

STATE OF CHURCH TECH 2021



Pushpay

In the past several years—and especially through the pandemic—more churches than ever have discovered the benefits of technology. Through management software, online giving, live streaming services, and dozens of other digital solutions, church leaders have realized that these tools are more than flashy luxuries—they're essential to the future of ministry.

But a willingness to embrace technology is only half of the equation.

Pastors and administrators are working with limited resources, of course, restricting what they can realistically spend on technology. Many ministries feel they don't have the time or manpower to adopt new systems. And as more and more churches consider new tech, there are gaps in knowledge that must be bridged, helping church leaders understand their needs and how best to address them.

Every church has its own unique, tangled web of motivations and constraints. There is no one-size-fits-all technology solution. But by zooming out and looking at the big picture, by investigating the “why” across a large swath of tech-minded ministries, we can draw broad conclusions that will aid churches and tech providers alike.



***There is no
one-size-fits-
all technology
solution.***

That's why Pushpay sponsored the State of Church Technology report. This comprehensive study captures the priorities, concerns, and near-term expectations of the people most responsible for meeting their church's needs with technology.

We've distilled the most significant takeaways from that report in the following pages. Armed with this knowledge, church leaders can effectively reassess their current suite of digital solutions, and tech providers will be better prepared to meet the ever-evolving needs of the Church.

About the Research

The State of Church Technology report is derived from a September/October 2021 survey. We reached nearly two thousand Church leaders from every corner of the country.

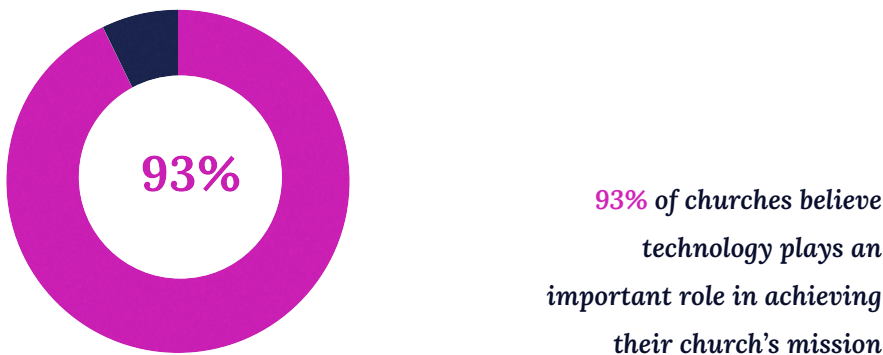
Notably, every respondent either described themselves as a 'decision maker' or 'influencer' regarding technology purchases within their church. These results reflect the views of the leaders who are choosing if, when, and what tech their ministry will adopt.

The churches included represent ministries of every size, from all across the faith spectrum.

Key Finding #1:

**TECHNOLOGY
IS ESSENTIAL
TO THE
CHURCH'S
MISSION**

Figure 1.1

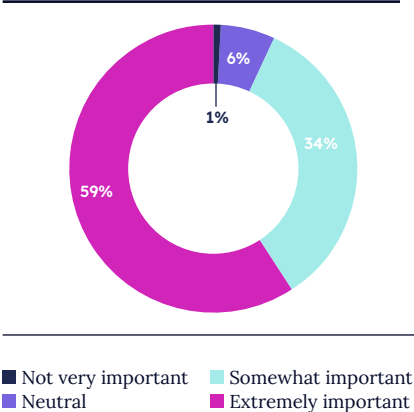


A discrepancy exists between what technology churches currently use, versus what they consider strategically important for the future.

We all know church tech is necessary—if it wasn't, you wouldn't be reading this right now. But the survey results are overwhelmingly conclusive: Just 1% (see Figure 1.2) of all churches claim that technology is “not very important” in achieving the Church's mission.

Once we dig deeper, however, the answers aren't nearly as uniform. For example, the amount of tech solutions a church already employs dramatically affects their opinions and behaviors. If a church is currently using no technology—that includes basics like social media, email, etc.—they're dramatically less likely to consider tech important for their future. That may sound

Figure 1.2 — How important is technology in achieving your church's mission?



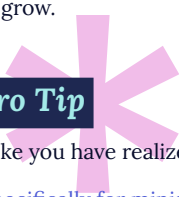
like common sense, but it indicates that if churches haven't yet adopted even the basics, they're extremely unlikely to implement tech solutions moving forward.

But the most compelling insight lies in the difference between what churches are currently using, as opposed to what they consider “strategically important” for them in the next few years. For instance, while 94% of churches are currently using social media, just 53% think those platforms will be strategically important for them moving forward.



...churches are interested in expanding their tech portfolio as they continue to grow.

