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a resource in:
Technology

Technology Principles



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Technology Principles

Technology is an integral and prevalent part of today's society. It takes multiple forms, from personal computers to mobile devices to various media players, and it changes rapidly. While it has brought great gains in communication and productivity, technology also contains numerous aspects which can cause concern. Proper understanding, self-examination, and safeguards are essential when evaluating its implications for ourselves and our families.

This paper will discuss key principles and the associated warnings in the realm of technology. It is centered on four scriptures which provide guidance into these standards and boundaries. Self-examination questions are given in each category.

Principle #1: Purity

"I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes..."Ps. 101:3

Principle #2: Communication and Relationships

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying..."Eph. 4:29

Principle #3: Time Usage

"All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."1 Cor. 6:12

Principle #4: Deception

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil."1 Thes. 5:21-22

Following the discussion on these principles, there are several appendices which discuss specific areas of concern for different usage groups:

Appendices

- A. Parents and Technology
- B. Social Media
- C. Higher Risk Environments
- D. Guidelines for Business Owners

For further discussion, study, and application in the appropriate use of technology, readers are encouraged to review the *Guidance on Using Technology* paper from the Elder Technology Committee of the ACCA and further resources which are available at www.accounseling.org/technology.

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Principle #1: We should seek to keep all of our activities consistent with the mind of Christ. *“I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes...” Ps. 101:3*

- **Our Standard:** Users of technology are encouraged to maintain the Scriptures as their standard for purity while reflecting the gospel of Christ in all we do (*Phil. 1:27*).
- **Our Society:** The opportunity for impurity in the area of technology is increasingly prevalent today. Ease of access to content through various devices, lack of all-encompassing filtering programs, and the saturation of technology in society create a situation where each believer should be alert.
- **Our Approach:** Active use of filters and monitors should be considered a necessity for individuals and families, but it should also be realized that no filter is foolproof. Continued instruction in the discipline of holiness in all areas of life and proactive accountability to this standard should be encouraged.

Principle #2: All of our communication, whether in person, online, or using any type of technology, should be honoring to Christ and encouraging to others. *“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying...” Eph. 4:29*

- **Our Standard:** Communication in all forms for a believer should be held to the high standards of the Word (*Rom. 12:18*).
- **Our Society:** The ease and immediacy of technology has given us the ability to quickly and rashly respond in a manner which is not Christ-like (*Phil. 4:8, Jas. 1:19-20*). In addition, lack of face-to-face contact has led to a decline in interpersonal skills which can lead to withdrawal and isolation. Constantly evolving social media venues (Facebook, blogging, Twitter, Instagram, “anonymous apps,” etc.) can perpetuate these trends.
- **Our Approach:** It is important to purposefully use the light of the Scriptures to examine not only the type of communication we engage in, but also the quality and depth of relationships which we maintain.

Principle #3: We should be able to be temperate (have good self-control) in all of our activities dealing with technology. *“All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.” 1 Cor. 6:12*

- **Our Standard:** Without proper awareness, even good things from technology can keep us from “redeeming the time” (*Eph. 5:16*) as we are called to do in Scripture.
- **Our Society:** One of the more subtle dangers of technology is its ability to be a significant source of time usage and/or wasting, especially in children. This overuse of technology can diminish time spent on other beneficial activities and can minimize a healthy, wide spectrum of learning opportunities.
- **Our Approach:** We should perform regular self-examination to ensure we are not being “brought under the power” (*1 Cor. 6:12*) of social media, gaming, internet surfing, or other more serious misuses of technology. Instead, we should seek to fill our time with the “Father’s business” (*Luke 2:49*).

Principle #4: Prove all things. Determine if the values, beliefs, and purposes of the author(s) fit with biblical truth and the whole counsel of the Scriptures. *“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil.” 1 Thes. 5:21-22*

- **Our Standard:** We are to be diligent in our determination of the validity of information found via technology and prove it with “all the counsel of God” (*Acts 20:27*) through the Scriptures and the counsel of experienced, proven believers (*Proverbs 24:6*).

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- **Our Society:** The increase in technology has led to the increased availability of resources (good, neutral, and evil) in a variety of formats. Little thought is given by most consumers as to whether these resources provide a balanced view of a topic, based on the solid foundation of the truth of the Scriptures.
- **Our Approach:** When discerning the truth of a topic, it is essential to search the Scriptures and let God teach you through His Word and Spirit while also leaning on the wisdom of experienced believers. Mainstream internet resources will often reflect only a fraction of viewpoints. It is critical to not take everything read or viewed at face value.

