

An Inside Look at Logos Research Systems, Inc. and Logos Bible Software



By Steve Hewitt

Just a few years after I started publishing Christian Computing Magazine (January 1989) I received a call from Dale Pritchett, excitedly telling me about a new Bible study software program that would work with Windows, and Logos Bible Software was born. We have done a variety of reviews on Logos over the years as their program has matured, but I don't believe we have ever done a story on the company itself. So, recently, while talking with Dale's son Dan, Logos' Vice President for Marketing & Business Development, I decided our readers would really benefit from an inside look at Logos, how they got started, what they are doing and where they are going.

Dan, for those readers who aren't already familiar with Logos Bible Software, can you give us a brief introduction to the company?

Sure Steve, quite simply Logos Bible Software is all about the Bible and better access to it.

Way back in 1992 two of our founders, Bob Pritchett and Kiernon Reiniger, were working for Bill Gates at Microsoft and making the best tools on earth for business professionals. They met at church and soon decided they should work together to make the best tools for studying the Bible instead. With Bob's father Dale on board to develop the business and two hotshot Microsoft programmers under a moonlighting agreement, they soon released the first commercial Windows Bible software ever. At about that time Bob and Kiernon left Microsoft to go full time, and I came on board with a few others, and we have been growing ever since. We now have over 170 employees on payroll in

Bellingham, WA, an office in South Africa, and more than 150 other people working on projects for us all around the world.

Wow! I bet there are some people who thought Logos was just a couple of guys in a garage or basement. With over 320 people working on Logos Bible Software, what are all of those people doing?

Well, there's not a lot of fluff—we have a dedicated team of people working hard every day to make the best Bible Software on the planet! Just like any other company, we have the normal accounting, sales, marketing, production, and service positions, but unlike many companies we are far more heavily

research and development driven. We continually improve the core software engine, we are on track to release about 2,000 new books for Logos Bible Software every year, and we have to make sales and pay royalties on almost 10,000 titles—this takes a lot of people.

One department that is larger than most people expect is our customer service department—with more than 30 representatives on staff here in Bellingham, WA. The size is due to our commitment to our customer base—we really take care of our customers! Not only is our customer service and support handled for free on an 800 number, but we hardly have any call wait/hold time, and all calls are answered by a human being. This is a commitment straight from the top. Our president doesn't like waiting on hold any more than you do, and he doesn't like the "press 1 for Spanish, press 2 for misdirection, press 3 for another endless loop" computerized answering systems either—he wants a smart, well-trained representative to handle every call. Listen to what our president Bob says about customer service:

"I insist on having a person, not a machine, answer the phone. . . . Great customer service means answering customer calls in person. If a computer answers your call to Logos Bible Software, you will know I'm dead."

— Bob Pritchett, President, Logos Bible Software

Having hundreds of people working on developing the software and producing our electronic titles is also critical to our success. When you are constantly improving the most advanced Bible software in the world and releasing around 2,000 titles a year, it takes a lot of people. For example, the [Anchor Yale Bible](http://www.logos.com/anchoryalebible) (<http://www.logos.com/anchoryalebible>) is perhaps the largest commentary series ever written. It has about 25 million words in more than 44,000 pages of text. That one project took literally tens upon tens of thousands of man-hours to complete.

Why does it take so much work to put a title into Logos Bible Software? Why not just make it a PDF or text file and be done with it?

It all goes back to the way Logos Bible Software is designed to act like a personal research assistant. The most basic function of Logos Bible Software is to give you an "executive summary" or "Passage Guide" for whatever verse or topic you are studying. You basically type a passage or topic and click "Go!" and the software does all the work for you, looking through hundreds of resources in seconds and pulling out the exact content that you need to see, and linking directly to it. To get an idea of how this works, take a look at our demo video (<http://www.logos.com/demo>).

In order for the software to be able to instantly provide you just what you are looking for in a way that is intuitive and precise, we must take the time to process every book in our format to exacting specifications, which involves linking every Bible reference and citations of other books in our format, tagging words according to their languages, and much more.

