Technology in Ministry and Christian Education Webliography

Zach Goodsell

Liberty University

EDUC 639

Bogan, T., & Hartman, R. (n.d.). Faith and technology: Toward integration for christian higher education.*CCCU New Faculty Workshop*, Retrieved from https://www.cccu.org/professional\_development/resource\_library/2004/faith\_and\_technology\_toward\_integration\_for\_christian\_higher\_education.

*Summary*

In this article, the author is looking to discuss what it means to bring together faith and technology into the Christian higher education institutions. The article begins with some necessary definitions of certain terms, including technology. The author argues that technology has its roots in the Garden of Eden, and that humans have always created technology to solve problems. From there, the discussion of technology continues through philosophical and theological approaches.

The article moves through the effects that technology has had on society and culture. From there, the transition continues into how Christian organizations have used technology to impact their culture. Radio ministries, for example, were a huge success of many colleges and universities to reach their communities with the gospel, according to the author.

The discussion continues into distance learning, and specifically issues in Christian higher education with distance education. The author discusses whether or not Christian education can continue in the context of distance education. By asking tough questions and being reflective on learning and Christian discipleship, the author leaves the discussion a little open for the audience to tackle the challenges of distance learning in Christian higher education.

*Discussion and critique*

This article was written for faculty training, and in so does a great job of bringing many concerns of distance education and technology in Christian organizations to rest. In doing so, the author does bring up more concerns of whether or not Christian education should be offered online. The balance between the both the education and the Christian views were interwoven to discuss a very important topic in higher education. Distance learning is taking off around the world, and this author asks the audience to do a simple task: be reflective and intentional in starting to use a new teaching method.

The discussion was well written and focused on important points; such as if students are coming from a technology-based society, their education needs to match that to meet their needs. The author balances the truth from the Bible and the viewpoint of many on higher education in a way that ties history and future technologies together. The audience, then, is for Christian higher education faculty.

This small niche of college professors in the world, however, would have great discussions on this very document. The author argues that a Christian college must be Christian in every way is a discussion that many would agree upon, but may look different for every individual organization. The integration of faith and technology is a thought that is often discussed but not always sought out by institutions that should be tying their Christian aspects in every form to the university.

All in all, the document is a great start for any instructor training or even just starting discussion on the subject of distance learning in Christian institutions. The author does a great job of bringing up issues with research or scripture based answers or ideas to pose questions for Christian higher education institutions to improve their presence in distance education – or at the very least, understand the reason for discussing the impact.

Hess, M. E. (2005). *Engaging technology in theological education: All that we can't leave behind (communication, culture, and religion)*. Sheed and Ward.

*Summary*

This book is a series of papers that were originally written as separate pieces, that have been combined together to help the audience, Christian institutions and their faculty, discuss the use of technology in their classrooms. From online to touching copyright issues, this book does a fantastic job

From the beginning, the author discusses how culture is changing around the Christian education and seminary institutions. It then continues in how to design learning environments to engage today’s digitally native students. The author’s point is that students are coming from a media rich culture and they need to not only be trained in the Word, but also the technology that is so evidently shaping culture.

The author wraps up the discussion giving practical examples and advice for using media in the instructional environment. The specific examples, such as VHS tapes, may be a little out dated but the methodology remains the same. The author’s point isn’t so much in using their direct examples, but in fact simply using media to enhance the learning process. These practices, as explained near the end of the book, are available to Christian educators in all contexts.

*Discussion and critique*

This is a very philosophically and theologically minded book with powerful references from both scripture and other sources. The dialogue of the book creates a strong discussion on the ever-changing media culture and how Christian institutions, such as seminaries and Christian colleges.

In one chapter the author describes how if we’re not making use of the technology that helps the students understand, some material and information may be lost. The author’s point is not that technology is the only way to educate, but that it is a very powerful tool that can benefit learning – even in a Christian context. This dilemma is argued in many different ways from both sides in Christian organizations, but it seems to be true that the author sees the power and validity of using such technology in instruction.

