

I work for the Church, responsible for making members aware of all the great things the Church produces. Six years ago, I started LDSMT to tell people about Church materials and show how they can be used to benefit our lives. Here's a word cloud. And notice the one of the largest is Sharing the Gospel. The blog includes other things like x and y. But we're here today to talk about how we can share the gospel—especially how we can use technology and social media to share the gospel wider and deeper than ever before.

Last August at the Campus Education Week Devotional, Elder M. Russell Ballard's said the following:

“From the beginning of time there have been articulate men and women who have had unusual powers of persuasion. Those with gifts of communication have always had great influence, but the influence of persuasive communicators has never been greater than it is today. Because of the Internet, and particularly the popularity and proliferation of social media—Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and heaven only knows what else has become popular that I'm not aware of yet—anyone can talk to anyone about anything. Today anyone who is clever, articulate, and glib can find an audience and develop a following. Unfortunately, not everyone who has cultivated the ability to communicate uses their powers of expression to spread or teach truth. And not everyone has the help of the Holy Ghost to think straight.” – Elder M. Russell Ballard, Campus Education Week Devotional, August 20, 2013.

In last April conference, Elder Neil L. Andersen said: “There are new ways to invite others to ‘come and see’ [John 1:39]. Let's make sharing our faith online more a part of our daily life.” (show meme, and zoom in on quote as you read it)

Play [clip](#): “The Lord needs you now more than ever to be an instrument in His hands. All of us have a contribution to make to this miracle.”

“For those using the Internet and mobile phones, there are new ways to invite others to “come and see.” Let's make sharing our faith online more a part of our daily life. LDS.org, Mormon.org, Facebook, Twitter—all provide opportunities.

“To share the gospel, young members in Boston started several blogs. (See, for example, [youngandmormon.com](#).) Those who joined the Church began their learning online, followed by discussions with the missionaries. This experience also helped the youth have greater faith in talking about the gospel in person. One of them said, ‘This isn't missionary work. This is missionary fun.’”

President Uchtdorf: “With so many social media resources and a multitude of more or less useful gadgets at our disposal, sharing the good news of the gospel is easier and the effects more far-reaching than ever before....”

“...perhaps the Lord’s encouragement to ‘open [your] mouths’ might today include ‘use your hands’ to blog and text message the gospel to all the world!”

“Sometimes a single phrase of testimony can set events in motion that affect someone’s life for eternity.”

Dieter F. Uchtdorf, April 2011 General Conference

### Sharing strategies

- We’ve heard a lot about “Hastening the Work of Salvation.” You remember the phrase “Catch the wave of missionary work” meme-catch.jpg And missionary-fun.jpg. And Latter-day Saints are Full-time Finders.jpg. Pix Hastening website. The website [HasteningTheWork.Ids.org](http://HasteningTheWork.Ids.org) has 20 videos to help us understand how members, leaders, and the missionaries work together in this Work of Salvation.
- Pick a few social media ideas from “[10 Scriptures, 10 Videos, 10 Conversation Starters to Share the Gospel](#)” and illustrate with pictures overlaid with text
- Link your Google+ account to your Mormon.org profile to earn Google authorship ranking which may help your Mormon.org profile be seen more.
- Mormon.org profile <show my pix> For step-by-step instructions, visit [Mormon.org/create](http://Mormon.org/create).
- Create Your Own Gospel-Centered Blog – why create a gospel-centered blog

Meme: Elder M. Russell Ballard said, “Most of you already know that if you have access to the Internet you can start a blog in minutes and begin sharing what you know to be true. You can download videos from Church and other appropriate sites...and send them to your friends” (“Sharing the Gospel Using the Internet,” Ensign, July 2008).

In the October 2010 general conference, Elder Russell M. Nelson shared the following success story about sharing the gospel online: “Now in this day of the Internet, there are new and exciting ways you can do missionary work. You can invite friends and neighbors to visit the new mormon.org website. If you have blogs and online social networks, you could link your sites to mormon.org. And there you can create your own personal profile. Each profile includes an expression of belief, an experience and a testimony. Because this is a new feature, most of these profiles are available in English. Profiles in other languages will follow. These profiles can have a profound influence for good.”

