

A Promised Land of Opportunity

Ground to claim in Web Evangelism IEC Conference Sept 03

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"I believe the Web is one of the most key tools that God has given us in the church today. Internet Evangelism is a dynamic, effective, cutting-edge ministry that more people should get involved in!"
- George Verwer

"Praise be to the Lord my Rock, who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle." (Psalm 144:1)

1. International potential

Those amazing Internet access figures!

By 2004 there will be:

- ÿ 700 million+ users
- ÿ 60 million+ users in China
- ÿ 60 million+ users in India
- ÿ 6 million+ users in Africa

More Internet facts, figures, and language use: www.gospelcom.net/guide/resources/world.php

Potential for web evangelism in 10-40 Window countries

The Window contains:

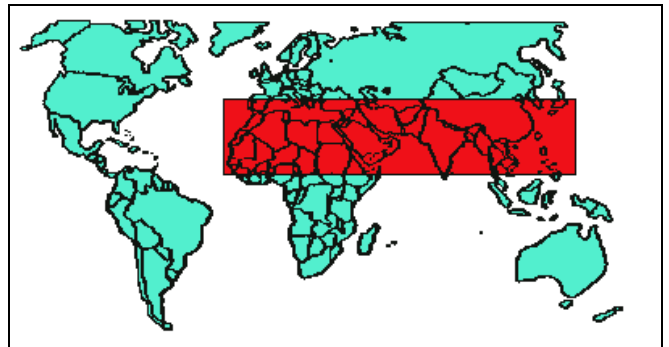
- ÿ 2/3 world population
- ÿ half of world's least evangelized cities
- ÿ most adherents of 3 world religions: Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism
- ÿ 95% of 10-40 populations are unevangelised

More on the 10-40 Window: <http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/fs/1040.htm>

Looking at specific countries

Internet users in:

ÿ Japan	56 million
ÿ Malaysia	5 million
ÿ Indonesia	4 million
ÿ Turkey	2.5 million
ÿ Vietnam	400,000
ÿ Nepal	60,000
ÿ Brunei	35,000
ÿ Bhutan	2500



Taken from list of 43 most needy countries which offer good opportunities for web evangelism:
aibi.ph/missions/cybermissions_target_nations.htm

Other country stats:

cyberatlas.internet.com/big_picture/geographics/article/0,,5911_151151,00.html

Example: Needs in Japan

"A stagnant economy and rising unemployment has had a profound effect on many Japanese. Young people are not so bound by tradition and protocol, and are looking for new answers. So far, they are not looking in church, which is formal and traditional, pastor-centered, and may even be shrinking slightly."

- John Bardsley - mission analyst

Only a handful of groups do online outreach for Japan - including CCC and new group 'VIP'. The needs and potential are enormous for this highly-wired society. Pray for more such ministries.

Example: Poland demonstrates effective IE strategies

- ÿ Population: 40 million
- ÿ Evangelicals: 70,000
- ÿ Evangelicals perceived as a sect by general population
- ÿ Chances of anyone meeting an evangelical face to face very small - except on the Internet

A small spare-time team under leadership of Michau Pleban operates a portfolio of interlinking outreach sites using a range of creative subjects and the 'Bridge Strategy'. Sites focus on literature, film, humor, general elections, 'Pop Idol' TV programme, webmastering/mobile phones and a special portal for Internet cafes to use. This model could operate successfully in many countries. Case study:

web-evangelism.com/resources/poland.php

2. The shortage of outreach sites

The "99% problem"

Arguably only 1% of Christian websites (or any other Christian media) are specifically designed for evangelism. A constant stream of new Christian sites goes online every week. Do we really need them all?

Reasons for the shortage?

- ÿ Easier/more comfortable to minister to other Christians than to non-Christians (speaking to myself here too). Escape the comfort zone!
- ÿ Hard to get alongside non-Christians, or even remember what it is really like to be one.
- ÿ Evangelistic sites don't have a 'product' to sell or generate income through supporters.
- ÿ Some may believe that any Christian content is mysteriously somehow evangelistic, just by being there.
- ÿ Hard for potential web evangelists to raise support.

