



## Digital publishing— a different paradigm

Publish early, publish small, publish often

This paper explores features of digital publishing and associated technology that are transforming approaches to Scripture translation and publication in minority languages.

Understanding the nature and harnessing the potential of the small units of information that make up digital media products is a key theme. The paper recommends that digital publication starts at an early stage in a translation project, making small units of Scripture available to the language community in audio and text formats as they are translated. It explores the idea of iterative and incremental publishing as a Scripture engagement strategy.



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# 1. *Digital technology impacting publishing*

## 1.1 The digital technology phenomenon

The unfolding age of digital technology has swept the world into a prolonged, yet fast-moving transition. Before each new development becomes fully established, a number of other digital novelties are jostling for attention. What started in the west has now become a global phenomenon with innovations and creative applications of technology happening in most countries of the world. Publishing possibilities enabled by the rapid expansion of Internet and mobile phone capabilities sit as heart of this technological revolution.

The findings of [Global social media research summary 2019](#) indicate that:

- 57% of the world's population of 7.7 billion is now connected to the internet.
- More than 360 million people came online for the first time during 2018 at an average rate of about one million new users each day.
- The average internet user spends more than 6.5 hours online each day with social media use accounting for the larger share of that time.
- Social media users increased by 280 million in the course of 2018.
- Two thirds of the world's population now uses a mobile phone, the growth over the past year being almost 100 million users.
- Some of the least developed and most unstable countries of the world have more than 50% of the population who are mobile phone subscribers, and more than 10% are internet subscribers.

A Pew Research Center report reveals that [social media use continues to rise in developing countries as it plateaus across developed ones](#). Developments in [frugal innovation](#) resulting in technology items such as the smart phone being adapted and produced at reduced cost for markets in the developing countries are contributing towards bridging the digital divide between rich and poor and may do so to a greater degree in the future. See: [The hottest phones for the next billion users aren't smart phones](#).

## 1.2 Information, the Internet and multi-media

At the heart of this unfolding digital transition is information. Twenty five years ago, the Internet became the information highway, or the great information exchange mechanism. Text was created by producers and consumed on-line by consumers or 'users'. The Internet has since developed into a global network of connected devices, with most using having the capacity to both contribute and access both text and multi-media items. '[Content](#)' has emerged as the generic term for digital information, reflecting the fact that it may take the form of audio, moving picture, still picture, graphic image or any combination of these formats ('effects') in addition to text. Digital content and multi-media have become synonymous.

## 1.3 Publishing in the digital era

This is what the experts and trend watchers are saying:

- [Ralph Graves](#): "We are experiencing a fundamental shift in thinking, as to how media (information) is compiled and presented, and how it is consumed."
- [Chris Morin](#): "The lines between old and new media forms are converging. We have seen new media content distributed via old media (for example a CD or DVD inside a book cover), and old media moving into new-media territory (for example a book available by e-reader and/or audio). Ideally, both adopt the best of the other and we move forward into 21st-century media."
- We are experiencing a blurring of difference between personal communication and mass media. See sources such as [The Fibreculture Journal](#).

- Extracts from [the Bain Company report: Publishing in the digital era.](#)
  - Regardless of device, consumers today expect ubiquitous, instantaneous<sup>1</sup> and free information.
  - From the past we know that the kinds of words that change people's lives have always lived on – in whatever format.
- Technology innovates exponentially. Survival is about understanding it and its effect on us. "Drive the bus or get hit by It": Andrea Ames. See [Information 4.0 Consortium](#).

## 1.4 Revisiting the vision of Johannes Gutenberg

In 1455 [Johannes Gutenberg](#) wrote, "God suffers in the multitude of souls whom His word cannot reach. Religious truth is imprisoned in a small number of [hand written] manuscript books which confine instead of spread that public treasure. Let us break the seal which seals up holy things and give wings to Truth in order that she may win every soul that comes into the world by her word no longer written at great expense by hands easily palsied, and multiplied like the wind by an untiring machine."

This vision of breaking seals and multiplying Truth like the wind energised Gutenberg to harness and greatly improve on the technology of his age. However, the imagery of his vision would suggest he was looking far beyond the capabilities and constraints of the print format.

