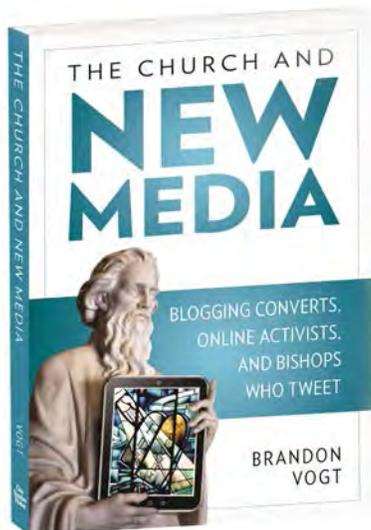


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Young blogger rallies influential Catholics around new-media revolution

HUNTINGTON, Indiana, August 23, 2011 – A 25-year-old part-time blogger and full-time mechanical engineer is convinced that the Catholic Church needs to embrace new media as it did print, radio, and television. If she wants to connect with her flock, Brandon Vogt says, the Church needs to engage the digital revolution.

And some of the Church's most influential shepherds agree. With endorsements from three cardinals, two archbishops, and a Vatican communications official, Vogt has produced a groundbreaking book on technology and faith, which also includes contributions from dozens of other Catholic new media experts.

The Church and New Media: Blogging Converts, Online Activists, and Bishops Who Tweet, by Brandon Vogt (Our Sunday Visitor, August 2011, 224 pp), has attracted the enthusiasm of Boston archbishop Cardinal Seán O'Malley, O.F.M. Cap., for instance, who penned the book's Foreword. The cardinal not only endorses the book, but was particularly inspired by one of the contributors, Jennifer Fulwiler, who was led from atheism to Catholicism through friendships and contacts she developed online.

Since young people today are absorbed in new media, O'Malley acknowledges, "the Church doesn't have to change its teachings to reach them – it simply must deliver the faith to them in a different way." O'Malley began his own blog in 2006 (CardinalSeansBlog.org), and says "young Catholics at the 2008 World Youth Day told me personally they regularly read my blog," while mentioning individual blog posts that made a particular impact. "This confirmed my belief in the immense reach of new media vehicles ... particularly to young Catholics who have grown up with these technologies."

"Though the Church is very comfortable with the broadcast-style of old media, which pushed content outward," says Vogt, "effective new media welcomes response, critique, and conversation. This is what people are drawn to right now – two-way tools, not one-way megaphones."

When Christ commissioned his apostles to "go forth and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28: 19)," there was a reasonable expectation that they'd use the most modern communication tools to do it.

"Today this means using phones, fiber-optic cables, and wireless lines in place of town criers and courier-camels," says Vogt. **The Church and New Media** details precisely how New Media can reach the ends of the earth like no other evangelistic tool in world history.

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The book's 12 contributors are a veritable who's who of Catholic new media experts, including Fr. Robert Barron, Jennifer Fulwiler, and Mark Shea. And they explore a range of new media tactics:

- reaching the unchurched
- sharing spiritual journeys
- connecting with young adults
- reading – and writing – blogs
- understanding ancient Church tradition
- podcasting
- digitally defending the teachings of the Church
- new-media strategies for dioceses and parishes
- the Vatican's digital model
- new-media activism
- building digital movements.

"I knew this book would better serve the Church if it came from multiple perspectives," Vogt explains. "So I gathered a dozen of the best new-media innovators to explain their areas of expertise. This helped the book play more like a symphony than a solo. It made the song much more alluring," he says.

Other prominent cleric-endorsers of the book include Cardinal Donald Wuerl, archbishop of Washington; Archbishop Charles Chaput, O.F.M. Cap., archbishop of Denver (who was recently re-assigned to lead the Philadelphia Archdiocese beginning September, 2011); and Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan, archbishop of New York, – who wrote the book's Afterword.

Dolan relays an idea that surprises even the most tech-savvy:

"Decades before the dawn of the internet, blogs, YouTube, and social networking (what we now call *new media*), the Catholic Church was calling for their invention," says Dolan.

It makes one wonder ... *How? When?*

Dolan reveals that in the **Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church** (2005), the Church says that one of the great moral principles to which society should aspire is to give a voice to as many people as possible. "Gone are the days," Dolan explains, "when an elite group of news anchors, in a space of 30 minutes, are the principle conduit of information to an entire nation or world."