Of course, we are thankful to be resourced by so many good necessary Christian sites. But even sites written entirely for Christians should contain a gospel link, for non-Christian visitors. The *Web Evangelism Guide* 'Meaning of Life?' link appears on every page top and bottom, with follow-on links to other outreach sites:

web-evangelism.com/resources/meaning.php

Gospelcom, Crosswalk, and many others, offer such a prominent link - sometimes their own, sometimes a third-party site. Choose third-party evangelistic links for this purpose at:

web-evangelism.com/resources/evangelistic.php

Church sites - missed potential

- ÿ most are not written with non-members in mind
- ÿ many do not explain the Gospel at any point

Strategies to make church sites evangelistic: web-evangelism.com/church

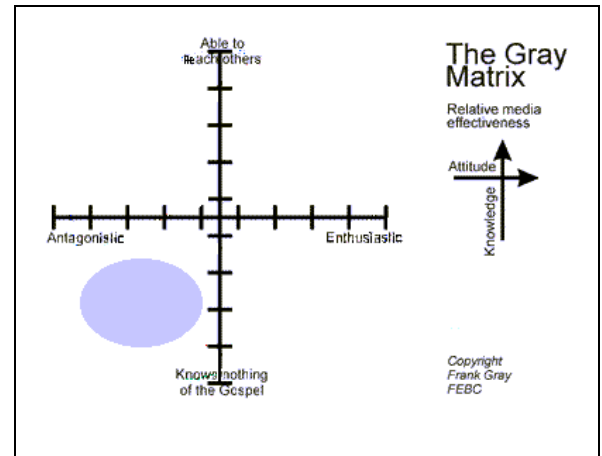
Being advocates for the medium - we can:

- ÿ tell churches our positive IE results.
- ÿ get IE stories in print.
- ÿ demonstrate this is a medium that works.
- ÿ educate how this medium works best - it's not preaching and not tracts. Needs gifts of a journalist, not a preacher.
- ÿ encourage churches to make effective sites for NON-members.
- ÿ enable churches and individuals to see that financial support for web outreach (both for organizations and individual staff support) is valid and cost-effective.
- ÿ encourage and train potential web evangelists.

3. Creative online evangelism

The Engel Scale revisited

- +5 Stewardship
- +4 Communion with God
- +3 Conceptual and behavioral growth
- +2 Incorporation into Body
- +1 Post-decision evaluation
- New birth**
- 1 Repentance and faith in Christ
- 2 Decision to act
- 3 Personal problem recognition
- 4 Positive attitude towards Gospel
- 5 Grasp implications of Gospel
- 6 Awareness of fundamentals of Gospel
- 7 Initial awareness of Gospel
- 8 Awareness of supreme being, no knowledge of Gospel



Gray Matrix - a cool tool

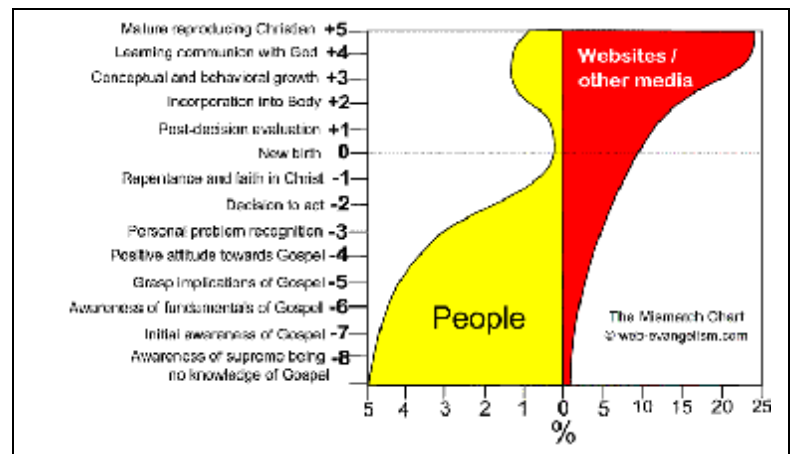
This tool combines the knowledge axis of the Engel Scale with an Antagonism/Enthusiasm horizontal axis. It helps us understand where people are at spiritually, and that we must engage with their attitude, probably before providing more knowledge of the Gospel. The gray blob represents a person (or group of people) that is unreached, with little knowledge or interest in the Christian message.

The challenge therefore is to use strategies that reach the people in the bottom left-hand corner. These must avoid Christian jargon and assumptions of previous Christian knowledge.

web-evangelism.com/resources/gray-matrix.php

The Mismatch Chart

Here is the Engel Scale again, with a rough estimate of the percentage of Christian material designed to reach people at each point on the scale. It demonstrates the vast amount for Christians, the moderate amount for 'nearly-Christians', but very little for people at bottom of scale.