## 2. *Scripture in various containers and formats*

### 2.1 Scripture as multi-media content

The digital revolution and its multi-media possibilities cause us to expand our mental constructs concerning Scripture and its dissemination, recognising that it can exist and be communicated in an increasing number of media configurations and formats in addition to print. The print expression has an ongoing and vitally important role to play in preserving a 'locked' and authoritative form of the inspired text in a given language. However, print may have less than a primary role in disseminating Scripture materials in orality-oriented cultures and sub-cultures as the possibilities of digital media are progressively exploited and deployed.

For the English speaking world, [Glo is an example of an interactive digital Bible](#) with digital media resources related to each verse of text. It also offers an extensive atlas, timeline and topical/life application resources of a multi-media nature. This illustrates a range of the formatting and presentation possibilities now open for multi-media, digital delivery of Scripture and related resources in all languages.

### 2.2 Digital multi-media – new wineskins

As we rethink our mental construct of the nature of Scripture, we realise that it is all about the content, not the container. For the first 1500 years of the church, the Scriptures were contained primarily in a limited number of hand-written manuscripts, oral retellings, and to a lesser degree in art forms such as icons, sculptures, stained glass windows, paintings, hymns/poetry and dramatic portrayals. These were the available wineskins. For the past 500 years the printed book has been the dominant wineskin, with analogue media beginning to make an impact around the 1970's.

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<sup>1</sup> The quest for the instantaneous is now being served by mechanisms such as [Accelerated Mobile Pages](#), [Progressive Web Apps](#) and [Facebook instant articles](#)

For orality-oriented audiences, digital multi-media formats are rapidly becoming the new and versatile wineskins for compiling and delivering Scripture materials, enabling expression through digital deployment of the full array of communications formats and ethno-art forms. Through digital means, the Scriptures can now inhabit the artistic expressions and creations of a particular people group, becoming artistically incarnate, customised and localized. Context-sensitive, vernacularized, digital multi-media creations that are based on the authoritative Scripture text have potential to illuminate the text and project its treasures onto the hearts and minds of members of the intended audience with exceptional effect.

### **2.3 Multi-media Scripture touching the audio-visually literate**

The dust settled, most of the crowd now dispersed into the Indian night. The weathered man leaned toward the pastor, asking with sadness in his voice,

“Does your God love widows?”

“Yes, he loves widows,” replied the pastor.

“Does your God love orphans?” he asked.

“Yes, he loves orphans as well.”

The man continued, shifted his weight on his cane, keeping his eyes fixed on the pastor, “Among our many gods, we do not have one like this; I must know this God.”

He had just watched the [“Widow and the oil”](#), a ten minute video portrayal of Elisha and the widow from 2 Kings. The visual story produced by Crown Financial Ministries, in addition to teaching about miraculous provision, opened this man’s heart to recognise the compassionate nature of God.

## *3. Digital media processes and possibilities*

### **3.1 New wineskin characteristics – preparation, filling and consumption**

In addition to its multi-media possibilities, the new wineskins of digital media contrast in a marked manner with the printed book in terms of content preparation, filling and consumption possibilities. Print publishing processes and associated economic considerations require that a significant quantity of highly polished content be prepared, placed in its container of binding, cover and printed page, and physically delivered to the user. The content is received as a complete and final production, remains in a fixed form and it is expected that the user will normally engage with the material in logical, successive stages.

By contrast, digital media products and digital distribution processes are free from the economic and fixed-form constraints that apply to print. Because a small unit of digital content may be formatted and published at little to no cost, it is possible deliver it to digital devices of the audience in an incremental manner, unit by unit or section by section, making the content units available in either final or draft form as they are prepared. By use of this **incremental publishing** approach, the user can be engaged at an early stage in the life of a product and interest sustained by frequent release of new units as these are created.

When there is incremental release of units of draft (non-final form) content to the audience, the process is known as **iterative publishing**, the purpose being to engage members of the audience by online collaboration and to apply their feedback in developing subsequent iterations of the product. Another term applied to this incremental and iterative methodology is **in-process publishing**.

In recent years a number of commercial ventures have developed on-line platforms to enable authors to create and publish works in an incremental and iterative manner e.g. see [why should you publish your book before it is finished?](#) and [the lean publishing manifesto](#).