Then he shared a story about..... Two months ago a young man named Zac — a freshman in college — saw an ad for mormon.org on television in Baton Rouge, La. He connected with the website and was intrigued by the profiles of Church members. At our website he found the link that informed him where he could attend church. The next Sunday, dressed in a white shirt and tie, he attended church, was introduced to members of the ward, and enjoyed all three hours of meetings. He was invited to a member’s home for dinner, followed by his first missionary lesson. In less than two

weeks, he was baptized and confirmed as a member of the Church. Welcome, Zac! (He is listening.)”

Create a slide with these bullet points:

LDS blogger Brian Mickelson is a seminary teacher, husband, father and part-time photographer. He created his own blog to share his beliefs as a Latter-day Saint with friends and family online. “I would suggest that new bloggers set a reasonable schedule of writing; maybe once or twice a week. I also try to avoid controversy; there is enough of that online. I suggest that people write about what they know and are familiar with: their lives and how the gospel is blessing them.”

By running your own blog, you have a tremendous opportunity to share your beliefs. LDS.org suggests that bloggers should, “Talk about your day-to-day life. Remember that some who read your blog may not understand traditional ‘Mormon jargon’; be careful to be clear in your writing. Share what you learn when you go to Church. Share your family home evening experiences. Share how the Lord has blessed you. Bear your testimony where appropriate, and if you are prompted by the Spirit.”

Brother Mickelson felt inspired to write the posts of his own blog about the gospel after studying the words of Church leaders. He said, “I’ve always blogged about my life, family and items I find interesting, but when I began studying what the General Authorities of the Church were asking us to do to ‘hasten the work,’ I decided that I could share more gospel-oriented things on my blog since the gospel is such a central part of my life.

“I think I share all kinds of gospel-oriented items. I try to write about some basic gospel truths and aspects of the Church so that my friends of other faiths can become more familiar with the basics. I also find myself writing about items that can be a little confusing to Mormons. I share connections between the truths found in the scriptures and possible situations that most people find themselves in. Most of all, I try to help people see the hopeful, encouraging power of the gospel of Jesus Christ in their daily lives. I hope my blog is encouraging, above all.”

You may also want to consider a blog about a specific topic. My blog LDS Media Talk, for example, focuses on new LDS resources and how we can use them for good. Other people have blogs about specific gospel topics, such as missionary work, family history, teaching, or Church history.

- It's easy to start a blog. There are free websites that help people create blogs and publish them to the Internet. I wrote a follow-up article on how to set up a blog:

### Choose a Blogging Platform

A blogging platform is the website, service, or software you will use to write, publish, and host your blog. The easiest option is to use a blogging service like [Blogger.com](http://Blogger.com) because it provides the software and also hosts the blog. It's also free and easy to use. More advanced bloggers may want to download their own blogging software and host their own blogs.

Blogging services with hosting provided: [Blogger](http://Blogger.com), [Tumblr](http://Tumblr.com), [WordPress.com](http://WordPress.com), [Squarespace](http://Squarespace.com), [TypePad](http://TypePad.com)

Self-hosted blogging software: [WordPress.org](http://WordPress.org), [Movable Type](http://MovableType.com), [Expression Engine](http://ExpressionEngine.com), [Joomla](http://Joomla.com), [Drupal](http://Drupal.com)

Other options include [LiveJournal](http://LiveJournal.com), [Blog.com](http://Blog.com), [Weebly](http://Weebly.com), and [Wix](http://Wix.com) (these last two are really websites with blog options).

### Choose a Domain Name

This is the web address people use to access your blog. (The domain name of this blog is [LDSMediaTalk.com](http://LDSMediaTalk.com).) Ideally, the domain name should be the same as the name of your blog. The shorter the domain, the better, because it is easy to remember and easy to type. You will have to pay an annual fee to register and use a domain name. You can use [1and1.com](http://1and1.com) to check a name to see if it's already in use, and then register the name you choose for \$9 a year. If you use [Blogger.com](http://Blogger.com), you can use their domain [blogspot.com](http://blogspot.com) free, like I did for my lighthearted blog [RichmanRamblings.blogspot.com](http://RichmanRamblings.blogspot.com).

### Design Your Blog

Visual appeal is important to attract and keep readers. The good news is that you don't necessarily have to hire a web designer. The blogging services listed above offer thousands of attractive templates you can use, with options to modify them with your own colors and images. Many are free and others can be purchased.

