

HOW TO USE THE NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO SPREAD THE VALUES OF MASONARY IN THE PROFANE WORLD ?

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It is the duty of each Mason to develop himself, through study, thought, reflection, conversation, and by every means he can find.

We are committed to intellectual, spiritual and emotional growth, and to growth as ethical, caring and compassionate humans.

As we all know that All Masons are taught of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty; the words “For there should be Wisdom to contrive, Strength to support and Beauty to adorn” are older than our Rituals. That's why it's our responsibility to focus Building Peace Through Information and Communications Technologies.

I would prefer to start my speech explaining the essentials of the The Information Age that will lead us how to use the new Technologies to spread the values of Masonary in the profane world.....

What does it really mean to talk about the conduct of our values in the Information Age? What defines the Information Age? How is it shaping the environment in which future operations will take place?

A recent book described the Information Age as a series of three revolutions—the first beginning with the invention of the radio, telephone, and telegraph. The second revolution, the authors characterize as the introduction of the television, satellites, and early-generation computers, like the thirty-ton ENIAC, which were large and slow with limited applications. The third revolution—where some authors begin to consider a transition to an "information society"—extends from the 1980s to the present and addresses development and employment of myriad information/communications technologies. This three-revolution description spans 150 years, from the mid-1800s to the present.

Alvin Toffler, in his book considering the multifaceted impact of information technology on the "Third Wave" of developing society, argues that the transition to the Information Age began after World War II, when progress began to depend more on mind than on muscle. According to Toffler, the Information Age is only some fifty-odd years old. Futurist John Naisbitt narrows the time frame further by identifying it with the period of "computer-liberation," which arrived in the 1960s and 1970s and led to the birth of the information society.

Regardless of how one may define the start of this era, it is clear that billions of people around the world now thrive in an information-driven environment. In many developed countries, communication via e-mail is as much a part of "keeping in touch" as the telephone or postal service. The Information Age has welcomed a culture of transborder communication. People share information, ideas, attitudes, and opinions through instantaneous transmissions that connect the world.

As we all agree that one of the most important value is “Peace” for us. Thus “Peace” is not created with a one-time act: the cease-fire, accord, or reconciliation is just a public point on a timeline between war and durable peace. True peace is built over time, with many different processes and approaches that move conflict into lasting, peaceful relationships. It requires action at many different levels, by different people, in different ways, and at different points in a conflict. We are all sure that it is our masonic responsibility to create and protect peace all the time.....

Activities can be as diverse as alternative dispute resolution, reconciliation, peacekeeping (both civilian and military), conflict prevention, post-conflict reconstruction, institutional and organizational capacity building, demobilization and reintegration, monitoring and advocacy, conflict transformation, psychosocial rehabilitation, and rule of law. These peace-building methods, as part of a cohesive long term strategy, target both the root causes of a conflict and the violence that may result.

- Information and communication technologies (ICTs)– hardware and software that helps people communicate, understand data, and learn, via tools such as computers, the internet, mobile phones, and more - can be a tremendous help in implementing these peace-building methods.

As with all technologies, these tools are just a means to an end. In order to effectively employ them, it’s crucial to start by thinking through the goals of your peacemaking efforts. What type of peace are you trying to build? With whom do you want to build the peace? Where do you want to focus your efforts? When is the most appropriate time to intercede? What do you want to achieve? How best can you reach your target audiences?

In general, information and communication technologies can be used in peacemaking efforts to achieve the Masonic values in different ways such as :

- To provide information
- To help people process information
- To improve decision making
- To support relationships
- To help people understand each other

Let's consider how technologies can aid these Masonic values by one.

Importance of the Information Providing

Information can be a huge boon in peace-building operations, by strengthening the ties between individuals and communities and improving their ability to share, learn and interact with one another. Greater information also means a better ability to understand situations and act accordingly. For example:

- **Internet connectivity.** The internet itself is a huge boon to information sharing. However, as connecting to the internet is a challenge in many places in the world, increasing information flow first means increasing connectivity. A number of tools enable users to connect to the Internet where commercial ventures can’t or won’t provide service.

- **Mobile technology, cell phones and personal data assistants (PDAs).** Personal communication devices can dramatically increase the flow of information, even in places where few other ICTs are available.
- **Geographic information systems (GIS).** GIS systems – software that captures, stores, and analyzes data tied to geographic locations - can be used to help track refugee movement, maintain observation of borders (which are often not obvious from the ground), and record where atrocities have occurred. Names and borders are often in flux in turbulent areas, making electronic maps constructed using geographic coordinates much more reliable than paper maps.
- **Satellite imagery.** Amnesty International is now inviting everyday citizens to monitor high resolution satellite imagery focused on 12 villages in high risk areas in Sudan, via the website [Eyes on Darfur](#). While this is a new use of technology for Amnesty and its ultimate utility will need to be judged, one trend is clear - this type of technology will make it harder for regimes to take action in the dark.
- **E-mail discussion lists and forums.** Email lists and website forums can connect communities and encourage ongoing conversations, even among citizens directly involved in a conflict and those in the diaspora.
- **Internet Relay Chat (IRC).** IRC is a solid, reliable method of facilitating anonymous, recorded group discussions over the internet. With a skilled facilitator and communication guidelines, IRC can be a very effective methods to allow groups to anonymously conduct negotiations or discuss sensitive issues. This and other chat tools, such as Skype and MSN Messenger, have been used to facilitate online discussions among both small and large groups.
- **Radio.** In the age of connectivity the lines between traditional media have blurred. Radio stations are now broadcasting via the Internet, and community-based stations find content to augment their local broadcasts by searching the web. In many communities, radio is the only link to the outside world. For example we can jointly establish a web based radio station instance with a name like [RadioMasonic](#) or [RadioClipsas](#) which could help to bridge to understand the reality of free masonry.