### 3.2 Small media units matching audience requirements

Small units of Scripture content suitable for incremental and iterative publishing have merit from a variety of perspectives. For the rurally-based minority language user, the constraints of speed and cost of Internet or mobile network connectivity may be factors. In addition, screen size and memory limitations of the mobile phone or other access device may result in a restricted capacity to access content. For these reasons, sectors of Scripture engagement audiences may be served best by a small unit approach to content delivery.

Those who are free from connectivity and hardware limitations are also likely to benefit from small units of content. Many get drawn into an attention-switching lifestyle—engaging with a range of multi-media content and giving a short period of attention to any one item before moving to another. Social media platforms illustrate this most clearly. Website and phone app designers, in addition to content creators, are progressively moving towards small media unit presentation formats that accommodate a short attention span.

A term widely used to refer to these small units of digital media is **micro-content**<sup>2</sup>.

## 4. A closer look at micro-content

### 4.1 Understanding the ‘micro-content’ concept

There is no single, precise and widely agreed definition concerning the size, make-up and essential properties of a unit of ‘**micro-content**’. The term is used to refer to various kinds of small units of digital media, configured in different ways and designed for somewhat different purposes. As digital technology evolves, various approaches to define the term for its different purposes remain fluid.

Rob Hanna writes in 2018 in [the rise micro-content](#),

“ . . . there is a straight correlation between what we’ve been working to achieve with topic-based authoring and our move away from book-based authoring to what is coming next. . . The content will be more focused on specific user context and user intent. It will be smaller and far more versatile to serve a broader range of applications.

*Micro-content* is content that is:

- about one primary idea, fact, or concept.
- easily scannable [i.e. suitable for rapid reading and accommodating a short attention span].
- labelled for clear identification and meaning.
- appropriately written and formatted for use anywhere and any time it is needed.

***It isn't micro-content just because it's small***

In the parlance of [Information 4.0](#), micro-content is synonymous with molecular content.”

These observations of Rob Hanna allude to the fact that micro-content is interwoven into other digital media considerations e.g. it interconnects with the concepts of:

- [life-long learning and micro-learning](#)
- [Topic-based authoring](#) (also known as modular or molecular authoring and publishing)
- [Instant articles](#)
- [Accelerated mobile pages](#)
- [Single-source publishing](#)
- [Text annotation and collaboration](#)

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<sup>2</sup> For some of the varied definitions and uses of the ‘micro-content’ term, see [Wikipedia: micro-content](#), [Next evolution in content creation](#) and [First Authoring for Chatbots and AI - Madcap software](#)

Much of Hanna's work is directed towards use of [Darwin Information Typing Architecture \(DITA\)](#) and its application to the marketing/advertising industry, and is therefore not directly relevant to this paper. However, a number of the concepts with which he works are indicators of broader developments with significance for digital publishing of Scripture. For example, see [DITA—Adoption/collaborating across-the-enterprise using dita xml and microcontent](#), in particular the first 30 slides.

In a blog titled, [Introducing Micro-content](#), Adrienne Becker writes:

*'In the old Macro Content world . . . the value was in the whole, getting it to the masses all at one go. Today it's different; the value to unlock in any media property is its parts, its moments, its Micro Content. Best of all, Micro Content is platform-agnostic, coming from multiple sources but facile enough that it can thread individuals into an audience . . .'*

## **4.2 Micro-content as stand-alone portions of digital media**

The micro-content concept for the purposes of this paper is focused on the idea of a small portion of text, audio or multi-media content. A single item of micro-content text can be understood as a semantically coherent unit that contains the information and insight needed to effectively communicate a certain idea, message, instruction or impression – a unit that has meaning whether it stands alone or is integrated with content comprising of related semantic units. Related micro-content units could make up an unfolding story sequence, the elements of a lesson plan, or a train of thought.

The most appropriate size of a given item is determined by a range of factors. These include the nature or genre of the content, the media type in question, the average screen size of the anticipated viewing devices, the characteristics of the audience, and the web data access cost for the average user. Some creators of web content may consider factors of this kind in no more than a sub-conscious manner while others approach the development of micro-content in a highly scientific way, taking a wide range of such factors into consideration.

A short YouTube video might be regarded as one unit of micro-content. For certain kinds of content and audience, a single screen display on a smart phone might be considered the average attention span and therefore the upper size limit for one unit. However, for various kinds of material, audience and anticipated receiving device, a micro-content unit might require scrolling through a number of screen-fulls of text, or engaging with multi-media items longer than the average YouTube production of two minutes. Many blogging and social media posts can be considered as comprising a single micro-content unit.