Put another way, while social media is overwhelmingly the most popular digital tool today, churches are telling us that solutions like ChMS, mobile apps, scheduling systems, livestreaming, and more will all be more valuable to them in the near future. This doesn't mean Facebook and Instagram are going away; it means that they're already in the fold, and churches are interested in expanding their tech portfolio as they continue to grow.



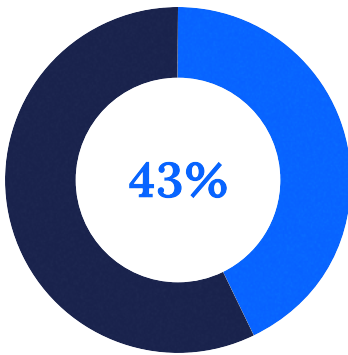
Pushpay Pro Tip

Church leaders like you have realized that their digital futures will be [driven by tools designed specifically for ministry](#). The only question is how fast you'll adopt these tools. The sooner your church starts using the tech solutions you're already considering, the sooner you'll see your community grow and thrive.

Key Finding #2:

**CHURCHES
(OFTEN
MISTAKENLY)
BELIEVE
THEY'RE
FORWARD-
THINKING
WITH TECH**

Figure 2.1



43% of churches only reevaluate their technology when the ‘need arises’

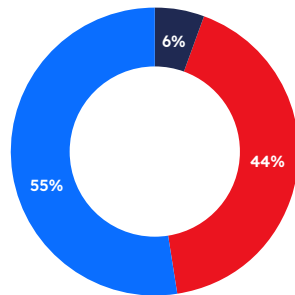
Many church leaders describe themselves as “progressive,” but their actions don’t support the claim.

As churches embrace tech solutions, it’s understandable that they believe they’re ahead of the curve. This is a new frontier for many of them. They feel like explorers, discovering exciting new ways to grow their communities and ministries.

Their actions paint a more complicated picture.

When asked how they’d describe their church when it comes to the adoption and use of technology, 55% of respondents said progressive, as opposed to reactionary or resistant (see Figure 2.2). That would imply a proactive approach to the evaluation of needs and implementation of tech tools.

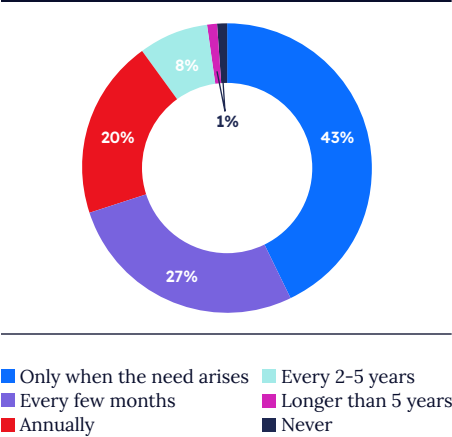
Figure 2.2 — Which one of the following best describes your church when it comes to the adoption and use of technology?



■ Resistant ■ Progressive
■ Reactionary

But when asked how often they evaluate their church’s tech needs, just 27% report considering it any more often than annually, and 43% admit to thinking about it “only when the need arises”—the very definition of reactionary (see Figure 2.3).

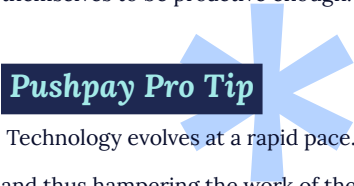
Figure 2.3 — How often does your church evaluate new technology products?



What this means is, a lot of church leaders perceive themselves as proactive and innovative with technology, but many of them don’t fit the bill.

The result may be a magnified resistance to change. If a church isn’t reconsidering its suite of tech solutions any more regularly than once a year, yet simultaneously considers its approach to technology progressive,

they may be overly defensive to any suggestion of change, since they already believe themselves to be proactive enough.

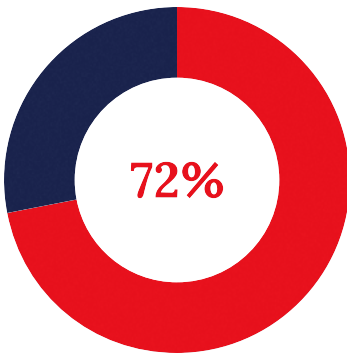


Technology evolves at a rapid pace. Churches are making their lives more difficult—and thus hampering the work of their ministry—by not routinely reconsidering their tech toolkits. Conducting a [regular technology assessment](#) within your organization will ensure your team is always ready to support your congregation and community. Or you can always chat with a Pushpay expert, who can keep you up-to-date on the latest digital solutions available and assess whether those tools are a fit for your church.