Questions to Consider

Principle #1: We should seek to keep all of our activities consistent with the mind of Christ.

- Has technology led to an area(s) of impurity in your life?
- Would you be willing to have Jesus (or your Christian brother/sister) review your internet history?
- How have your internet activities helped you to better further Christ's Kingdom?

Principle #2: All of our communication, whether in person, online, or using any type of technology, should be honoring to Christ and encouraging to others.

- Are you free of any use of "*corrupt communication*" (*Eph. 4:29*) in your online posting or emailing? Are all of your communications free of gossip, bullying, and partiality?
- How has your communication fit the standard laid out in *Philippians 4:8*?
- How has your online communication enhanced your relationships with others in a healthy, God-honoring manner? Do you still have healthy "face-to-face" relationships with others as well?

Principle #3: We should be able to be temperate (have good self-control) in all of our activities dealing with technology.

- Are there responsibilities in your life neglected due to how you are using technology?
- Do you have any addictive/uncontrolled behaviors related to your use of any technology (games, social networking, constantly checking your email, etc.)?
- In what ways are you utilizing technology to better "*redeem the time*" (*Eph. 5:16*)?

Principle #4: Prove all things. Determine if the values, beliefs, and purposes of the author(s) fit with biblical truth and the whole counsel of the Scriptures.

- Do the beliefs and standards of the material you are reading, viewing, and listening to fit with biblical principles?
- Have you searched the Bible for the subject in question? Are you willing to receive instruction or are you simply looking for support for your own preconceived thoughts?
- How have you sought out wisdom from experienced, proven believers on this topic (*Prov. 24:6*)?

Appendix A

Parents and Technology

In the scripture, parents are encouraged to “train up a child” (Deut. 6:4-9, Prov. 22:6) so the child is able to know and follow God’s commandments as they get older. This journey is often full of disagreements between the parent and child about how much freedom vs. parental oversight is needed. The child often feels more confident to engage in choices and challenges than they should, and often the parent has difficulty giving additional freedoms to a child who is still growing and maturing. Technology can be such a battleground for parents and children. It is important to start engaging this topic while your child is young and continue to see the topic as an opportunity to train your child in truth throughout their life. Parents need to stay informed of potential risks and take proactive steps to minimize these risks in order to help provide a safe technology environment for themselves and their children.

Scriptural principles to consider:

- **Use self-examination in the light of God’s Word to help us gain a proper perspective and give vision on our use of technology for ourselves and our families.** *“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.” Prov. 29:18*
- **We should seek to keep all of our activities consistent with the mind of Christ.** *“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” Phil. 4:8*
- **Ensure our use of technology represents Christ well.** *“let your conversation [whole lifestyle] be as it becometh [in a manner worthy of] the gospel of Christ.” Phil. 1:27*

Questions to consider concerning parenting and technology:

- What aspects of technology do you consider good, evil, and morally neutral?
- How will you train your child to think about technology?
- How will you teach your child to avoid evil, engage good, and develop self-control?
- What type of systematic technology plan will you have in place for your family?

Steps to consider for your family:

- Ensure all devices with internet access have content filters. Realize most video streaming is now done via Internet-connected devices and not necessarily TVs/video players. See the ACCFS website for an Internet Filtering/Monitoring Quick Reference list.
- Create and maintain a Family Technology Plan for your family. Encourage dialogue throughout the process but balance this discussion with the need for boundaries to be in place. A sample Family Technology Plan follows and more details can be found on the ACCFS website.
- Be willing to reach out to others and ask for help in this area. A good reference website is www.common sense media.org. This website includes updates of current technology which your family may be exposed to. It is a good place to review new apps you may see on your child’s mobile devices.

For more information on technology resources, please see www.accounseling.org/technology

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Family Technology Plan

(Note: Parents will need to adapt this policy to the ages of their children and needs of the family.)

Purpose of Policy: We desire to live lives consistent with biblical instruction. We understand the internet is a helpful resource, but it can allow access to ungodly material and ungodly interactions with others. Our hope is to develop a plan to use the internet as a resource while protecting each of us from the possible dangers.