For further reflection on micro-content see [Gordana Jugo's ePortfolio; the future of micro-content and hyperlocal media](#).

## **4.3 Gaining and retaining attention with micro-content**

In [Introducing Micro-content](#), Adrienne Becker writes:

*'There is one law in the media industries today from which all others derive: Attention is the currency of our culture. With attention, you can move markets [and hearts]. Without it, you blip and fade -- at best. . . To capture attention, you have to create a moment, a point in time where there is a meaningful connection with an audience, a moment that matters because it moves a group of individuals to laugh, cry, be inspired or feel awe.'*

*'And the best way to capture attention in today's crowded media world is through Micro Content, used by storytellers to make moments that matter. . .'*

Micro-content has things in common with broadcast formats and advertising where gaining and retaining focused attention is the key issue. A radio or television story may be just 30 seconds long. Read at a pace of 180 words per minute these lengths equate to 90 words. However, research reveals that the social media posts and blogs which achieve most shares and appear highest on Internet search engine ranking are generally longer and may comprise of a number of related micro-content units. See [optimal content length](#).

## 5. *Micro-Scripture concept explored*

### 5.1 Scripture as micro-content – what would it look like?

In the Scripture print medium, the section unit has some of the characteristics of a micro-content unit. The micro-Scripture concept might be regarded as a refinement of the section, requiring a more rigorous approach to communicating a meaningful unit of information that may stand alone or be positioned together with related semantic units.

A micro-Scripture unit could be:

- An 'episode' of the story of creation e.g. creation of the physical universe.
- An 'episode' of the life of Abraham.
- A single commandment (maybe with related/illustrative Scripture content).
- All or part of a narrative unit or historical event.
- All or part of a dream or vision.
- One proverb or a number of proverbs relating to a particular theme.
- A Psalm or portion of a Psalm, song or poem.
- All or part of a prophetic utterance.
- A parable.
- A miracle story.
- All or part of a prayer.
- Theme/topic related units of Scripture on matters such as prayer, fasting, marriage, sickness, work, fertility, forgiveness.

### 5.2 Micro-Scriptures for grey-zone, minority language communities

Rather than think of a minority language audience as readers of Bible books or just hearers of Scripture-based stories, we may regard them as potential consumers of micro-Scripture content in various digital media formats and mixes—text and/or audio, and/or video, and/or still pictures and/or effects. Many may have literacy skills together with an orality predisposition. These societies fall in the grey zone between literacy and orality: they represent a hybrid condition with audio-visual rather than text-based literacy being dominant. (Adapted from 'Tyranny of the Moment' by Thomas Hylland Erikson, 2001, P 37).

Oral and informal learning styles are compatible with the kind of micro-learning that is accomplished with micro-content. See [Microlearning - a strategy for ongoing professional development](#).

In addition to audience preference, considerations of cost, meagre connectivity and low specification of receiving devices point to the merits of presenting Scripture as units of micro-content. We begin to think in terms of 'micro-Scripture' components—small, semantically viable units. We might regard this as a consideration of 'micrality' (term coined for use in this paper) in the same way that we apply considerations of orality.

### 5.3 New wineskins – new options to arrange and present content

As we apply considerations of ‘micrality’, these new wineskins prompt us to think in terms micro-Scripture units and the various ways in which they might be arranged and interconnected. We begin to gain a greater freedom to consider the order and sequence in which they might best be presented so as to most effectively engage the worldview and context of an audience. We have the options of distributing individual units, selections and compilations of Scripture in various multi-media arrangements. The prayerful, thoughtful and research-informed grouping and ordering of micro-Scripture content become vital considerations in the overall task of effectively challenging and transforming the world view of an ethnic community.

The extent to which ‘micrality’ considerations are applied becomes one of the significant strategic issues for each Scripture translation project and its related Scripture engagement activity.

## 6. *Incremental and iterative translation and publishing*

### 6.1 Benefits of incremental and iterative Scripture translation and publishing

A strategic decision for each translation project is whether to publish small units of Scripture as work progresses. Immediate, incremental, iterative and progressive publishing of portions/stories in both text and audio formats has significant benefits. Members of the language community being served have access to Scripture at an early stage in the project, and the translation team has the potential to benefit from their feedback right from the outset through online or other processes of collaboration.