Key Finding #3:

**“TIME”
TRUMPS
ALL OTHER
TECHNOLOGY
CONCERNS**

Figure 3.1



72% of churches consider 'ease of use' to be extremely important when considering new technology (more than any other characteristic of the tech)

No matter the size, budget, or number of digital tools a church has already adopted, the most common concern is implementation.

A church leader ran the numbers, received the necessary approvals, and is ready to make a significant investment in technology. And while they have several factors and priorities to weigh, there is always one concern that outweighs the rest: time.

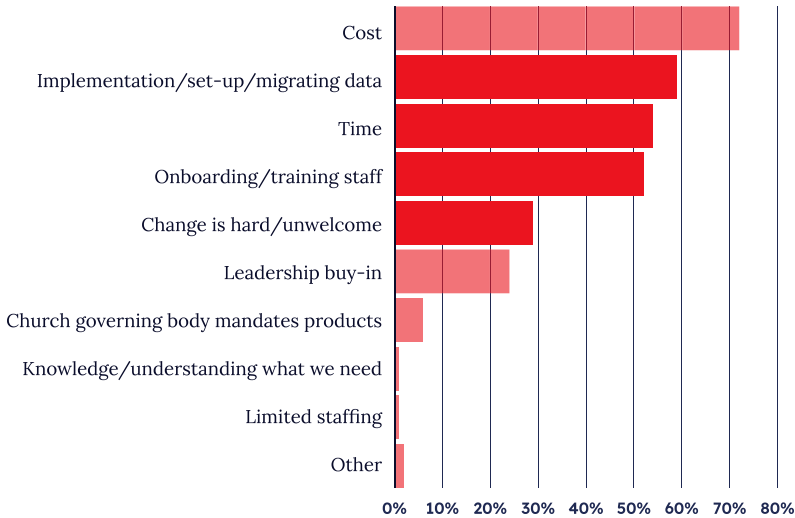
When asked what factors their church considers extremely important for new tech solutions, “ease of use” significantly outpaces “best software to solve the problem” and whether the tech provider has a “good reputation.” Believe it or not, price only ranks fourth on this list.

On the flip side, when asked what obstacles their church faces when adopting new technology, four of the top five answers are “implementation”, “time”, “onboarding/training staff”, and “change is hard/unwelcoming” (see Figure 3.2).

The implication is clear. Adopting new tech is difficult enough, especially when staff are already struggling to keep up with their church’s needs. But once a growing

ministry realizes that manual emails and other basic tools are no longer efficient for digital follow-up, they still remain hesitant to move to advanced tech solutions, because they perceive the transition as more difficult and time-consuming than simply staying the course.

Figure 3.1 — What are the THREE BIGGEST obstacles to adopting a new technology product at your church?



Therefore, a buyer must be able to quickly learn a new technology platform’s features and nuances. In turn, the time to onboard and train their staff will be minimal, and that will make the tech transition palatable to even the most stubborn members of their church.

Ease of use—and thus time—is king for church technology.

Pushpay Pro Tip

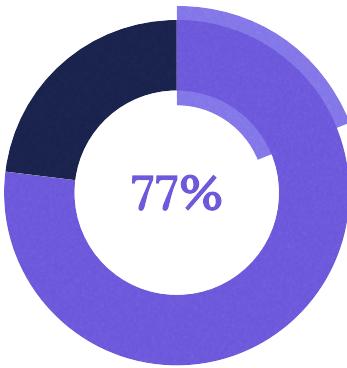
While the Church’s tech revolution has certainly arrived, it’s far from optimized. Too many ministries are using a mishmash of tools that aren’t seamlessly integrated, making life unnecessarily difficult for church leaders, admins, and volunteers.

A tool like ChurchStaq can align your ministries and reach your community with a complete suite of church software including ChMS, giving, and apps. That frees up your time and energy for the work that really matters. [Colorado's Bergen Park Church](#) is an inspirational case study for churches hoping to scale up their ministry with tech solutions.

Key Finding #4:

**SECURITY IS
IMPORTANT—
TO A POINT**

Figure 04



77% state security and data protection is 'extremely important'... but only 19% say security and data protection concerns have 'very much prevented' or 'somewhat prevented' them from making a technology purchase

Churches want to feel safe when using their technology, but rarely do they walk away from a purchase because they're uncomfortable with security

Every day we hear about the latest email scam or a new customer data leak on the news. The faith tech sector in particular has suffered from significant hacks and breaches in recent years, so it's no surprise that church leaders—many of whom aren't tech experts themselves—take security seriously when shopping for technology solutions.

The research bears this out. Just 1% of respondents claimed that security and data protection was “not very important” when considering new tech. Virtually no one is flippant about this situation in the twenty-first century.

And yet, security doesn't drive purchases.

