Getting the Most Out of Your Personal Space on the Web

It's exciting to see so many members of the LifeChurch.tv team communicating online! Blogs, Facebook, Twitter, etc. are an incredible way to share your faith journey, get to know other ministry leaders, learn, chronicle your life, and generally connect with people you wouldn't otherwise. As we work together to lead people to become fully devoted followers of Christ, here are a few tips to keep in mind while we navigate the ins and outs of the online world:

- ***You're amongst friends—sometimes***. As much as your blog, Twitter stream, Facebook page, etc. might feel like your cozy home on the Internet where friends stop by to catch up, it's really a public space. People can land on your page from a Google search and read just one post completely out of any other context. In fact, members of the press have contacted LifeChurch.tv based on blog post content. And that content? It lives on foreeeever in Google, long after you've forgotten about it. So, think of your web space less like a family room and more like your front yard.
- ***Spread news, don't break it***. It's great (and helpful!) when we can use our personal web spaces to share the great things God is doing at LifeChurch.tv. But it's not cool to get the news out there before the time or in a different place than we've oh-so-strategically planned. Make sure what you talk about is ready for public consumption. If we've talked about it from the stage or online, you're good.
- ***Detract? Distract? Neither***. Most of us know what's going to detract from the mission of LifeChurch.tv and stay far away from that territory. But you'll also want to be on the lookout for things that will distract from the mission of LifeChurch.tv. You might post about something that is 100% accurate and true to our beliefs that can still draw unwanted attention to the church and take substantial time to manage and explain. If you're in doubt, you're surrounded with strong leaders who'll be happy to help you figure out whether something falls into that gray area.
- ***Ask questions***. If you want to spur conversation about a topic, think about open-ended posts and questions, not opinions.
- ***Be smart***. From a legal perspective, you're responsible for what's on your personal web space, so make sure you follow copyright rules and any other relevant laws. Be particularly mindful of video and music clips. Those lawyers do not mess around, no matter how small potatoes you might feel. And when it comes to LifeChurch.tv content, a good rule of thumb is "point, don't post," meaning that it's better to link to the content on our established communication channels rather than posting it on your blog or site. Follow the guidelines from your Copyright Law & Recording Policy e-learning (http://learning.lifechurch.tv/) and you'll be in the clear!
- ***Disclaimers or not, you represent***. Yes, a disclaimer is a good idea. But even with that, what you say in your tweets, on your blog, and on your Facebook page is just as much of a reflection of the church as what you do in your personal life. A few things that will help with that: don't link to your personal site from LifeChurch.tv communication, and don't speak on behalf of the church.
- ***You've got backup***. If a member of the press contacts you regarding content on your blog or web space, we're here to help. Make sure your first step is to contact Lori Bailey (lori.bailey@lifechurch.tv), and together we'll work out the best way to respond.
- ***When in doubt, go positive***. Whether you're responding to a snarky comment, frustrated with a vendor, or trying to decide if you should write about something that's bothering you, you'll never regret taking the high road (and sometimes that road is not saying anything at all).

Your presence on the web is an extension of your personal ministry, and we can't wait to see how you continue to use it to communicate the one-of-a-kind individual God created you to be.