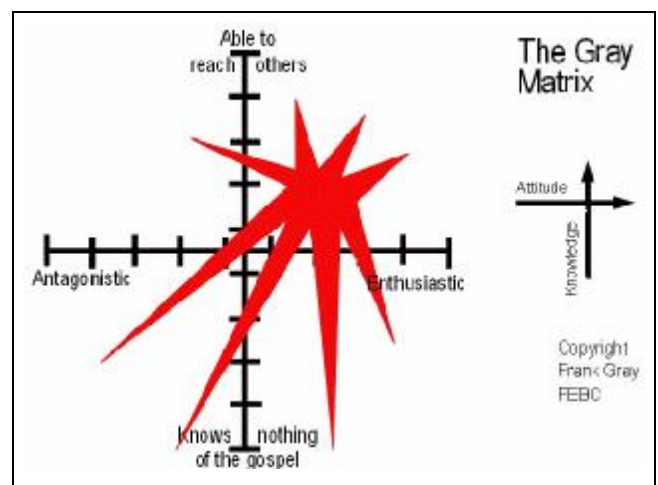
Are we ministering to ourselves most of the time?

The Battlestar has landed

The Star graphic is combined with the Gray Matrix. The rays of the star represent creative evangelism web approaches which reach right down to people at the bottom of the scale. These identify with issues and needs that interest them.

Precision targeting - for the first time we can target people:

- ÿ anywhere in world
- ÿ by secular interest
- ÿ by language
- ÿ by need



Creative ideas and the Bridge Strategy

Maura McCarthy calls it the 'Adaptive Strategy'. I use 'Bridge Strategy'. It's the same thing. Construct sites on anything and everything, then make an ethical transition to different elements of spiritual content:

- ÿ parable/parallels based on the subject
- ÿ questions about life and its meaning
- ÿ testimony (webmaster and/or others)
- ÿ direct presentation of the Gospel

This creative strategy is surely the key to reaching the unchurched, unreached, non-seeking online person.

Examples

Women: *Women Today Magazine* is a prime example of a site targeting a specific group, on the basis of felt needs, and avoiding all religious churchy language and assumptions. Read the case study comparing it with the superficially similar site *Christian Women Today*, which is only for Christian readers. web-evangelism.com/resources/case-study.php

Films/culture: e.g. *Hollywood Jesus*, *Movie Glimpse*, *HobbitLore*: web-evangelism.com/film

Sport: e.g. *The Goal*, *To the Next Level*, *Jason Stevens*: web-evangelism.com/sport

Local community resources: eg *Kamloops Lfe*: web-evangelism.com/community

Hobbies: e.g. photography, pets, music, pocket PCs, chess:
web-evangelism.com/resources/hobby.php

Tragically there seem few such hobby sites. With millions of Christians having thousands of hobbies, here is enormous potential. If more would make even a simple site (even 5-10 pages), with an onward link to a third-party Gospel presentation, we would touch millions. The same applies to many other secular topics. This opportunity is vast and largely untapped.

In the Bulletin, I usually run an 'If Only' section - ideas which would make wonderful Bridge Strategy sites. Here are two quirky ones featured last time:

Found Magazine - lost odds and ends people have found: www.foundmagazine.com

Illusions - visual tricks: www.grand-illusions.com

Online and CD Games

Potential for games - either to add 'stickiness' to a site, or even to communicate Christian truth.

See: Covert Gaming: www.msnbc.com/news/954674.asp?cp1=1

More > web-evangelism.com/resources/games.php

Pray for games developers to take up this strategy.

4. Equipping for IE

Informal:

- ÿ IEC self-study course: www.gospelcom.net/bgc/iec/otoe/
- ÿ Web Evangelism Guide pages - use page-end questions for further study
- ÿ Andrew Careaga's books and newsletters:
www.e-vangelism.com www.eministryonline.com
- ÿ Join discussion lists e.g. ie-discuss-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
- ÿ Understand culture: www.damaris.org and www.relevant.com