As these possibilities are deployed in a Scripture translation project, the mode of operation for incremental publishing of final form (consultant checked, reviewed etc.) text could be defined as: Publish early, publish little, publish often – enabling users to engage with the content in small quantities, hopefully on frequent occasions and with sustained interest.

When incremental and iterative processes are applied, the mode of operation becomes: Publish early, publish draft, publish little, publish often, re-publish next iterations as user feedback is obtained.

### 6.2 Sequence of incremental Scripture translation and publishing

When working with a minority language and deciding which Scriptures to translate first and how to proceed, questions such as these may be asked:

- Which Scripture stories/portions will be effective in engaging the interest of the language community?
- Which stories/portions will serve best to establish the trust of the language community in the Scriptures?
- Which stories/portions will serve to expand the worldview of the community embrace a scriptural viewpoint?
- Which stories/portions of Scripture are most essential to address the basic spiritual needs of this community and enable motivated members to grow as disciples of Jesus?

The overview in Appendix 1 outlines one possible set of stages and an overall sequence for Scripture translation. The progression is determined by Scripture engagement considerations, starting with portions that are likely to resonate positively with the worldview and life experience of the community being served, and then moving on into Scripture content that will begin to challenge and reshape the worldview. The exact sequence and progression is determined by initial research of the local context

followed by evaluation of response to materials already published. For example, in a community where proverbial wisdom is highly valued, it may be appropriate to present material from the book of Proverbs as a first stage of translation.

The order of publication adopted by the translation project might become the recommended sequence of Scripture engagement for members the community. For example, mechanisms might be built into a vernacular Scripture website to direct newcomers to Scripture along this sequence as a suggested pathway of revelation.

## *8. Recommendations and conclusion*

### **8.1 Recommendations for language projects**

In the light of digital media, orality, and ‘micrality’— in addition to incremental and iterative publishing considerations, it is recommended that:

- Each project incorporates digital media and publishing perspectives, strategies, considerations and processes from the outset.
- Partially complete projects undertake an extensive review to evaluate where adjustments might be made to incorporate digital media and publishing perspectives, strategies and processes.

Possible outworking of the above recommendations:

1. Discourse studies include analysis of any existing web content in the vernacular as well as analysis of social media use and conventions that have emerged within the community. (This is in recognition of the fact that localised digital micro-media considerations may call for a digital media style that differs in some respects from literary styles in existence in the vernacular and/or national language.)
2. Initiatives are taken to identify and deploy local community co-workers who have aptitude for designing and producing micro-content in text, audio and audio-visual formats.
3. From the outset of the translation phase of project, relatively small quantities of text are published in digital formats. This gives the community access to some Scripture at an early stage, and opens up the possibility of the translation team securing broad-based feedback.
4. A sustained rhythm of publishing early, publishing little and publishing often is built into the translation program.
5. Ethno-art practitioners from within the language community are deployed to the maximum extent possible from an early stage in the project. (Give them opportunity to experience and contribute to the Scripture translation process. Challenge and encourage them to apply their gifts to the presentation and dissemination of translated materials.)
6. Technical skills (for example audio recording expertise) and resources resident in the local community are deployed, involving them in the development of digital media materials.
7. Existing use patterns of mobile phones by the community are evaluated and harnessed for Scripture engagement—with distribution by file sharing, and/or text message, and or/Internet access.
8. Social media mechanisms in use by the community are deployed to publish micro-Scripture items as well as to announce the release of Scripture products and promote their use.

## 8.2 Get big results by thinking and acting small

'Get big results by thinking and acting small' is the sub-title of a book by Greg Verdino published in 2010. The book addresses the world of business and marketing, but with just a little tweaking his chapter titles and related strap lines read like words of mystical poetry relating to minority language Scripture production and distribution in the world of micro-content, micro-Scripture and micro-publishing. The resulting adapted poem is this:

*The next big thing is lots and lots of small things  
– the future of Scripture engagement is micro.*

*Thinking and acting small  
– understanding the micro-consumer mind-set.*

*From mass communication to masses of communicators  
– making connections and promoting use through the voice of the consumer.*

*From media networks to the network effect  
– engaging audiences in the age of human-powered distribution.*

