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A Newsletter of the Amy Foundation



Are you taking advantage of digital tools?

by Shaunna Howat

The last fifteen years have seen great change in the area of communication. Think of it: we have transitioned from reliance on print for information to a digital world, where nearly anything you want to know (and much that you do *not* want) is available—literally—at your fingertips.

The door is open, and Christians must search for ways to reach their neighbors, whether next-door or...around the world.

Not since Gutenberg set the Bible in type, launching the spread of the written word into the hands of the common people, has there been such widespread revolution in the written word.

Important questions arise from this revolution. What is the future of this digital age? Where is it going? What should Christians do to keep up?

Truly, though, the latter question should be re-

phrased. Christians should not wonder how to just keep up; they need to explore how to capitalize on this digital explosion and use it to reach out to millions—billions—of technology users with the Word of God.

Our directive has not changed: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20).

Pretty clearly, Christians should never stop permeating the world with God's word.

Christendom reacted to Gutenberg's printing press in radical ways. Some would argue—and rightly so—that God orchestrated that event so that the Reformation would grow by leaps and bounds, focused on getting the Bible (and many Chris-

tian pamphlets and sermons) into the hands of ordinary people in their own language.

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Pen & Sword is going digital!

After 15 years of print publication, *Pen & Sword* is joining the digital age. Starting with the next issue, *Pen & Sword* will be published online only. Readers who send their current email address will receive notice when the issue is posted, along with a link to the online edition of *Pen & Sword*.

Make sure you don't miss an issue by completing and returning the form on page 3. Or email your name, current mailing and email addresses to AMYFOUNDTN@aol.com.

No access to email or the Internet? The Amy Foundation can send a print-out of the online version. Just complete the appropriate section on the subscription form on page 3.

Shaunna Howat is co-editor of the *Pen & Sword*. She teaches rhetoric online to students around the world from her home in Milford, Ohio.

► Digital tools, cont'd from p. 1

Literacy grew exponentially, most using their own Bible to learn to read and write. What an amazingly simple tool for reaching the world with the Gospel!

It would be easy to shrink from this technological shift to digital information from print. Technology can intimidate. However, Christians don't have the luxury of withdrawing or remaining stagnant. The door is open, and Christians must search for ways to reach their neighbors,

whether next-door or virtual (around the world).

Taking literally the command to be "salt and light," Christians create web sites to answer profound questions of seekers, making their sites visually appealing. They make forums and blogs to hold discussions. They offer books and Bibles online, searchable and readable—accessible to anyone, anytime, for the cost of a few minutes online. They hold virtual classes that

people around the world can access.

Obviously the next question must be personal for everyone: "What will I do about this?" Will Christians withdraw, or will they see this digital explosion as the newest, most brilliant opportunity to reach, teach and disciple? There is no option of sitting on the sideline. ◀

A note from the editors

While the world transitioned from print to digital over the past decade-and-a-half, the *Pen & Sword* editors have themselves experienced much change and transition. Between the two of us, we've lived through six high school graduations, four college graduations, three children's weddings, three grandchildren, two cross-country moves, and several job changes.

In the early years, we would have to physically buckle up our preschoolers and drive across town to share files or text. More recently, despite separation by many hundreds of miles, we edit and prepare each *Pen & Sword* issue digitally, sharing plans and files electronically. We are grateful for the opportunity the digital age has provided us, enabling us to continue ministering to you, our readers, year after year.

Now our careers and family obligations outside of *Pen & Sword* have consumed more time and posed more challenges, and we have reluctantly decided to step down from our editorial position. As *Pen & Sword* transitions to a digital e-newsletter, we look for the next editors to use the medium to reach audiences in new ways and encourage you to write for secular audiences.

We thank you for reading, responding, encouraging and challenging us through the last fifteen years. Now what will *you* do to reach the world?

—Linda and Shaunna

Pen &
Sword

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Shaunna Howat
Linda Wacyk

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email: amyfoundtn@aol.com

Amy Internet Syndicate writer named PACEMaker of the Year

Congratulations go out to Amy Internet Syndicate member, **Kendall Wingrove**, as the 2009 PACE Maker of the Year Award! The award is presented to an individual by the Central Michigan Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America. Recipients are selected for their professionalism in the industry, community leadership, adherence to ethics and willingness to mentor others.

According to the *Lansing State Journal*, "Wingrove also established "Curriculum Beyond the Classroom," an innovative program linking student interns with area professionals."

