

*Social Media Quick Guide*

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# YouTube



## About ChurchTechToday

[ChurchTechToday](#) was born out of the need to find a place to discuss how technology can truly impact the Church in positive ways, whether it be reducing administration with a church office, allowing para church organizations to connect with their members online, or simply to share the Gospel message through non-traditional channels.

## About Lauren Hunter

Lauren Hunter is a church technology PR consultant (<http://lhpr.net>) and founder of ChurchTechToday, the #1 Church technology blog for pastors, church communicators, and leaders.

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YouTube may be the most forward thinking website on the planet. As much as Facebook has revolutionized the Internet into a social place for people to communicate, YouTube is offering a medium that is still years ahead of its time. While Google may be the king of search engines and leaps and bounds ahead of the competition, YouTube is even more so with online videos. The process in which it takes to go from video idea to shooting on a phone, PC screen capturing, or a more traditional and edited sense has led to the leading video platform in the world.

But simply hearing that YouTube is a leader and something you may want to invest in is only the beginning. It should be noted that unlike other social media networks, a ton of time should be put into creating content for YouTube. Even if you are doing minimal effort with editing and production, coming up with great ideas and the whole process of creating the final product may mean more hours than you thought to commit. At the same time, YouTube is a social media network, so there needs to be engagement with fans, working with subscribers, and having a great strategy around this social network.

## **The Network's Persona**

YouTube is the great restaurants in our social media town. Think Starbucks, Chipotle, and Chilis on one side of the street, P.F. Changs, Hard Rock Café, and Red Robin on the other side, with Five Guys, Smashburger, and Chick-fil-A right beside it. Not a single place that does not make your mouth water.

In this social media town, YouTube has so many different ways to consume media that allows for social media engagement that you simply have a buffet to choose from. Want to watch how-to videos, short video game play throughs, or morning church devotionals? Want to see the Skit Guys perform, music videos galore, or any number of Google+ Hangouts On Air? Refined or simple, short or long, spiritual or entertaining? You will find them all.

*6 billion hours of video are watched  
each month on YouTube.*

*More than 1 billion unique users  
visit YouTube each month*

*100 hours of video are uploaded to  
YouTube every minute*

## The Network's Lingo

- **Upload** – the process of getting your video onto YouTube
- **Video** – the specific medium used to start the conversation
- **Channel** – your profile page that houses all of your videos
- **Subscribers** – a list of people who have decided to follow you and automatically receive all of your future videos
- **Rating** – a five-star rating, a way to share with the author and others how you felt about the video
- **Share** – the ability to post the video to other social media networks or embed on your blog or website
- **Playlists** – grouping similar videos into a series list that when finished with one video in the series, will automatically begin the next
- **Comments** – express your thoughts to the author and others
- **Like** – showing appreciation or distaste for a video

## The Network's Downside

YouTube's massive audience, consistent views by others, and attractiveness because of a different medium make it a viable option for anyone that can get their hands on a video camera. Yet, to go from "just posting videos" on YouTube to reaching significant subscriber levels and higher view counts may require that you refine your strategy to producing films and improving the talent as well as the hardware that you have. To produce premium-level content, you need to make sure that what you are presenting is entertaining, engaging, and well thought out.

To fix this premium-level dilemma, you can try and throw money at the situation to buy a better camera, more lighting, a better editing computer and software, or a green screen. What you cannot buy is creativity and ideas and this is the difference between going from okay content to great media. Learn how to film well, put the time into thinking through the project, and go the extra steps to filming something unbelievable.

## YouTube Is A Place Of Authentically Connection

When we talk about YouTube being one of the biggest and most incorrectly used social media networks out there, we get a lot of inquisitive looks. YouTube a social network? Really? Think about it this way, instead of posting a link to a website, a status update, or a photo album, you are significantly limited only to posting videos. From there, you can connect with other people on the network, comment, share, and like what someone has posted. The medium is non-traditional but the concept still remains.

The amazing quality of video-only sharing is that you have the chance to be completely authentic with your audience. Facebook and Twitter texts are great for exchanging information but if you desire to be relational in what you do, inspire others to take up a cause, or build your tribe from a platform that is engaging, video is for you.

Within video, you have the chance to share your deep passion for your ministry, the hurt when a family loses a loved one, or the joy and excitement to make an announcement of a teenager saying yes to Jesus. As powerful as words can be, video has the potential to authentically engage on many deeper levels.

## How To Use The Network Effectively

Although the video work is done long before someone begins to upload a video to YouTube, there are many steps afterwards that can extend the reach of your content even further. The first is a well-written description.

