



Leading WITH Passion

Empowering people to serve Christ leads Simon Solutions to new software vision

When the average Christian thinks about serving their Savior, software and improved technology isn't always top-of-mind; however, all that is beginning to change. In today's interactive world, people communicate across thousands of miles in seconds via e-mail. They conference face-to-face across oceans with video conferencing and stay connected up to the minute with world events through the Internet.

Technology is all around us and we use it on a daily basis. From the ATM to self-checkout at the grocery store, our society has grasped the technological revolution and embraced it. Today's church also is now embracing technology and God is helping us find new and innovative ways to use this great gift to further His kingdom. At Simon Solutions Inc., it is their passion to empower people to serve the body of Christ.

"We sincerely desire to help ministries translate their personal visions into broad-based action—crossing the threshold into life-giving community and explosive growth," says Mike Simon, president and CEO of Simon Solutions Inc. "We believe ministry in the 21st century will reach new heights with profound results, especially as this relates to the development of new technology."

In The Beginning

The first chapter in this story began in the year 2000. Simon felt inspired to gather together a dynamic team of young Web developers to build interactive Web sites for ministry purposes.

"We were very excited by the unlimited potential of the Internet, but frustrated by how complicated and expensive it was to build a truly interactive Web site," says Simon.

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—Mike Simon, President/CEO, Simon Solutions Inc.

“We soon realized that Internet technology was just too primitive. We felt unable to offer affordable Web solutions to ministries and our dream for easy-to-use, fully interactive Web sites for ministry was put on the back burner.”

Things changed in 2006. Armed with new technology and more years of working with the Internet, Simon assembled his original team and enlisted the help of some business-savvy friends.

For the purpose of marketplace ministry, Simon formed his business—Simon Solutions Inc. “We are here to help ministries grow and move forward,” he says.

Located in Florence, Ala., the company's goal is to serve as technology consultants to the Body of Christ. “We design Web-based, community software for ministries, both small and large.”

In January of this year the company launched its dream—the Oikos Community Console™.

What Is Oikos?

Oikos is a hybrid of software and Web site designed for PC or Mac. Some would define this as a Web application.

The research and development team discovered methods to transform Adobe Flash into an organic environment that serves an emerging platform for enhanced communications and group management.

In simple terms, Oikos is a communications device. In one seamless environment, users have several ways to connect with each other over the Internet. Oikos offers instant messaging, forums, media sharing (pictures, video and audio), calendars and an easy-to-navigate member's directory.

Oikos also features powerful group management. An unlimited number of groups can be formed and the Console sorts all information (calendar events, forum posts, media albums, etc) by the groups. These groups can be made available to join by anyone in the Oikos or they can be restricted by password. Groups are managed by Oikos members who are authorized by the Oikos administrator.

“With millions of people now integrating their online world with everyday living, we see the Oikos Community Console as a ministry tool that helps people connect and build relationships,” says Simon. “As an organic community-building tool, Oikos is an online gated community—a safe place for members and an inviting atmosphere for visitors.”

People are securely connected with each other while the Console reliably prevents unauthorized users from entering the community. Because an Oikos Community Console is sponsored by the community it serves, there is no risk of members seeing inappropriate advertisements. Oikos is also designed to help protect members from online predators.

“The Oikos Community Console is perfect for any sized ministry, because it's scalable—able to adapt to people's needs and changes in the organizational environment,” notes Simon. “We like to think of the Console as organic software. Oikos uses a module-based framework, where modules can be added or removed based on the community who uses it. As the community grows and changes, Oikos grows and changes with it.”

Simon says Oikos was designed to complement a ministry's traditional Web site—not to replace it.

“Capturing the most popular features of Web 2.0 technology and social networking, Oikos transforms an ‘informational’ Web presence into an ‘interactive’ community,” he says. “The Console is simple to administrate, for the small church without an IT department and for the large church with thousands of members.”

In addition, Oikos is a great tool for any ministry looking to improve their communications, both on a local or global scale. It is perfect for small churches, multi-campus churches, cell ministries, apostolic networks and parachurch organizations.

Oikos is also a wonderful blessing for missionaries, who can stay connected with family and friends around the world. Oikos can also be used to mobilize intercessors in real-time prayer and empower people in Oikos social networking, the most powerful approach to evangelism for the last 2,000 years.

The company is also planning several more modules for Oikos, including Video Conferencing; Online Tithing and Donations; and a full suite of Productivity Tools. “Currently, we are in the final stages of development on our next module, which is designed to connect ministry associations in real time,” says Simon. “This module will stream information from a central hub to every member Oikos in the association.”

For church leaders who are worried about Oikos being too difficult for their members to use, Simon says Oikos was designed to be easy on the eyes and easy to use.

“We want it to be a relaxing Internet experience,” he says. “We hope that the Oikos Community Console is as encouraging as it is interactive. We invite churches and ministries across America, and perhaps around the world, to take full advantage of everything it has to offer.”

Price for this type of software also can worry some church leaders; however, Simon says the company has priced Oikos so that every ministry, regardless of size, can afford it.

“We hope that Oikos will help empower more people in advancing the Kingdom of God, worldwide.” ♦