

Quick Guide...

Audio Visual

Prepared by the Committee on Church Art and Architecture

There is a growing trend towards the inclusion of modern audio-visual aids in worship. For some time this merely meant ministers becoming more easily heard by using simple sound systems. These systems might be extended and include the choir singing, wedding parties or baptised infants in their broadcast.

Sound systems became more sophisticated and microphones more clever and loop systems joined in and eventually all could be heard by all, provided that the locum or any other occasional user could master the system.

One day someone decided that congregations will sing better if all stand and look up – at a screen. The rush was on to get a screen: or rather get screens, as many as it takes.

Pause there and consider why. Changes in our churches are made principally to enhance worship, to make it more accessible, more meaningful and clearer in its delivery.

Consider if you lead worship what you could add to that with good audio-visual aids, but be aware that not everyone will need that and some may indeed be all at sea with it.

Showing the words to a hymn, showing intimations and factual information on church business are ready advantages, but including video and sound effects into the spoken word is for some and probably not for all. We are not all potential film producers and likely to be unhappy with trying to be one and the extra effort involved. Some have mastered the change and can with iPad in tow take advantage of what modern technology has to give.

The first step in considering an audio-visual system is to set out what it is to do: how is it to be used.

Your choice is large and can include:

- Quality sound for all, including the deaf for hearing worship
- Sound throughout your building
- Sound from the choir
- Sound from other parts of the building
- Sound from outside your building
- Integration of sound effects in worship
- Sound for concerts and other non-worship activity
- Recording sound for playback elsewhere
- Vision for hymns and other text
- Vision for movies and still graphics, with or without sound
- Visual / sound recordings for playback later – weddings, baptism, choir recitals, concerts etc
- Live visual / sound effect on screen
- Integration of sound and vision in talks, including church services.

Your next step is how to deliver and what will deliver what you want:

- If sound, how to decide on equipment and its discrete location?
- If video, how will you view – on screen or screens and can these be integrated into your church fabric? How then to decide on what equipment to fit?
- What kind of screen(s) – retracting or fixed, LCD or intelligent glass?
- How is your system to be controlled?
- How much can you spend?
- How flexible can your system be for add-on uses in the future?

Whom to Contact

Anyone wishing to contact the Committee should complete an enquiry form which can be found on the Resourcing Mission website (www.resourcingmission.org.uk/carta/about) and email it to: gentrustees@churchofscotland.org.uk. Alternatively, you can telephone 0131 225 5722 and ask to speak to someone in the CARTA office.

CARTA Quick Guides

Other Quick Guides include advice on dementia friendly church buildings, access for all, reordering and communion ware. These can be found on the Resourcing Mission website (www.resourcingmission.org.uk/resources/quick-guides).

About the Author

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