Free WordPress Themes: [250+ Free Responsive WordPress Themes](#), [Best Free WordPress Themes](#), [30 Best Free WordPress Themes 2013](#), [WordPress.com's Free Themes](#)

Premium WordPress Themes: [Market Places \(ThemeForest, WooThemes, Mojo Themes, Rocket Themes\)](#), [50 "Hand-Picked" Beautiful Premium Responsive WordPress Themes](#), [Top 50 Premium WordPress Themes for Personal Blogs](#), [50+ Best Responsive WordPress Magazine Blog Themes 2013](#)

If you want more design flexibility than the templates provide, you could consider a drag-and-drop design tool, such as Headway Themes, which is what I used to buildTalkAboutSavingMoney.com.

#### Use tools

Blogging isn't just about writing and publishing your posts. You also need to analyze how many people are reading your blog and which articles they find interesting. Below is a list of basic tools you may find helpful:

Google Analytics – free statistics about where your visitors come from and how they interact with your site

Akismet Plugin – tracks spammers and helps keep them off your blog

WordPress SEO – provides a great all-in-one SEO solution for WordPress, including on-page content analysis and XML sitemaps

Redirection – manages your 301 redirects and monitors 404 errors

WordPress Database Backup Plugin – easily backs up your WordPress database

#### Create quality content

A well-designed blog may entice visitors to linger for the first visit, but quality content is what will keep them coming back. Writing for a blog is different than writing for a newspaper, magazine, or book. Write with short sentences and paragraphs. Provide bulleted lists. Use as few words as possible without sacrificing quality. And write as often as you can. If you need help coming up with topics, you may get ideas from these resources:

Google Alerts – sign up for emails with the latest content on keywords of your choice

Reddit – see what readers are ranking as top stories

Digg – discover and share content from anywhere on the web

Pinterest – see what interesting things other people are collecting and organizing

StumbleUpon – discover websites based on your interests

Flipboard (iOS and Android) – create your own magazine on any topic imaginable

Alltop – see an online magazine rack of popular topics

Market yourself

Your writing can't help others if no one reads it. Two of your most powerful marketing opportunities are search engine optimization (SEO) and using social media. SEO is all about getting your articles to show up on the results pages when people search for the topics you write about. Social media can be a great vehicle to help people see your articles, comment about them, and share them with others. Be sure to share your blog posts on Facebook, Google+, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Pinterest. Here are some resources to learn more:

Google Keyword Planner – Discover which keywords and phrases are searched for the most. You can then use those words in the titles and articles you write.

Social Media Posting Guide - A handy 1-page guide with suggestions on how, when, and where to post.

- There are literally hundreds of ideas on LDSMediaTalk.com on how to share the gospel. <zoom back to wordle> I invite you to browse through the topics and articles.

Show curated lists of the best of the best. Lists.jpg. Find lists of the Church pages on Facebook, Google+, Instagram, Linked in, Pinterest, Twitter, and YouTube. Also see list of recommended hashtags. Have circles appear over these as you read them.

### **3 Key Materials to share on Social Media**

- Video: Mormonism: A Christ-Centered, Global Faith—show all the others, tiling them
- Infographics (show from Newsroom, et. al.)
- Personalized pass-along cards. Show meme pass-along. Church creates colorful, modern pass-along cards that you can get from the distribution center. But now, you can even create your own personalized cards. Quickly explain how.

<show meme conf-weekend.jpg> General conference is this weekend, which is a perfect time to share your thoughts and experiences with your friends—members and nonmembers alike. Remember that “sharing the gospel” isn’t just about our nonmember friends. When you “share the gospel” with other members, we strengthen each other. Every day this week, you’ll find a post on my blog about conference. Display the headlines and read each one.

Closing slate (if I’m still in the running): Vote for your favorite #LDS blogs and social media sites. #MarchMadness rankings. Winners move on to next round until only 1 is left. If LDS Media Talk is one of your favorites, be sure to vote for it. We're in Division 1, second round.

You can vote once a day.

<http://www.ldssmile.com/2014/03/16/lds-social-media-madness/>

-Your Name (How it should appear on the program)

-A short bio (150 words or less)

-A title for your presentation

-A short description for your presentation (150 words or less)

Sharing the Gospel Using Social Media and Technology

Larry will share ideas on how to use materials published by the Church to share the gospel. He will explore how you can share materials published by the Church. He will also show what individual members can do. Larry is the author of LDSMediaTalk.com.