Time & Place:

1. All devices that connect to the internet will be turned off by 10pm. Devices that need to be charged overnight will be left in the parent's bedroom to charge. These devices will be given back in the morning once you are ready for the day's activities.
2. There will be 30 minutes every evening where all electronic devices will be set aside. This time can be spent together playing a game, eating supper, reading a book, doing homework, etc.
3. Time after chores and homework are finished is considered "free time." Only one hour of this time can be "screen time". (TV, computer, phone, tablet, etc.)

Appropriate Conduct:

4. You will not post or send hurtful or sexual messages, pictures, or videos.
5. You will not develop an on-line relationship with anyone you have not met in person without discussing with your parents.
6. You will not have social media, email, or other personal accounts your parents do not know about.

Blocking/Filtering/Monitoring:

7. Our family will be using the following software to block/filter/monitor devices. _____

Username, Passwords, Buddy Lists:

8. Parents will have passwords to all personal accounts: email, social media, etc. (This should be reevaluated as your child shows the maturity to appropriately manage these accounts.)

Unacceptable Activities:

9. This section should include specific unacceptable activities such as pornography, gambling, peer-to-peer file sharing, and the illegal downloading of music.

Family Signatures:

Social Media

Social Media is an increasing area of focus for secular society and believers alike. Its ease of use, rapidly changing technology and availability of apps, and influence on a person's behavior are sources of concern. It can, however, bring great benefit in the area of communication. Staying informed of potential risks and taking proactive steps to minimize these risks can help provide a safe and productive technology environment in the area of social media.

Scriptural principles to consider:

- **All of our communication, whether in person, online, or using any type of technology, should be honoring to Christ and encouraging to others.** *“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying...” Eph. 4:29*
- **We must ensure that our use of technology represents Christ well.** *“let your conversation [whole lifestyle] be as it becometh [in a manner worthy of] the gospel of Christ.” Phil. 1:27*
- **We should be able to be temperate (have good self-control) in all of our activities dealing with technology.** *“All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.” 1 Cor. 6:12*

Questions to consider regarding social media:

- How much of my time do I spend on social media? Is it the “best” use of my time?
- What communication(s) am I sharing through social media? Is it Christ-like?
- Why do I post what I post on social media sites? What is my motivation?
- Can I go without social media or technology for a period of time? How would I know if I am “controlled” by social media?

Steps to consider for social media:

- Do an honest self-examination of your time involvement and emotional involvement through social media. If you find yourself spending an inappropriate amount of time on social media or investing emotionally in your social media presence, you may need accountability in these areas.
- Individuals may turn to social media outlets when they are uncomfortable or avoidant with certain situations in reality. This avoidance will often only further compound situations which need to be worked through.
- Some individuals become much more open to responding when online (“online disinhibition effect”). This, coupled with the ease of communication available through social media, can lead to communication difficulties very quickly. Great care and self-control must be practiced when communicating via social media.
- There is a growing concern regarding “anonymous apps” (YikYak, Whisper, Gossip, etc.). These apps allow users to share gossip or vent their feelings about others through an anonymous pseudo name. This can more easily lead to cyberbullying and other forms of communication which is not Christ-honoring.
- Privacy is easily violated on social media. *It is imperative to remember anything that is posted online in any fashion is accessible forever.*

For more information on technology resources, please see www.accounseling.org/technology.

High Risk Environments

All of us can struggle with different aspects of technology, but there are certain environments where this risk becomes even greater. Individuals living on their own can quickly avoid the protection of social accountability and run a higher risk of succumbing to the temptations and dangers of technology. Those who find themselves or their children heavily spending time in gaming or other online activities can become addicted to such activities and worse. Finally, those who struggle with self-control in the area of sexual purity, gambling, or other sins almost always find unchecked technology as a further hindrance to purity and overcoming in these areas. It is imperative these high risk environments are taken seriously and proper help and guidance is sought.

Scriptural principles to consider:

- **We should seek to keep all of our activities consistent with the mind of Christ.** *“I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes...” Psalms 101:3*
- **Ensure our use of technology represents Christ well.** *“let your conversation [whole lifestyle] be as it becometh [in a manner worthy of] the gospel of Christ.” Phil. 1:27*
- **We should be able to be temperate (have good self-control) in all of our activities dealing with technology.** *“All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.” 1 Corinthians 6:12*

Questions to consider in high risk environments:

- Do I fall within the category of a high risk environment?
- Am I being honest about my use of technology and its effect upon me?
- Do I need to develop the discipline of abstinence in the area of technology?
- Who is in my network of accountability? Who can I contact when I am struggling to maintain purity in this area?