Dan, you've been a part of Logos for 17 years. What are some of the changes you've seen over the years?

When we started Logos Bible Software, we had a vision to take the latest and greatest in technology and apply it to Bible study. We felt that if the business people of the world could leverage computers and software to become better business people and increase productivity, then students of the Bible should have the same benefits, too. In the beginning we had to work hard to convince the market and the publishers we work with to even consider the transition to electronic libraries. It was so new and untried. When we called a publisher to license a book for an electronic version, the receptionist usually did not even know where to transfer the call. Now when we call a publisher, they know exactly who we are and where to send the call—that is, if they haven't already called us first!

A theological library wherever you go!

Save 25% with code CCMAG

www.logos.com www.macbiblesoftware.com

Watch the PC Demo! Watch the Mac Demo!

The advertisement features a photograph of a laptop on a table with a white coffee cup and saucer. Below the photo, there are two software boxes: one for 'Scholar's Library: Gold' and another smaller one. The Logos Bible Software logo is visible in the top right of the ad area. At the bottom, there are two buttons for watching PC and Mac demos, and two website URLs.

Right now, one of the big changes we are noticing and planning for is the ever increasing integration of people's lives with the web. As a result, we have launched several free online web properties like [Bible.Logos.com](http://bible.logos.com) (<http://bible.logos.com>) and [Sermons.Logos.com](http://sermons.logos.com) (<http://sermons.logos.com>) and offer free tools like RefTagger (<http://www.ref>tagger.com>) so churches and personal blogs can harness the power of these tools for themselves. In the future we plan to tightly integrate these web properties into the software itself. By launching tools like [RefTagger](http://www.ref>tagger.com) (<http://www.ref>tagger.com>) and the free [Bible search interface](http://bible.logos.com/content/bible-search-bar) (<http://bible.logos.com/content/bible-search-bar>) for other websites, we are encouraging ministries, personal sites, and churches to take advantage of our tools to make their sites better. Right now we have around 8,000 Christian websites using RefTagger alone!

Another change we are noticing right now is the tidal wave of users in the church moving to the Mac! At the end of last year we finally released our full Macintosh version at [MacBibleSoftware.com](http://www.macbible-software.com) (<http://www.macbible-software.com>), and the response has been overwhelming. The benefit for Mac users that purchase Logos Bible Software for Mac is that they are not only getting a great package and a great deal with their initial purchase, but they also have nearly 10,000 titles they can add on to their libraries, because almost all of our existing titles for PC also work on the Mac now.

You mentioned your online Bible at [Bible.Logos.com](http://bible.logos.com) (<http://bible.logos.com>). There are already a number of sites like this on the internet. What sets Logos' site apart from the rest? What do you provide that others don't?

Our free online Bible, [Bible.Logos.com](http://bible.logos.com) (<http://bible.logos.com>), is very different from most online Bibles out there because it is intuitive and it just works. Type whatever you like. No pull-down menus, verse selectors, translation pickers, complicated phrasing or syntax. Just type whatever you want to search for and it just works—it's kind of like Google. When you try it, you'll see what I mean. You can just type a word, a phrase, a series of words, a topic, a scripture reference, a book of the Bible, a quote, a phrase you only vaguely remember, and it just works!

Another thing that makes Bible.Logos.com different is that it is endlessly scrolling in both directions. In other words, if you are reading along in Isaiah 40:8 and want to see more context, just scroll the text up. Keep scrolling up, and you can eventually go all the way back to Genesis, or scroll down and keep reading all the way to Revelation. Don't worry about page load times, because we cache only two chapters at a time in either direction!

One of the things that makes Bible.Logos.com a great tool for evangelism and spreading the Word is the tight integration it allows with social networking sites. Just go to any verse you want to share, and you'll see on every page of Bible.Logos.com a "Share" button which helps you build instant links to the verse you are viewing in Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Delicious, and many more through the standard "Add This" interface.