Kendall has a master's degree in journalism from Michigan State University, and a bachelor's degree from Central Michigan University.

"Kendall is an awesome, gifted writer and columnist," said Internet Syndicate editor Jim Jackson. "He has won quite a few Amy Writing Awards in the past."

The Amy Foundation Internet Writing Syndicate is blessed to have Kendall Wingrove as part of our syndicate! Congratulations, Kendall!

Subscribe now, to keep receiving the new DIGITAL *Pen & Sword*!

Good stewardship requires us to publish and distribute *Pen & Sword* in the most efficient and helpful way for readers. Earlier surveys indicated that most subscribers have access to email, and use it on a regular basis.

The Amy Foundation is happy to distribute the *Pen & Sword* to anyone who wishes to receive it. If you would like to continue receiving notice whenever a new issue of *Pen & Sword* is available at www.amyfound.org, please complete the information below and return it to: **The Amy Foundation, P.O. Box 16091, Lansing, Michigan 48901; FAX 517-321-2572. Or email** the information below to: amyfoundtn@aol.com.

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We will continue to prepare a limited number of print issues of *Pen & Sword* for our subscribers who do not have access to the Internet. Check here _____ if you require a print copy to be sent to the address you've provided.

Your
information
is safe
with us.

The Amy Foundation will maintain the newsletter's email distribution list and **will not sell or give out** any personal information.

Looking
for writing
tips on the
Web?

► Truth in E-mail, cont'd from p.4

Is this being responsible to truth?

Good question.

Many of these e-mails are the result of overactive imaginations and false superiority. They have given Snopes.com (the researchers of wild e-mail tales) a full-time job, checking out the facts. It's a service that Christians, especially, should check.

We must ask ourselves, "Is it true? Or is it gossip?"

Gossip destroys. . . dreams, reputations, hopes, souls, businesses, lives, earthly peace.

God hates gossip. It's on his list of the six most abominable things: "A lying tongue... a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:17-19).

Gossip is against His plan for truth.

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. . . " John 14:6.

Philippians 4:8 says the first criteria for godly communication is that it be *true*. We need to be accountable for our role in truth. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Let us speak and send words and thoughts to build up, to edify. In short, let your intent and words bring life and hope—not destruction.

Even in what you forward. ◀

The Amy Writing Award

Submit Today!

15 writers

will receive

\$34,000 in cash prizes,

including a \$10,000

first prize.

To learn more or to
read past winning
articles, visit

www.amyfound.org.

The Internet Detective tells if web sites you google are authoritative, useful and reliable:
www.vts.intute.ac.uk/detective/

Purdue grammar & writing lab
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

Poets and Writers
www.pw.org

Daily Tips
www.dailywritingtips.com/



THE AMY FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

FALL 2009

Note to readers:

This is the final print edition of the Pen & Sword. To receive this newsletter via email, complete the form on page 3 or send a request to amyfoundtn@aol.com



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Guest Commentary

by
**Phawnda
Moore**

Truth in e-mails

There was a pastime in a bygone era where children sat in a circle and whispered "something" into the ear of their neighbor. It was repeated, over and over. Then, the last person said out loud what they'd heard. When we compared it to the original whispered sentence, we all were shocked at what "it" had become. Changed. Distorted. False.

The adult leader then told us how evil gossip could be. For if we, in a circle of friends, could each interpret words differently, that proved we were vulnerable to believing and repeating things that were not true, even innocently. If the sentence had gained a little controversy, we were spreading gossip.

Usually, there was a pause and we became silent, convicted of our own childish frailty.

Fast forward four, five or more decades.

E-mails: a social thing. Forwards: in print, just about anything looks "true." It's a pastime, kind of like being "in" with a circle of friends. And don't we, then and now, have more trust when it comes from someone we know?

With a click of the mouse, we hear from friends – from church, work, neighbors, family— and uncover titillating news about prominent political personalities, heart-wrenching dramas about

children with terminal illnesses, protesting groups of citizens who are outraged at disrespect to the American flag or heartless big business, fearful tales about cell phone dangers, and accountings of evil strangers who loiter at

*We must ask ourselves,
"Is it true? Or is it gossip?"*

banks, near your home or on the dark highways.

Sometimes these messages snowball into an indignant conclusion ("we must stop this") followed by pages of signatures, which get forwarded, then, to our circle.

Phawnda Moore is a calligrapher and journalist, (see www.journalismdesign.net) She leads groups of artists and authors in northern California. Her work has been published internationally.

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