Helping People Process Information

Nowadays so much information is available all around that it is difficult to separate those information from useless data , and to turn that information into knowledge or wisdom. Technologies that can help see the forest for the trees in the peace-building realm include:

- **Websites and information portals.** Web sites can provide critical filters and viewpoints on the avalanche of information. For example , the [International Network to Promote the Rule of Law](#) (INPROL) web site provides a central place where field practitioners can look up information and contact experts. The [Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research](#) at the Harvard School of Public Health runs a Portal Development Unit, which gives policymakers and practitioners easy access to information on human security and conflict prevention and allows users to create virtual networks with counterparts to share common concerns. I am sure we can

set a committee to try to create similar Websites to encourage people to achieve masonic values.

- **Virtual operations centers.** Online operations centers can allow many people spread across different continents to look at the same information. Imagine a dozen people from different backgrounds all looking at an online map. The map is overlaid with information about the region - locations of people, food, and rebel groups, the general level of disaffection, etc. – which they can collectively modify to make more accurate. As all the collaborators are working from a shared common model, they can begin to communicate better. This type of technology is not yet prevalent, but its use is expanding. For example, members of George Mason University's Peace Operations Program set up a similar Center for the Swedish government, which they called an 'Aquarium.'

Improving Decision Making

With the guidance of the Free Masonary , I believe that Technology can help to improve decision making skills, the ability to see the critical information and likely results of decisions, and the environment in which decisions are made. Technology can help us to understand each other better....

For example:

- **Games and simulations.** Games and simulations can provide an incomparable learning environment. Players can learn what works in a safe virtual environment, and thus improve their decision making in the real world. Games can be used to increase skills, spread information, introduce concepts and generally increase awareness and understanding.
- **Online Dispute Resolution tools.** In addition to helping to process information, ODR tools can facilitate better decisions. For example , SpaceDebate.org, a website built is built using s ORR software called Open Debate Engine, allows users to publicly discuss the many aspects of space weaponization. A structured debate like this can make it much easier to see all the points of view and come to an effective decision.

Supporting Relationships

ICTs can be a tremendous help to those trying to maintain or form new relationships. The ability to communicate through the written word, photos, sound clips, video clips, and web cameras can keep people connected regardless of how far apart they are geographically. For example:

- **Social networking tools.** MySpace, Change.org, LinkedIn, Meetup, Ning, and other social networking sites help like minded individuals connect and collaborate on issues, causes and projects of shared interest. For example, the peace movement in the United States has used these venues as a key way of finding new supporters, and organizing rallies, marches, and protests. We are planning to establish a online social networking site under the name of MasonSpace and it is my pleasure that today we are

announcing the [CLIPSAS Dinamic Portal](#) which I will demonstrate you after my speech.

- **Online collaboration tools.** Tools such as [Groove](#), [Citadel](#), [Zimbra](#), [Basecamp](#), and others allow geographically dispersed teams to maintain their own shared workspaces where they can share files, set up threaded discussions, and more.
- **Virtual reality.** Virtual reality worlds such as [Second Life](#) provide additional ways for people to “meet” even if geographically distant.
- **Telecentres.** Most of the technology implementations described above have been virtual, accessible via the Internet or other communications devices. But in addition, Telecentres and Community Technology Centres have in some communities become an important physical meeting place where community groups can gather, plans are hatched, campaigns are developed and connections are made to support international solidarity communities.

Technology Helps People Understanding Each Other

Increased understanding – of different cultures, languages, and concerns – can go a long way toward reducing conflict. Communication technologies, especially the internet, can make distant situations more understandable and other people seem more like us. For example:

- **Social networking tools.** Millions of people have put up personal profiles, with statements, photographs, and more on web sites such as [MySpace](#) and [Flickr](#). Like blogs, these profiles can help to understand people who are different than us, and show the similarities across cultures and geographical boundaries.
- **Translation software.** Literally understanding each other’s language is a first step to deeper understanding. While the tools for automated translation are in its infancy, it will be important to watch how it develops. Translation is not an easy challenge: sometimes words appear to translate across language barriers, but secretly hide deep cultural differences of perspective.
- **Blogs.** Reading informal accounts of events or lives through a blog can be a powerful way to understand different cultures and ways of life. The [Global Voices](#) online network, for example, was formed to highlight, support and amplify the voices of those who are often underrepresented by traditional media. The network focuses on supporting bloggers who blog in countries and on topics that rarely get mainstream coverage.
- **Multimedia.** Audio and video can have an enormous impact on bridging real or imagined divides between people. A pioneer in the use of video for activism, [recently partnered with Global Voices](#) to launch a human rights video hub. Video can be submitted by anyone on topics ranging from violence against women, disputes over land use to state sponsored violence.

Endless Peace as a Masonic Value

Technologies can't create peace. But they can certainly contribute to an environment where people can more easily communicate, understand the current situation, visualize the implications of their actions, understand each other's point of view, and form meaningful relationships with people who are geographically or culturally distant. All of these are important aids in the peace-building process, as we move, one step at a time, towards a world of lasting peace.

We believe that, the way leading towards the universal ideal of humanity that purposes peace, happiness and fraternity of all human beings and all communities is the one that is apart from every sort of discrimination.

We think that this route passes through embracing each other with love and respect, and through perfection attained by uniting with tolerance. We look forward to seeing the reflections of such perfection in every activity that provides benefits to humanity.

As the Liberal Grand Lodge of Freemasons in Turkey, we regard it as one of the natural and inevitable requisites of human rights and obligations that everyone, whether man or woman, are equal with respect to the right of becoming a freemason. On behalf of the honour of humanity, we wish that contrary approaches in this respect change.