*From prime time to real time  
– making a real difference by engaging at the speed of now.*

*From reach to relationships  
– activating the many by resonating with the right few.*

*From one big thing to the right small things  
– creating new opportunities and relationships by engaging the power of small.*

*What small things will you do today?  
– applying the micro approach in your activity right now.*

## 8.3 Conclusion

This paper demonstrates that the concepts of multi-media, micro-Scripture and micro-publishing of an incremental and iterative nature are vital considerations when developing strategies and planning processes for minority language translation and Scripture engagement. However, this small unit perspective is not intended in any way to challenge or disregard the vital importance of the full and complete revelation of Scripture.

The approach of collaboration with the audience around the publication of micro-Scripture content has the potential to connect with many who may not otherwise be reached with vernacular Scripture. This approach is designed to gain their attention, stimulate their interest, build their trust, and meet some of their basic needs through their engagement with Scripture presented in unit sizes and formats compatible with their digital media preferences. By engaging with the small, there is potential for spiritual awakening that leads to an appetite for the big.

# Appendix 1

## Possible stages and sequence of a translation project

1. **Bridge builders:** Identify Bible portions/stories - most likely from the Old Testament (OT) - that will serve as bridges, connecting readily with the culture and lifestyle of the community, with the intent of building trust and interest in the Scriptures.
2. **Further bridge builders:** Evaluate responses to initial bridge builders and identify further bridge builders as a means of sparking further interest in the revelation of Scripture.
3. **Door openers:** These are likely to be OT stories with elements which both affirm and challenge the experience and worldview of the language community.
4. **Further door openers:** Evaluate feedback and identify further door openers to reinforce points where understanding is limited. Identify additional stories that introduce new challenges as well as affirming aspects of the prevailing worldview.
5. **World view transformers:** Progress to portions/stories that challenge the world view of the language community, while not necessarily affirming any elements of it.
6. **Further world view transformers:** Evaluate feedback and identify further portions/stories to reinforce aspects of world view transformation as well as addressing additional world view issues.
7. **Biblical foundation builders:** Evaluate the extent to which an essential Scriptural foundation has been established through portions translated to date. Identify additional portions needed to provide an overview of the key characters and concepts of the OT.
8. **Further foundation builders:** Continue to focus on portions that provide the essential OT foundation. This might involve Scripture compilations bringing together the biographical details of each of the key characters of the OT (the Lives of the Prophets series). Such compilations are likely to include stories/portions previously translated.
9. **Poetry and wisdom literature:** If poems and proverbs are used extensively by the community, then OT portions based on these genres might be introduced at an earlier stage. If not, this might the time to consider them.
10. **OT panoramas:** Consider the possibility of translating the additional Scriptures needed to compile one or more OT panoramas such as that required for the script of God's Story. (Global Recordings have scripts based on a number of themes and OT character groupings.)
11. **Key terms and concepts found in the New Testament (NT):** Review all the available OT Scriptures translated in relation to key terms and concepts of the NT. Identify any blanks, and produce OT portions to fill these.
12. **Introducing Jesus and the apostles:** Identify portions that bring together the biographical details of Jesus and the apostles. Consider the possibility of the Jesus Film and other NT based audio-visual products.
13. **Deciding on a complete Gospel:** Mark's Gospel presents a steady flow of questions and related events that force the audience to consider for themselves who Jesus really is on the basis of evidence presented. Might this be a good fit for the audience as a first complete Gospel?

**14. Integrating content of the epistles into the Acts narrative:** For oral learners, and for many others, the teaching of the epistles will be best understood and appreciated if it is integrated into the appropriate places in the Acts narrative.

**15. Remaining needs:** To what degree can this language community adequately access the entire Bible in another language? The answer to this question determines the remaining translation need.

Adapted from [Selecting and using Scripture portions in frontier missions: Rick Brown](#).

## Appendix 2

### **Some further recommendations**

1. Socio-linguistic surveys include enquiry into the role of mass media and digital media in the life of the language community, as well as research about the digital devices in most common use – as part of an analysis of communication mechanisms and processes in use by the community.
2. Socio-linguistic surveys, wherever possible, include at least a limited collection of expressions of ethno-arts forms, such as audio recordings of music, songs and poems and video recordings of dance.
3. Translation activity be preceded by worldview studies leading to a carefully planned, but progressively reviewed and revised ordering of Scripture portions to be translated and published—the order designed to be most effective for engaging with and transforming the worldview of the language community.