"My friends and family know that I am not a 'techie' by any stretch of the imagination," says Dolan, "and our brave new world of technology and communication can be overwhelming in its complexity. Faced with a technological evolution beyond our personal capacities or preferences, we can opt for old and comfortable patterns of communication, even if they limit our ability to connect in meaningful and effective ways, or ...use new technology for the good, and learn to use it well."

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The world's largest English-language Catholic publisher, Our Sunday Visitor serves millions of Catholics globally through its publishing, offertory, and communication services. Established in 1912, Our Sunday Visitor has grown into the largest supplier of offering envelopes, parish and diocesan mailings, books, periodicals, curriculum, address management, and stewardship services. Our Sunday Visitor is a not-for-profit organization, returning a portion of net earnings back to the Catholic community through the Our Sunday Visitor Institute. For more information, visit www.osv.com.

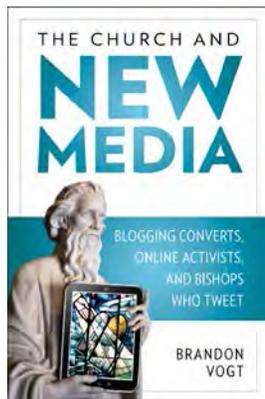
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Product Fact Sheet

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The Church and New Media: Blogging Converts, Online Activists, and Bishops Who Tweet



Publisher:	Our Sunday Visitor
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Description:

People around the world are adjusting to the greatest communication shift since the dawn of the printing press. Millions today communicate through Facebook, YouTube, blogs, and Twitter, which means the effectiveness of the Church's message depends on engaging these New Media tools.

Author Brandon Vogt – a 25-year-old mechanical engineer by profession – is a writer and speaker who blogs about theology, technology, social justice, and books. This rare convergence of talent and professional background has positioned him to write a primer that is virtually a stand-alone resource.

Following Pope Benedict's call to evangelize the "digital continent," **The Church and New Media** explores the power and risks of New Media while guiding Christians through this new digital environment.

Foreword by Cardinal Seán O'Malley, O.F.M. Cap.

Afterword by Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan

Expert contributors include:

- Father Robert Barron
- Lisa Hendey
- Jennifer Fulwiler
- Father Dwight Longenecker
- Thomas Peters
- Mark Shea
- Matt Warner

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Interview Questions

Brandon Vogt

The Church and New Media, Blogging Converts, Online Activists, and Bishops Who Tweet



1. What prompted you to write this book?
2. Where do you see a void in the Church's use of – or even willingness to use – New Media? And what kinds of situations – either positive or negative – has this caused?
3. How can the Church's involvement in New Media help it keep contact not only with younger faithful, but more mature Catholics?
4. It's one thing to be involved in New Media, and quite another to employ a best-practices approach. How should the Catholic Church best use these media, and what should the Church avoid?
5. There are priest- and bishop-contributors to this book who are quite comfortable with New Media. Some have their own blogs, others use Twitter, others Facebook---some use all of these. What can you tell us about shepherds who've undertaken this approach toward their flock? What has it seemingly yielded, and how has it changed their ability to stay in touch with their people?
6. You're a mechanical engineer by day. How does your profession help in your Catholic writing work on these technological fronts?
7. What are you working on next?

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About The Author

Brandon Vogt



Brandon Vogt is a Catholic writer and speaker who regularly blogs at [The Thin Veil](#). He writes on spirituality, technology, and social-justice, and features regular book reviews and weekly giveaways. He also manages a special blog connected with his new book, **The Church and New Media: Blogging Converts, Online Activists, and Bishops Who Tweet** at [The Church and New Media](#). The book, essentially a one-of-a-kind resource on new media for the Church, has been endorsed by many of the top ranking Cardinals and bishops in the U.S – including Archbishop Timothy Dolan of New York, Cardinal Seán O’Malley of Boston, Archbishop Charles Chaput of Philadelphia, Cardinal Francis George, Archbishop of Chicago, and Cardinal Donald Wuerl of Washington, DC.

In May 2011 the Pontifical Councils for Culture and Social Communications invited Vogt as one of only 10 Americans to dialogue with Vatican officials and international bloggers on social media. He has been interviewed widely on the topic all over the U.S., including on EWTN, EWTN radio, Relevant Radio, in Our Sunday Visitor newsweekly, and many other publications.

Brandon daylights as a mechanical engineer in Casselberry, Florida, where he lives with his wife, Kathleen, and their two children, Isaiah and Teresa.