

US News

Move Over YouTube . . .

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CBNNews.com - PLANO, Tex. - The fastest growing Web site just happens to be totally dedicated to God.

CBN News journeyed to the headquarters of Godtube.com in Plano, Texas to take a look at what makes the site so popular and see how it might be useful to you and your church.



Watch Low Band

An Overnight Phenomenon

For a brand-new Web site, GodTube's growth has been nothing short of phenomenal. Just launched this summer, it saw hits on its site grow 973 percent from July to August. Four-million people visited GodTube in October alone. It's already the largest broadcaster of Christian videos in the world.

"We have some 800,000 hours of videos uploaded to GodTube.com," GodTube.com CEO Chris Wyatt said.

Now it's offering the 'trifecta' of Web casting with interactive networking like on MySpace, a live Web cast called 'Godcaster'

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and videos fed from users - just like on YouTube.

"It allows believers to connect around the world, using full voice, video as well as audio. You could have a conversation with a believer in China or a believer in New Zealand from the comfort of your own home," Wyatt said.

"We have about 25,000 churches right now signed up to GodTube.com," he said. "And while they may have a few hundred people in their worship service, there can be as many as a few thousand people attending on-line."

A student at Dallas Theological Seminary, Wyatt is not just Christian-sawy, he's also extremely media-sawy.

He worked for years at the very center of the big-time media, CBS. He knew it was most important to make GodTube as user-friendly as possible.

"We made it very, very simple... 'pastor simple' as we call it. Instead of 'Plug and Play' we call it 'Plug and Pray,'" he said.

Keeping it G-Rated

Watching over GodTube's content to make sure it's a G-rated environment and stays that way is content and programming editor Jason Illian.

"Anything that's loaded to our system is being first previewed by somebody else's eyes so we know that the content is safe and family-friendly," Illian said.

GodTube has a unique function to help monitor content: On-line Video Police can be called on with the click of a key by a concerned parent or such. And there's more.

"Any chat room that we have open, we have eyes in there. Any time of inter-action between two people, we have people monitoring that -- not so that we can be 'Big Brother,' but so that we can create a safe environment. That's what I'd want for my family and for my kids," Illian said.

But this doesn't mean there's no controversy. Theology debates abound, with GodTube itself taking no sides.

"We like to say we're the Switzerland of Christianity," Wyatt said.

That means GodTube will remain neutral, although Wyatt assures Christians no blasphemy or weird cult stuff will be allowed.

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'We Want More Than Their Attention, We Want Their Hearts'

But in the end, GodTube's overarching mission is to liberate the Body of Christ from inside the church walls and take it to an often hard to reach world.

Wyatt said, "With gated communities and large gated apartment complexes, it's really hard to get past those gates, but everyone has a computer in their office or their home."

So the work goes on of Webbing the world with the Good News.

"We don't want to just grab people's attention," Illian said. "We want to grab their hearts."

Wyatt said, "This month, we're going to do about five million unique visitors and that's five million opportunities to share the Gospel."

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