Formal

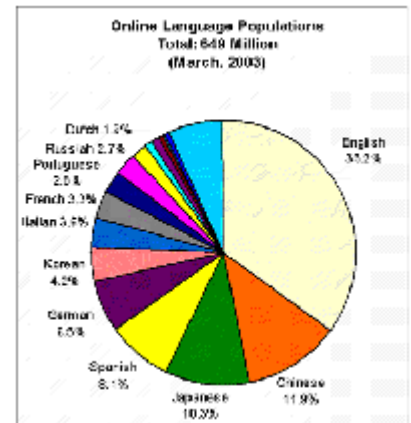
- ÿ New Cybermissions 12-week distance-learning course - an ideal follow-on to IEC course
www.cybermissions.org/training
- ÿ Need for other formal courses - see proposal that Christian institutions could take up:
web-evangelism.com/resources/training.php
- ÿ Writing, Journalistic Writing and Technical: writing/journalistic writing/webmastering courses available, including distance learning/evening classes in local colleges.

A promised land of opportunity: Appendix

IEC Conference Sept 03 *Extra quotes, ideas, anecdotes and resources*

1. Web Resources

- Ÿ Web Evangelism Guide web-evangelism.com
- Ÿ Twice-monthly email Web Evangelism Bulletin web-evangelism.com/web
- Ÿ Training: web-evangelism.com/resources/training.php
 - IEC self-study informal course: gospelcom.net/bgc/iec/otoe/outline.php
 - Cybermissions 12-week distance learning: www.cybermissions.org/training
- Ÿ CCC outreach team - potential for internship and partnering: www.truthmedia.com
- Ÿ Strategy/communication ideas: www.marketplacecommunications.com
 - www.newwway.org
 - www.communication-strategy.net
 - www.mediastrategy.org



2. Language use online

See pie-chart of the most used languages

Other languages used: web-evangelism.com/resources/world.php

3. The web saves “six months to two years of ministry time”

"Before I arrived in [Asian country] as a missionary, I went online to the city I was sent to.

It is a mixed Christian-Muslim regional center in a very remote part of the country. I then read the daily paper online, emailed the mayor and local officials, joined a local discussion group, got informed and made friends. When I arrived, a number of people whom I had met online invited me out to dinner and my ministry started as soon as I arrived. I also managed to join the email group of the then Vice-President (now President) and made a few constructive comments - so when I had problems with my visa, I just sent an email and it was soon fixed! I reckon that I saved between six months to two years of ministry time by making a wide range of high-level friends before I arrived and "starting fast and well-informed". Sure, only 1% of people there were online, but that 1% were the leaders and they boosted my ministry so it became effective. Church-planters can use the Internet to network their way to success."

4. Novelty value of non-English Christian materials when few online materials yet available:

In a language in which there is very little yet online, the very presence of Christian material can sometimes, at this initial stage of web development, attract readers:

"We needed people with language and computing skills to help us take Kannada Bible online. It was quite accidental that I ran into an old ministry friend who was involved with a digital bridging project of imparting computer skills to slum dwellers (mostly Hindu and middle-school drop outs) in a major southern city. And he readily agreed to help us out with Kannada Bible content. Late last year, they began data entry and proof-reading of Kannada Bible and have completed all books of NT, and first 10 books of OT. They gather every day in a local church facility, to read and type in the Kannada Bible verse by verse. As a result of the newly acquired skills many of them were able to find jobs and stake their claim in the digital world. Can you imagine a few slum kids being a blessing to the whole Kannada-speaking people around the world?"

In an email report from the team, two of the slum girls have accepted Jesus as their Savior and are taking baptism. Just engaging them to type scripture has convicted them of their sins and brought them to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Praise God! Please pray for them and others working on iYesu project. The iYesu project is funded by many well wishers from technology industry in the US. We are hoping to undertake bibles in 5 more languages (Telugu, Gujurati, Bengali, Urdu and Marathi)." (Indeos Foundation)

5. Echoes from Eternity - embedded meanings and parallels in stories and culture

Melissa Mathison was educated in a Catholic school in Hollywood, and worked on the film E.T. During filming, she and the cinematographer suddenly realized the similarities between the plot and the story of Jesus Christ. "His being left on earth, being found, his apostles, dying, the resurrection. We were cracking up when we figured out that one. When we told Steven [Spielberg], he said, 'I'm Jewish, and I don't want to hear anything about this.'"