Steps to consider for increased safety:

- Proactively establish a relationship with someone who will challenge you to the standards of scripture and lovingly hold you accountable to this standard. Meet regularly.
- Ensure all devices with internet access have content filters. You will need to ensure your accountability partner controls access to the passwords of these filters. You might also want to set up monitoring software where your internet activity is emailed to your accountability partner. See the ACCFS website for an Internet Filtering/Monitoring Quick Reference list.
- Periodically challenge yourself with technology “fasts” to ensure you have control over this area of your life and it does not have control over you. Use this time to focus on your relationship with Christ.
- If you determine you have a problem in the area of technology, purpose to seek the next level(s) of help needed beyond accountability to effectively deal with this problem.

For more information on technology resources, please see www.accounseling.org/technology.

Technology Guidelines for Christian Business Owners

Christian business owners and employers have a unique opportunity and responsibility to model godly behavior to their employees and customers through appropriate technology use. Employers should consider protecting their employees as diligently as they would protect their own families. Staying informed of potential risks and taking proactive steps to minimize these risks can help provide a safe and productive technology environment for themselves and their employees.

Scriptural principles to consider:

- **We should seek to keep all of our activities consistent with the mind of Christ.** *“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” Phil. 4:8*
- **It is important to ensure our technology use represents Christ well.** *“let your conversation [whole lifestyle] be as it becometh [in a manner worthy of] the gospel of Christ.” Phil. 1:27*

Questions to consider when considering technology in the workplace:

- Does it appropriately use resources?
- What is its potential for misuse?
- What are necessary safeguards which should be in place?
- How do I guard my employees against the dangers of this technology?

Steps to consider for increased safety:

- Ensure all devices with internet access have programmable content filters. Unfiltered or unmonitored internet access for employees may allow poor stewardship of time and lead to lost productivity, introduce security threats into a computer network, expose the business to legal liability, and allow use of business computers for inappropriate activities.
- Symantec Web Security, SafeEyes, EtherShield Business from Internet Safety.com, and iPrism Web Security by EdgeWave are examples of internet security suites that allow employers to filter, set usage allowances, and monitor internet usage on computer networks.
- Depending on the complexity of the computer network, a computer consultant may be needed to help find the best way to provide internet filtering/monitoring for the business.
- Create and maintain a business email/internet use policy. An example of such a policy is at the end of this document.

For more information on technology resources, please see www.accounseling.org/technology.

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SAMPLE INTERNET USE PLAN FOR BUSINESSES

This technology use plan applies to all employees of this company who have access to computers and the Internet during the course of their business activities. Violation of these directives could result in disciplinary and/or legal action.

Computer, email, and Internet use:

- Employees are expected to use the Internet responsibly and productively. Primary usage of the Internet is for job-related activities. Incidental personal use is permitted.
- All internet data that is composed, transmitted, and/or received by company computers are to be considered as company property.
- The equipment and technology used to access the Internet are company property and the company reserves the right to monitor internet and email traffic.
- Any websites or downloads may be monitored and/or blocked by the company if they are considered harmful and/or not productive to business.
- The personal installation of programs and applications by employees will be monitored.

Unacceptable use of the Internet includes, but is not limited to:

- Sending or posting discriminatory, harassing, threatening, or vulgar messages or images on the Internet or through email.
- Using company computers fraudulently through pirating software, films, or music.
- Stealing, using, or disclosing someone else's password.
- Downloading, copying, or pirating software and electronic files that are copyrighted or without proper authorization.
- Sending confidential material, trade secrets, or proprietary information outside of the company.
- Hacking into unauthorized websites using company computers.
- Purposefully bypassing company monitors and filters.
- Sending or posting information that is defamatory to the company, its employees, products, or customers.
- Sending or posting chain letters, solicitations, or advertisements not related to business purposes or activities.
- Passing off personal views as representative of the company.

User compliance:

All terms and conditions as stated in this document are applicable to all users of this company's network and internet connection. I understand and will abide by this Internet Use Policy knowing that any violation thereof could cause my access privileges to be revoked and may result in disciplinary or legal action.

Employee signature

Date