



research school of **informatics**

Project Title:	Information Provision by English Christian Churches
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Project Description:

The internet is an established marketing medium. It would follow that an organisation under apparent threat – such as the established Church of England - could be expected to exploit the internet as part of its efforts to counter falling membership numbers. At a local level, a church website that is open, accessible, up-to-date and welcoming could go a long way to encourage engagement from the wider community. The project aims to systematically evaluate how English Christian churches use the internet. Specifically, the overarching aim is:

To understand how English Christian churches and related organisations are using their internet presence to communicate theological, community and practical information to, and within, their congregations and the wider public.

The research has as a central element a content analysis of a sample of websites from Anglican, Catholic, Methodist and Baptist churches, in order to establish how each denomination uses its web presence and whether there are any identifiable differences in style or content between the denominations. A longitudinal study is also tracking changes in the proportion of churches within these denominations that publish a site. Finally, interviews with website producers and clergy will be undertaken to investigate attitudes towards churches' presence on the internet.