ISPD Development Workshops](#)

ISPD - Bringing people, process and ministry together to build the Kingdom of God
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Visit our web site for free resources and valuable information.

The Institute of School and Parish Development (ISPD) is a national, Catholic development consulting firm created to serve Catholic schools, parishes and dioceses in the areas of planning, marketing, fund-raising, and resource development.

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to anyone you think could benefit from this information. If there are any topics you would like to see covered in a future newsletter, please contact us.

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