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It is interesting that you mention the social networking aspect of your sites. I've noticed that Logos is actively involved in several social networking sites. Why does a Bible Software company have a Facebook page, a Twitter presence and a LinkedIn group?

We believe in actively engaging our users and have been doing so for years through alerts within the software, email, blogs, Camp Logos, Logos Lecture Series, and user groups. Most recently we've added Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn as they are all great tools for meeting and talking with our customers. Soon we will also launch online forums where we can not only help serve our customers better, but also provide a place where they can discuss the Bible together. With so many people who are passionate about Bible study in the forums, we believe it will be a great place to visit and interact.

We try to have fun with our social networking sites. For example, we just ran an exclusive contest for our users who are friends with us on Facebook where they took photos of themselves all around the world with something of Logos', and we got some amazing shots! The best part was the sense of community it fostered among the users as they saw their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ studying God's Word all over the world. You can check out some of the winners on the [Logos blog \(http://blog.logos.com/archives/2009/03/logos_facebook_photo_contest_winners.html\)](http://blog.logos.com/archives/2009/03/logos_facebook_photo_contest_winners.html) and on [our Facebook page \(http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=840894556&v=photos&viewas=840894556\)](http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=840894556&v=photos&viewas=840894556). If you are on Facebook, friend us!

Our [Twitter presence \(http://twitter.com/logos\)](http://twitter.com/logos) is just taking off right now. It is a great way to test special offers, pass on cool news, and give a select group of people the inside scoop on what's going on here. Right now we have more than 1,000 followers and counting.

We also have a great [group on LinkedIn \(http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=861457\)](http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=861457), and we post videos to [YouTube \(http://www.youtube.com/user/LogosBibleSoftware\)](http://www.youtube.com/user/LogosBibleSoftware), [Vimeo \(http://www.vimeo.com/logos\)](http://www.vimeo.com/logos) and others.

Software and the Internet aren't the only places Logos is active these days. Can you tell us a little bit about your recent launch of Bible Study Magazine?

Well Steve, I remember when I asked you for advice just last year on launching a magazine and got a feel for what a big job it was. Man, you were right! After six months of planning and preparation, we launched the first issue of Bible Study Magazine (<http://www.biblestudymagazine.com>) last November, and

it has taken off like crazy since then. We started with nothing and now have well over 10,000 subscribers to a brand new magazine—in print!

In print? You mean, as in “dead trees, paper”? Seriously?

Yes, I know it sounds crazy, especially since we are an electronic publisher. The truth is, our goal is to get more people into Bible study. We realize that there are many people out there that are more comfortable with a print magazine and are not ready for an electronic version. Those who might want electronic only already know about us and are already doing Bible study with us. We want to reach out to people who may not have even thought of using a computer for Bible study and be a service and a blessing to them.

We are really pleased with the magazine, and we are honored not only to pick up new subscribers every day, but also to be recognized by even the secular press as an outstanding publication. In January we were reviewed by Library Journal and received the only “red star” and purchase endorsement for librarians out of all the new publications they reviewed that month!

Well, Logos is certainly a busy company. Is there anything we didn't cover?

Yes, a ton! We are moving at break-neck speed, and it is hard to keep up with everything—even when you work here! A few things we missed that your readers might want to know about would be our annual [Bible and Technology conference \(http://www.bibletech-conference.com\)](http://www.bibletech-conference.com) in Seattle, our new [Ambassador Program \(http://www.logos.com/ambassador\)](http://www.logos.com/ambassador), and our special [blog about Bible study in Spanish \(http://www.biblia.com\)](http://www.biblia.com). For those who don't know much about us, I would recommend that they watch both our [corporate video \(http://www.logos.com/about\)](http://www.logos.com/about) and our main [demo video \(http://www.logos.com/demo\)](http://www.logos.com/demo).

Thanks for the opportunity to share with your readers, Steve. As a thank you, we wanted to give your readers a 25% discount on any of our base packages using coupon code CCMAG.

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