In a discussion of open source materials, the author does a great job of not only listing examples of specific resources, but also how it could impact Christian education as a whole. The discussion continues into a what-if scenario of what it might look like if all teachers and faculty in Christian educations were technology and media literate. It’s an interesting aspect that allows the reader to engage with the material and dive into the topic a bit more, and the specific examples make it easier to visualize success.

The specific examples of each utility of incorporating technology in the classroom are what make this book unique. The author’s investment in media and technology, as well as Christian education is evident in their examples of proven practices of incorporating the two. The author’s experience adds the validity of this resource, and could make it a great school-changing book in many Christian organizations.

Overall, this book is a fantastic resource for anyone working in Christian education. It uses biblically based ideas and concepts to construct a vision of how using technology in higher education can benefit Christian institutions. From distance learning to even a discussion on racism in Christian education, the author does a great job of building on top of each chapter with the next.

Meadows, P. R. (2012). Mission and Discipleship in a Digital Culture. *Mission Studies: Journal Of The International Association For Mission Studies*, *29*(2), 163-182.

*Summary*

This article discusses how the technologically advanced and sometimes invasive culture is impacting how we live, and more specifically, disciple others. The author discusses how the digital culture surrounding us is simply a mix of what was old (direct communication) and what is new (technology). Human life can be expressed through both, but is impacting education.

The author continues the discussion by describing digital culture and though the Internet is a huge network of devices, the focus is really on the people behind the device. Social media and mobile devices have become a way of life in how many people communicate. The expansion of those things is due to the influx of people wishing to express themselves online.

From there, the author discusses how Christian disciples ought to live amongst others in a digitally focused culture, specifically in a mission focused way. Though technology is making a grand impact on our culture, the author argues that churches should not just focus on virtual worlds. The concluding thought is that if a church isn’t discipling the people around them, going into the virtual realm (online, etc.) will not matter.

*Discussion and critique*

From the beginning, this article was very well thought-out and organized. The author does a great job of defining terms that are used often in the article, and continually builds on each point to get their point across – that though digital and virtual worlds can be helpful to the mission of discipling others, it is not the only way.

This article is heavily focused on ministry and mission, but had great biblically backed points to support it. With that said, there was little reference to actual scripture verses, and seemed much more digitally factual based. The author brought in themes of the scripture without the direct reference or exegesis of specific verses. It is assumed, then, that the directed audience are Christians who understand the Great Commission and what that means for discipleship. The outside research and other sources used fit the needs of the article and supplemented the information quite well.

In defining a virtual church in our digital culture, the author starts with the basics and even touches on some common misconceptions to the ideas. This attention to detail is very important, considering the small audience, and allows for any questions or concerns to be discussed in the contexts of the article. The discussion was highly relevant and eased the audience into the next point.

On a critical note, it would have been great to see some examples – some churches who are using both virtual and typical church styles, or even some that are using just virtual environments for church gatherings. This wouldn’t have to be used to throw any organization under the bus, but it helps the readers take in a whole picture of what that might look like. Even so, the article was well written with careful attention to detail, all the while being highly informative.

Mitchell Legg, P. (2012). The Work of Christian Education in the Seminary and the Church: Then (1812) and Now (2012). *Interpretation: A Journal Of Bible & Theology*, *66*(4), 423-433.

*Summary*

This article is a discussion and overview of Christian education over a 200-year span of history.  Starting at 1812, the author takes the audience on a journey through time to look at how Christian institutions have evolved in their teaching strategies. From the beginning of Sunday School to today’s ministry, this article is a great resource to view the ever going efforts of Christianity’s goal to educate each other.

Starting with the start of churches in the US and the simple curriculum of Bible stories, churches continued to make use of other communication resources. From publishers to schools, Christians made use of the technology at the time to communicate their message. By the 20th century, the author tells us, the big efforts were on radio programs. Around this time Sunday School programs took off as well. By the 1960’s, according to the author, the culture became impacted more and more by visual media, such as television and movies. As technologies and people’s influenced changed, so did the focus and direction of Christian communities.