## Appendix 3

### *Web publishing and digital delivery options*

#### **1 Web publishing of Scripture**

The development of a minority language Internet site for vernacular Scripture publishing at a very early stage in the life of a translation project is likely to become the norm rather than the exception. It is recognised that in some cases, only a relatively small proportion of members of a given language community may have means of accessing such a website at the present time, but there are at least four good reasons why it is important for most translation projects to develop Scripture publication sites.

- It is likely that a significant number of the opinion leaders in a language community have direct or indirect access to the Internet by phone, if not by computer.
- Even if the potential for accessing a website is limited in the homeland of the community, it is certain that dispersed members of the language community will have Internet access and will be searching occasionally for anything that relates in any way to their ethnic roots. The Internet is an extremely effective means of reaching these community members, and they have the potential to relay vernacular Scripture content to family and friends back home.
- While Internet access may be limited in the homeland today, the picture will almost certainly be very different tomorrow.
- Web-published materials may be promoted and shared by digital social networks, media forms that are experiencing rapid growth and are extensively used by the younger generation.

See, for example, [Social media in the Arab world](#).

Web publishing with the possibility of access by mobile phone is becoming viable in most settings as one means of publishing and delivery. The requirement to keep a website fresh by regularly posting new material is perfectly matched by incremental translation and publishing processes. New content generated by reformatting and media-mixing of existing content also add a sense of freshness and vibrancy to a website.

#### **2 Digital Scripture delivery by means other than the Internet**

In [Cross-platform content: the new imperative](#) we read, “Publishers need to get smarter about their content development efforts. We must continue to explore creative ways to repackaging everything we produce across multiple platforms.” In other words, develop content in a range of formats so that it can be delivered by a range of distribution mechanisms and platforms.

In addition to Internet, some publishing/delivery mechanisms to consider are:

[Kiosk hotspots](#) for Wi-Fi transfer of data may be set up on a permanent basis or temporary basis, and may be operated from solar power.

**Micro SD (secure digital) cards:** A 4.0 GB capacity SD card costing less than US\$5.00 and suitable for a computer or phone can contain all books of Scripture in both text and audio formats in addition to hundreds of hours of associated audio-visual materials. See the [Digital Bible Society](#).

**DVD:** In one region of Eurasia, DVDs with text scrolling in sync with an audio recording is a very effective and attractive format

### 3 Digital Scripture delivery by social media

The networking and progressive virtual community building effects social media result in it being a powerful mechanism. At this time there are basically six kinds of social media.

**Social network** sites allow people to build personal web pages and then connect with friends to share content and communication. In addition to personal pages, we now find web pages for a vast array of issues and causes on these sites. Such pages have enormous potential to announce/promote/advertise Scripture items. Each new unit of Scripture posted to a vernacular Scripture website may be regarded as an event and announced on the social network page. Also, a separate social network page might be dedicated to regular incremental postings of micro-Scripture units.

**Blogs** are online journals, with entries appearing with the most recent first. These offer a range of possibilities for language community members to post micro-Scripture content with associated reflections, as well as pointing to the related Scripture website.

**Microblogs:** social networking combined with bite-sized blogging, where small amounts of content ('updates') are distributed online and through a mobile phone network. Twitter is the clear leader in this field. For Scripture engagement purposes these combine some of the features of texting, social media and blogs.

**Wikis** act as a communal document or database, allowing people to add content to or edit the existing content. These have much potential for drawing a cross section of members of a language community into discussion around items such as key terms, as well as opening up the translation process to collaborative activity. Wikis may be open to all or restricted to those with username and password access.

**Podcasts:** audio and video files are made available by subscription through services like Apple-iTunes. These have potential for publishing micro-Scripture content in audio and video formats.

**Forums:** mechanisms for online discussion, often around specific topics and interests. Discussion about a range of language development and translation issues might be promoted on forums.

**Content communities:** communities which organise and share particular kinds of content. The most popular content communities tend to form around photos (Flickr), bookmarked links (Delicious) and videos (YouTube). For Scripture engagement purposes, these have the potential to serve in the same way as podcasts, with the added options of posting text and engaging in discussion about content.

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