"Several years ago the Lord began giving me interpretations of different movies. I believe that He is using the 'common language' of today which is the language of film, as a vehicle for His message. Just as He gave the dreams to Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar, I think He is using men such as Steven Spielberg in a similar way. I believe the church is missing it by not being an interpreter such as a Daniel or a Joseph." - Lesley Hand, MovieGlimpse.com

Almost all stories contain parallels with some element of eternal truth.

More > web-evangelism.com/resources/parallel.php

6. UK stately homes discover timeless truth

Britain is rich in 'stately homes' - those large mansions and castles built by the great and the good over the last 1000 years. Most are dependent on tourists for their continued existence, and the loss of overseas tourists following 9/11 has caused desperate administrators to look for ways of increasing visitors and income, often by using museum experts. And - a revolutionary move - they have been asking visitors what actually interests them. And the perhaps unsurprising answer is: stories. People do not want information on the architecture and art printed on panels. They want stories and gossip about the people who lived there. At Castle Howard, guides are dressed in period costume to tell the stories. At Knebworth, they say, "People don't come to see the treasures but to hear the stories." Journalists, of course, have known this for years. "People are interested in people."

Interestingly, the word 'gospel' comes from the Old English 'godspel' which means 'good news' but also 'good story'. One of the things that makes us human is our imagination - the ability to visualize a narrative which we cannot see, whether past, present or future, fact or fiction. We are hardwired to create and understand 'story', even from a very early age.

So we should not be presenting the Gospel primarily as a series of propositional truths, but as story - the universal human language.

7. Women Today Magazine: editor Claire Colvin explains the ethos

"It seems so obvious that a Christian site is not necessarily an evangelistic site. One of the biggest barriers that stops a site from being truly evangelistic is language. One thing you'll notice on the Women Today site is a lack of Christian terminology. You don't see words like 'church', 'pray', 'salvation', 'holy', 'sanctified', 'born again', 'repent'. Instead, you find articles written from a Christian perspective but presented in regular English.

How can you expect people to hear your message if you speak a language they don't understand? I think this is hard for many of us who were raised in the church because these words are so familiar. It's important to remember that an evangelistic website is not about us, or what is comfortable and familiar to us. An outreach site is all about helping the Gospel make sense to our audience, using the words and examples, format and tone that make it easy for them to listen and understand. I think we have a great example of this in Christ (big surprise!). When He preached He could have pulled out every theology term in the book and made Himself sound very learned in the process, but that's not what He did. He told stories, He used simple stories to explain the wonders of God to human beings. He didn't change the truth, He spoke it plainly. And people responded."

Rest of article > web-evangelism.com/resources/case-study.php

8. Content Management (CM)

If you have ever completed a website guestbook, that is simple 'Content Management' - the ability to add text to a page through your browser, with no technical expertise needed. Sites which use CM can enable a team to add content to the site, without contributors being technically-minded. However, it is still essential that users understand Web communication. It offers a way forward for large outreach sites, and enables good writers to get their stuff online without help. Gospelcom's ready-made CM system CWS is one example. CM offers enormous potential to multiply Internet Evangelism.

The Blogging style of web communication is becoming increasingly popular, and represents another avenue to creating site content without technical headaches.

9. The Three Components of Effective Internet Ministry

Ÿ **Marketing:** Let the *right people* know your site exists *for them*

Ÿ **Delivery:** To *move someone* thru your site to *a desired action*

Ÿ **Response:** To *engage people* in conversation *for ministry*

These three components also apply to any kind of ministry. In a Web context, each component must be functioning if the site is to touch people.

More > web-evangelism.com/resources/effective.php



10. Teaching IT

Teaching computer use has great potential in evangelism, both in the West, and the 2/3 world.

More > web-evangelism.com/resources/teach-it.php

11. Emlyn and the Far Pools

"I wish there were more," said Emlyn to his family, as he brought his fish-catch into the house. After all, the whole village depended on fish. It was even a requirement of the landlord that the village should catch sufficient fish for market. Only then would it grow and prosper.

The fish-pools supplied the needs of the village - they stretched up the valley, almost as far as you could see. Those nearest were right on the edge of the village, set in comfortable fields with pleasant shade. Go further away though, and you came to hard rocky pools with steep sides and limited access. Furthest of all, hard up against the dark forest, were the murky pools where you had to be careful of the quick-sands. Insects could be a real problem there. Nameless beasts of prey lived in the forest, so it was best not to fish alone. Emlyn had been there occasionally.

>Rest of story: web-evangelism.com/resources/fishing.php