Less than 1 in 5 respondents reported that they've held off upgrading their tech or moving toward digital because of security and data concerns (see Figure 4.2). That's

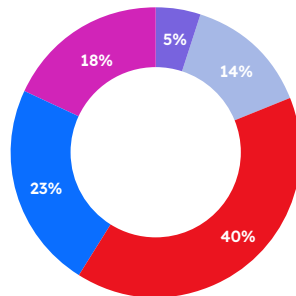
to say, very few churches are stalling or avoiding tech purchases because they're not comfortable with the security of the platform.

This paradox could be tied to the aforementioned lack of expertise on the buyer's side. Church leaders know that security is important, but see the issue as binary—a platform is either secure, or it isn't. The added value of third party testing, advanced fraud protection, and PCI-DSS compliance is lost on them.

Pushpay Pro Tip

Anyone new to the world of data security should spend some time [reading up on the subject](#) if only to know what questions to ask of potential tech providers. Pushpay's best-in-class security will suddenly no longer feel like a bonus, but a necessity.

Figure 4.2 – To what degree have security and data protection concerns prevented your church from upgrading tools/ becoming more digital?

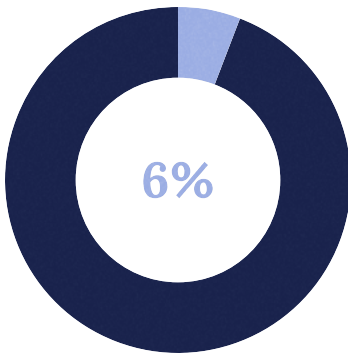


■ Very much prevented ■ Not prevented much
■ Somewhat prevented ■ Not prevented at all
■ Neutral

Key Finding #5:

**DIGITAL
CHURCH IS
HERE TO STAY**

Figure 5.1



Just 6% of churches say they're 'resistant' to adopting technology

More than any time in history, churches are enthusiastic to adopt technology for the long haul

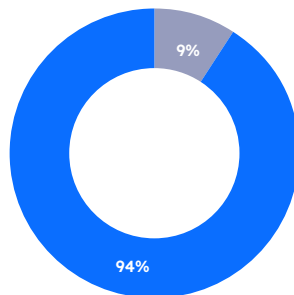
The pandemic erased any doubts regarding the viability of a digital Church. Ministries all around the world successfully adapted to the challenges presented by COVID by leveraging technology to strengthen their communities and continue accomplishing their good work.

And while we're all excited for life to get back to normal, it's clear that churches have no intention of abandoning their tech solutions.

One case study is the transition to livestreaming. 91% of churches report that they currently livestream at least some of their services (see Figure 5.2).

More telling than that, however, is

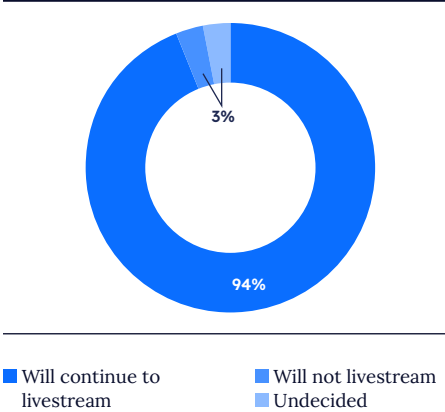
Figure 5.2 – Does your church currently livestream any mass/worship services?



■ Livestream

■ Do not livestream

Figure 5.3 – Over the next 12 months, does your church plan to continue livestreaming mass/worship services?



that 94% of those churches state that they'll continue to livestream over the next twelve months, presumably regardless of their ability to meet their congregation in person.

Nearly every reported statistic supports the idea that tech solutions will continue to play a crucial role in the Church. From the number of leaders who describe themselves as progressive with technology to the

widespread acceptance of tech's importance toward achieving the Church's mission, every sign points toward the permanent, powerful role digital solutions will play in ministry for years to come.

Pushpay Pro Tip

Investigate which tech platforms can encompass all of the separate digital tools your church is already using. For instance, many churches don't realize that their service livestreams can be hosted in Pushpay's custom app through [our partnership with Resi](#).

Conclusion

Over the last few years, the people empowered to make decisions for their church have witnessed the power of tech solutions, and they're eager to expand their digital toolkits for the future. The challenge isn't convincing churches to accept technology, but rather for us all to better understand the wants, needs, and mindsets of leaders as they explore their options and choose between the myriad options available.

The insights provided by the State of Church Technology report are a great first step for both churches and tech providers alike. But again, there is no silver bullet tech solution that works perfectly for every individual church. Each ministry needs and deserves a partner who's truly dedicated to helping them streamline their tech, reduce their workload, and reach their full potential.

We at Pushpay are ready to help. [Schedule a free consultation](#) with one of our experts, and together we will set up your church for success in the digital age.





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