

Using Technology in the Teaching of Religion, part one

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Religion has two functions: to help those in need and to keep oneself morally pure (James 1:27). Religion is worship, approaching God, offering to Him ourselves, our acts of charity, our bodies, our minds (Romans 12:1). We do this in response to what He has already done for us (1 John 4:19). In faith we approach God, believing he exists, and that He will reward us for seeking Him (Hebrews 11:6). The Bible we believe to be God's written word. It has power to transform our lives by pointing us to Jesus, God's Son, and by inspiring us to follow His will.

Any tool which helps us teach this practice of religion to our students, should be used. Technology, electronic or digital products, can help by aiding us in our seeking God, and in helping us care for the needs of those around us.

Students should be led to seek God, and information about God, through the Bible, as well as the testimony of fellow believers. Technology assists in this use of the Bible. The Bible can readily be found in digital form, either on disk, or on the Internet.

In preparing for his or her classes, the teacher can make use of these Bible sources. I verified the verses quoted above in this article by means of [Bible Gateway](#), an Internet Bible Search Engine. This site allows for Biblical searches using various translations and cross references. [Bible Gateway](#) offers easy access to the scriptures. Using cut and paste technology, worksheets can be prepared with the desired verse highlighted. I have found that copying directly from Bible Gateway to a sophisticated word processor such as Microsoft Word does not allow for the flexibility I need, so I will paste all work to be copied to Windows Notepad, make the necessary adjustments, and then copy and paste those adjustments to the word processor of my choice.

Bible Gateway, and similar Bible source programs, help in the making of worksheets, in preparing Power Point presentations, including specific verses on a test, or to develop a devotional. God's word is literally at one's fingertips.

To effectively study a Bible passage, it is useful to know the meaning of the words from the original language of Hebrew or Greek. An exhaustive concordance, such as Strong's or Young's can accomplish this. I have found the [Blue Letter Bible](#), to be quite useful. After selecting a Bible passage, you can compare the passage from several different translations, study other Bible passages dealing with the same topic, look up the meaning of particular words, examine what others have said in commentaries, look for maps and pictures on the verse, find hymns making use of the passage, etc.

Often issues arise while studying scriptures. For example, while studying about creation, you may want to consider what reasons there are for believing in creation. The Internet provides a tremendous number of sites for examining issues on a vast array of topics..

The Internet provides a large variety of information: sources include the Post-Apostolic Fathers, the work of Josephus, the writings of Luther, Calvin, Bunyan, and other reformers, renaissance writings, councils

of the church, words of the popes, etc. These sources allow for in depth study of issues. Many Text Projects can be found online, one of the most useful is the [Christian Classics Ethereal Library](#).

Adventists view the writings of Ellen White as authoritative, pointing readers to the scriptures and giving council in matters of church life. I have found the online search engine, as well as the CD Rom edition, of her writings very useful. <http://www.egwestate.andrews.edu/published-writings.html>. Sometimes the teacher will want to select a passage from Ellen White's writings to highlight some issue being studied. There are sites that allow you to browse her books: <http://www.egwestate.andrews.edu/readbooks.html>. The SDA Ministerial Association has prepared study guides to go along with her books: <http://www.ministerialassociation.com/resources/studyguides/index.html>

As Adventists, we consider the thinking of our pioneers to have significance as we search for God's ideas. The following site allows the teacher to search what the pioneers had to say. The challenge, when working with young minds, is to transform the information into interesting, thought-provoking material.

In this article we have just scratched the surface, dealing with using technology to teach religion, and yet, with careful use of the assets listed, the quality of materials designed and made available to students will be impressive and will bring glory to God.