

THE #1 THING EVERY CHURCH SHOULD CONSIDER BEFORE STARTING A LIVE-STREAMING MINISTRY

Although many questions may arise while your technology partner is developing a full live-streaming solution for your church or ministry, there is one critical question that should be answered before any work begins.

The first step any church should take before having a video streaming system installed is to confirm that adequate internet speeds are available from their local internet service provider.

Following are three questions to answer before picking up the phone:

RESIDENTIAL OR BUSINESS?

Internet service providers typically offer a choice of two internet service types to their customers: residential or business. The major difference between the two are the ratio of upload speed and download speed the package provides.

Residential

Residential packages provide much of the available internet speed for downloads and a minimal amount for upload. For example, download speed would be used for streaming movies from media outlets like YouTube or Facebook, whereas upload speed is needed to stream video to those platforms.

Business or Commercial

Business or commercial packages typically provide an equal amount of both download and upload speed since businesses historically upload more than their residential counterparts and hopefully aren't sitting around binging YouTube all day!

So then, it makes sense that churches wishing to stream their services to a platform such as Facebook or YouTube should consider the upload speed offered in the package they currently have. Many churches find that they need to change their current service to a business package before moving forward with their live stream ministry.

HOW “FAST” IS FAST ENOUGH?

Internet speed is the way we commonly refer to how much data can be transferred in one second. Since data is measured in bits, internet speed is measured by bits per second or, more accurately, megabits per second. You will see this abbreviated as Mbps. So, how much is needed? Well, that’s where it gets tricky.

Facebook, and YouTube, the most common streaming platforms, require a minimal Mbps to avoid what’s called dropped frames (when the video freezes or glitches). So it seems logical that you would inform your internet service provider that you will need that internet speed. However, the problem faced by many churches is that the internet speed promised by providers is grossly exaggerated. That speed is only attainable in optimal conditions, and typically can never be experienced in the “real world”. That means churches will need to buy into a much higher package than what is minimally needed to guarantee consistent speeds and avoid dropped frames.

Facebook suggests 6Mbps - 7Mbps however, because most uploads are limited to 720p resolution, streams can remain stable down to 2Mbps.

YouTube on the other hand, suggests upwards of 60Mbps to be able to stream to their platform in its full resolution capability. Of course, you can stream to YouTube at much lower resolutions and do so with the same requirements needed for Facebook.

WiFi OR HARD-LINE ETHERNET?

Depending on your router and it’s proximity to the computer being used, it may be ok to use WiFi to stream your church’s services. However, keep in mind that wireless anything can never rival a hard-wired connection in dependability and consistency. It may be extra expense for your installer to run Cat6e cable into the booth, but it could save a ton of frustration down the road.

In conclusion, internet service should be the primary consideration in preparing to live-stream church services. It is the medium through which your message will reach the world. While fast and reliable internet service is expensive, it speaks volumes to your audience both when it is consistent and when it is not.

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