The author lands the discussion on discussing today’s Christian education and offers a few short glimpses of the use of technology, such as social media, in church communication contexts. The article wraps up with some concluding points of how churches might be missing their target audience by neglecting communication media that today’s culture embraces.

*Discussion and critique*

The author does a great job of discussing where Christian education has come from since 1812. The history overview was a great summary of the last 200 years and ended quick glimpse of some ideas of where Christian education may be headed.  The insight was very informative into looking at the trends of Christian institutions and their communication strategies.

The organization of the article is well done, as it creates a textual timeline that takes the reader through the 200 years of Christian education that this article looks at. This is a historical piece that brings the facts to the table.  An underlying theme is the use of communication tools throughout this historical picture of Christian education and it is easy for the reader to visualize the dynamic changes that churches have undergone to keep up in reaching the communities around them.

It would be great to see more discussion on where we are and headed in Christian education.  This wouldn't mean churches would have to follow such a prediction, but with little mention of mobile devices it is hard to visualize where churches are going.  Technology is such a prominent resource in Christian organizations; it is only a matter of time before we see the education side of churches make use of that more.

The author’s background is from working in a Presbyterian seminary, so more focus is drawn to that denomination. Overall, however, the focus remains on Christian education with only a few mentions to the strains of the declining congregation in the Presbyterian Church. Communication strategies are key to a church’s success, and the author did a great job of utilizing their background and current employment as an example to what that might look like.

Schultze, Q. J. (2004). Faith, Education and Communication Technology. *Journal Of Education & Christian Belief*, *8*(1), 9-21.

*Summary*

Schultze’s article begins by discusses the use of communication technology in education and the benefit that it can have – specifically in improving communication. The author first focuses on listening, and how Christianity focuses more on listening than transmitting. By diving into scripture, Schultze discusses a theology of listening and how more information doesn’t matter if the teachers aren’t listening.

Midway through the article, the author discusses how our lives communicate to others. This communication of how we make decisions and do good deeds can be very powerful. In relation to technology, how instructors approach technology through their attitudes is very impactful onto what the learners take away. From there, the author continues the discussion of being open to the Holy Spirit in teaching. Even with technology, Christian’s ought to remember the Spirit and that technology doesn’t control the classroom. The communication through technology is simply one way for teaching to take place, but not the only way, according to the author. The author then winds down the discussion in a conclusion that reminds the audience that educators need to seek to meet the needs of their learners and community.

*Discussion and critique*

In this older article, the author does a fantastic job of describing how a Christian organization should approach technology. From the beginning, the author brings up some great scripture references to prove their points and develop a theology of listening. The author’s objective seemed to be that technology isn’t going to fix education – especially in Christian organizations. The loss of virtue and character is destroying schools, not the lack or influx of technology.

Though it is an older article, but the information is simply not out of date. The goal and direction was not on the specific technology in classrooms or Christian organizations, but the character and attitude of the ones using technology. The dialogue of listening and being focused to the students, not the technology, was insightful to how Christian instructors and teachers should direct their attention. Living a life worth living from is an aspiration of many

The content of this article is powerful for Christian organizations, even now, nine years later. One of the author’s most powerful statements is found in the first sentence of the conclusion: “Perhaps the greatest antidote to over-technologizing education is living prayerfully in the spirit, both as individuals and communities of faith” (p. 19). This powerful statement brings together what the author was developing throughout their article – that Christian organizations ought to be powerful communities in Christ. The ways of Christian organizations and schools should look incredibly different than their non-Christian counterparts.

Amidst all the positivity, it would have been great to see a discussion on a functional Christian organization that operates in the manner described. The lack of a specific organization being mentioned or put under the microscope in the article does allow for the audience’s thoughts to be directed toward their own, however, it may be helpful for some to see that someone is doing it successfully. With that said, the theory and theology of the article was powerful and impactful, a worthwhile read for those working in a Christian organization.