People are on YouTube to watch videos and so the text is a secondary part of the content, but to ignore it is to lose out on significant engagement with your audience. A brief one or two paragraph (maximum 7 sentences) can be written to describe the video, though giving away the ending is always annoying. Below this, share other places that the user can find more of your content, whether the original blog post that this is shared on, social media

networks, or specific website locations that are relevant to the content that you are displaying on the website.

The second consideration for post-uploading updating is the tags for videos. Not including Google's own search results from the billions of searches done every day, YouTube is actually the second largest search engine on the planet. This means that keywords, optimized titles, and proper tags per each video are necessary to maximize your video visibility. YouTube helps with recommendations from your title, description, and previously entered tags so there is no reason to not have great tags that are specific to each video you enter.

The final post-upload activities are to put the final touches on each video. Maybe you have a playlist of sermons that you share online week, a weekly devotional, or a Monday morning sermon recap. Add your video to the playlist so that it can be viewed in continuation with the rest of the content.

Follow this up with a custom thumbnail for your video. You can use a preselected screenshot provided by YouTube, but providing your own screenshot with a little Photoshop to add cohesion to similar videos and a lower-third title will go the extra mile. It's these little details that can really make your channel engaging for your audience and may make them stay for an hour or more.

*YouTube mobile gets over 600 million views a day.*

*More than 50% of videos are rated or commented up on registered users.*

*100 million people take a social action on YouTube every week.*

## 5 YouTube Ideas for Churches

We want to set you up for success on YouTube, so we have come up with some great YouTube ideas for your church to use it well. Note that some of these ideas are perfect for large churches and others setup for small ones.

### 1. **Monday Morning Pastor Recap**

Sunday sermons are a great time to hear from the shepherd of the church a Biblical lesson that hopefully is God-breathed, community-inspired, and Biblically-based. But I know how sermons go when you prep, deliver, and then follow up with the congregation afterwards. You forget a whole verse, you only scratch the tip of the iceberg on the topic, or you have great further conversations with members Sunday afternoon that bring up whole new directions that were not yet talked about. Why not do a Monday morning recap where you cover some of these things that were not discussed Sunday morning?

### 2. **Youth/College Ministry Video Announcements**

Having been in youth ministry leadership for ten years of my life and apart of the college ministries for the four years I was in college, there are some amazing video announcements out there and they should not be reserved just for a one-time release. Keep making the Facebook or Google+ events, but make sure to share on YouTube these great videos that you are putting a bunch of effort into. Not only will people be entertained, but you will be sharing some upcoming events with those that may not be in your congregation.

### 3. **Saturday Sermon Starter**

Saturday Sermon Starters (or any other day of the week) takes this idea of only preaching on Sundays and ripping that tradition apart. Why not start the conversation about tithing, grace, or parenting on Tuesday, Wednesday or Saturday? If you create a great video on the topic, post it on YouTube, and share it on your blog or other social media sites, you can actually initiate people on the conversations. Some pro tips: end the video with some questions that you will be asking during your sermon so that people can have an answer ready, read the full context Bible verses that you will only highlight on Sundays, and share resources that you are drawing from with annotations and links in the description for your congregation to be able to go purchase themselves. Even better, this might be the perfect outreach tool your church comes up with in a while for community members that were considering attending your church and now have a taste of what they will experience.

### 4. **Create Great Promos/Recaps Of Events**

Churches are always having some great big event, whether a marriage counseling retreat with 20 couples up in the woods, a college Super Bowl party, Vacation Bible School, Fall Harvest Events, Christmas Nativity Play, Easter service, or more. Hopefully you have been advertising these events both within the church as well as in the community. Some churches go to great lengths to promote these events with major video productions, but only keep them in-house. Why not share these videos on YouTube and then create a recap of the activities with a photo slide show, video from the event, and maybe even a quick pitch a church staff in front of a green screen on the next couple of events coming up. Just make sure you have photo release forms for everyone that you are filming.

## 5. **Pastor Q&A**

One of the best uses of video that is not being done much is the idea of a Pastor Q&A. Whether it is a formal interview by the videographer or just the pastor sitting in front of the webcam, offer some great feedback and answers to some tough questions. This can start with a dropbox at the entrance of your church or a formal sheet that congregation members can fill out and place in the offering plate to ask. Even better, invite other social media networks to ask any variation of questions. This will give you time to come up with some great researched responses or recount experiences that will move the heart. But the best part is that you will be directly engaging with your community of people. That being said, take the risk and answer the really hard questions and be okay with having empathy, expressing difficulty answer questions, and showing that your foundation is in Scripture and your faith in God.