

Yvon Prehn - yvonprehn@aol.com

Christmas Goodies Resources For Church Communicators



Christmas is a time for gift-giving, and one of the best gifts I can give all of you who faithfully read my column is a list of some resources for church communicators of which you might not be aware. Following is a variety of annotated resources in a variety of areas from clipart and image editing, to a great source for youth related logos and t-shirts, to high-end studies on writing for websites and many other areas.

Clipart and related links

Christian Book Website, for clip art deals

www.christianbook.com

This website has all kinds of clipart packages including denominational sets and ones that are no longer nationally distributed including denominational packages, historical packages and all kinds of things. However, what is odd about this section is it is a bit hard to find on the website itself. They don't have a category for clipart on the home page, you need to type "clip art" into the search box for the offerings to come up and then a HUGE list of many pages appears. One of the best programs, that used to be sold all over, but is very hard to find now, is the ClickArt Publishing Suite III, for only \$29. It not only has lots of good church clip art; but, it also includes the WMF Image Editor which is a great image editor for clipart in the WMF format.

Image, clipart editing

WMF Image Editor

www.companionsoftware.com

If for some reason, you don't want to buy another clipart set, you can buy this image editor by itself. This link is a source for WMF Image Editor, a great little program

that allows you to edit clipart that is in the WMF format—Windows Metafile Format. It allows you to break apart clipart, delete parts, rearrange parts, and re-color parts. Most of the clipart you download from the www.microsoft.com site is in the WMF format. You can do so much more with this than you can with the image editing that comes with MS Word or MS Publisher. When working with this program I usually have two windows open—it is so much fun to take apart a complex piece of clip art and save little parts of it for use in various projects.

The ClickArt Publishing Suite III described above site is also in the WMF format. If the image is not in WMF, you can convert it into WMF through Snagit, the following program.

Snagit

www.snagit.com

I LOVE THIS PROGRAM! With it you can clip out and save anything that appears on your computer screen—anything from a section of a page to a website or any part of it. In addition to the screen capture function, Snagit also has some pretty powerful image editing tools—you can use it to crop, enlarge, reduce, apply a number of image filters including posterize, pixelate, solarize, add noise.

These filters give you end results that are similar to what you get if you apply filters in Photoshop. The difference is that Snagit is a \$39 program and SUPER easy to use and Photoshop.... well, Photoshop never has been described as easy.

You can also use it to convert clipart from one format to another—for example, if you snag something that is in a jpeg or eps format and you want to edit it in WMF Image Editor, you can convert it to the WMF format simply by saving it in that format in Snagit.

One caution: Little Snagit has no conscience. If you capture an image that is not legally yours to use, no warning pops up saying “better check with the copyright owner on this!” You have to keep an eye on little Snagit.... and only capture and use images that it are legal for you to do so.

If you really want something you see on the web, but you don’t know if it is legal or not for you to use it, ask.

For Volunteer training, info, etc.

Energize

<http://www.energizeinc.com>

This is a secular site, but it is one of the best resources I’ve ever come across with great advice for anyone who works with volunteers. It contains many articles, books, resources, and an online newsletter, etc. Their newsletter is great and full of ideas.

For your youth group

Uthstuph

www.uthstuph.com

This site is wild and crazy and a wonderful company for very edgy designs for youth groups. It is available in a variety of prices depending upon the level of customization.

For Blogging

If you want to try this tool to communicate, but don’t know where to begin, these two will get you started. Blogger is free, but how do you use it? Lynda.com (www.lynda.com) has a wonderful tutorial that will walk you through step by step on setting up and starting a blog.

Blogger

www.blogger.com

A free and beginner site for blogging. www.lynda.com has a tutorial on Blogger



Yvon Prehn Seminars
schedule now for 2008

Effective Church Communication & Marketing:
STRATEGY

Effective Church Communication & Marketing:
DESIGN & CREATION

very affordable, incredibly helpful, and inspiring

for more info and open dates, contact yvonprehn@aol.com

Website advice

It is no secret that I am not a huge fan of over-designed websites with lots of graphics and little useful content. My thoughts in this area have been greatly influenced by the two resources below and I would highly recommend them to anyone wanting to do something of value with their website rather than display the latest Flash graphic you are playing with.

Gerry McGovern

www.gerrymcgovern.com

The source for a newsletter on writing and content management for the web; McGovern is a secular guru on sensible web content creation and his brief newsletters contain much that is useful for church communicators.

Jakob Nielson’s USEIT

<http://www.useit.com>

An extremely basic and very sensible site—a recent article relates a study that shows the comparative benefits of long vs. short articles on the web.

The Links section of my website, www.thelionsvoice.com, of course has much more, but the ones above are some of my favorites. PLEASE, if you have resources related to church communications, let me know and I’ll pass them on in future articles, my seminars and website.

Have a wonderful, joyous Christmas!