

# Icon Systems Releases the New IconCMO ChMS Web App for the iPad and Android Tablets!



By Steve Hewitt

**W**hen I saw the press release from Icon Systems, I stopped everything else I was doing and began reading their announcement and clicked on the links they provided for more information. ChMS Apps are the future. Simple. My experience (over two decades of publishing CCMag) tells me tablet and mobile computing is where we are going!

Recently, I was invited to meet with a church staff in Houston, Texas (something I always enjoy doing) and shared with them that “desktop” computing will be around for a long time, but only for a few of those that have special data or processing needs. Most of us will simply move away from a desktop or notebook computer and adapt to mobile computing, and that tablet will be the platform of choice! When I suggested that their next serious computer would be a tablet instead of another notebook, I saw some frown. However, two days later, the person that invited me to share with their staff sent me a Dilbert cartoon. The dialog was all about one character asking the other “Are you getting a lot done on the grandpa box?” When asked what he meant, the character replied “The people in my generation do our work on our phones and tablets.” The “grandpa box” was referring to a desktop computer.

Of course, with many ChMS services moving to the cloud, you can access these sites through a browser. And, for those that are not cloud based, you can still use a remote access to your PC solution. However, I

think these will be a simple stop-gap until real applications become available that provide the access to the data a church needs, as well as takes advantages of the many features provided by tablet computers and mobile computing.

So, what led Icon to create the IconCMO web app for tablets? Well, to find out, I asked for an interview with Bill Gifford, President of Icon Systems, and Jay Sandt, their Sales Manager.

**Q: What mobile products does Icon Systems offer and how are they different?**

Jay: Icon Systems currently offers two different mobile options that churches can use.

**IconCMO Lite:** Designed by Italics Software and offered through the Apple App Market. IconCMO Lite is a native application to the iPhone and iPad. IconCMO Lite provides pastors, staff and even church parishioners with the ability to view IconCMO’s demographic data on the go. Having your database mobile will help

with a variety of tasks like maintaining contact with members, looking up contact information for others, finding driving directions, texting members, plugging into small groups, etc. Calling the office for member information will be a thing of the past when you are on the road with the new native mobile app for IconCMO! With IconCMO Lite churches can eliminate the paper church directory and it's always up-to-date.

### IconCMO Web App

**for Tablets:** Designed by [Icon Systems](#), allows churches to use either an

iPad or another Android based Tablet such as the Samsung Galaxy to access the complete IconCMO application. Icon Systems made special modifications to the Tablet version to allow for touch navigation and offers a native feel to tablet users. A Web App is different than a Native App because it is used through a browser but looks and behaves like a native application.

In the last three months Icon Systems has released IconCMO Lite, IconCMO Web App for the Apple iPad and the IconCMO Web App for the Android series of tablets.

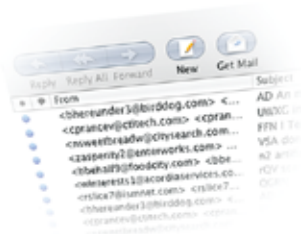
### *Q: What's your view on where we are going with Tablets? Are the going to replace notebooks?*

Jay: Laptops have given users a taste of mobile freedom. They want more. Tablets (such as the Apple iPad, Samsung Galaxy Tab, and others) have significant advantages over traditional laptops, offering much better weight, performance, and battery life. They are more comfortable for carrying to board meetings and relaxing on the couch. And, due to their streamlined operating systems, much of the typical computer maintenance routine is completely unnecessary: installing and removing applications without fear of complications is routine for those new to computing!

Bill: In addition to these advantages, the multi-touch interface paradigm (as used on many touchscreen phones and tablets) dramatically changes the way people interact with computers. Multitouch and the contact-free interaction found on the Xbox Kinect are

# SPAM filtering for 70% off!

- We use Barracuda SPAM Filters – the industry standard!
- Redundant Internet connections & U.S. support team
- We only host SPAM filtering for churches & ministries, so we block inappropriate medical & legal terms
- Only \$50/month per email server – no 'per user' fees!
- No long-term commitment – if we're not earning your loyalty then we don't deserve it!



## Call us today to get started!

the two most notable innovations in human-computer interaction since the popularization of the mouse over 25 years ago. We're just beginning to see the fruits of these new technologies. It's an exciting time to be in computing!

### *Q: Before we go much deeper into discussing tablets and your new app, tell our readers a little bit about Icon Systems.*

Bill: Icon Systems released one of the first Microsoft Windows church management software programs, Revelations in 1992. Over the past nineteen years, we have watched church needs shift from simply tracking data to enhancing communication and promoting a sense of community. Icon Systems strives to utilize advancing technology to serve churches and their congregations as effectively as possible.

In the late 1990s, Icon Systems foresaw the next stage of technological progress and began to develop IconCMO. The CMO stands for Church Management Online because the program is fully web-based. IconCMO has been a huge success: churches no longer have to deal with the complexities of enterprise networking and are no longer limited in location to the church office. Instead, IconCMO is available any time you want and anywhere you can connect to the Internet. This leaves the headaches of server administration and backups to us so churches can focus more on ministry and less on maintenance.

This summer, we updated IconCMO to be fully compatible with the Apple iPad and a variety of An-

droid tablets, bringing the power of a complete church management software package to the palm of your hand.

***Q: Why did you decide to create an IconCMO web app for tablets? Why is it unique?***

Bill: Software is a tool that serves its users. With today's on-the-go, fast-paced active ministry, software needs to adapt in order to serve effectively. The era of sitting behind a desk entering data for eight hours a day is ending, so Icon Systems is working diligently to help churches enter the new era of mobile technology.

IconCMO is particularly unique because it is the only church management software with a complete fund accounting package available on tablets. Not only can you keep tabs on your membership, but you can record transactions, run reports, and answer any question about the church financial situation with just a few taps.

***Q: What benefits do you see for the IconCMO iPad app in the mission field or across multisite organizations?***

Jay: Delivering an iPad application to our IconCMO multisite clients—both in the United States and global—has proven essential. The same technology used to support multisite churches can also be used in the mission field to further the overall vision of the organization. Tablets can utilize cellular networks so they can instantly connect to social networks, email, and church software anywhere. Ministries around the world can use tablet technology to work more effectively across diverse locations.

***Q: Do you think many churches will switch to using tablets?***

Jay: Tablets have often been characterized as consumption devices: reading news, web surfing, email, and gaming. Applications like IconCMO, however, are leveraging tablets as ministry tools—not only interacting with data

but with people! Being able to instantly connect to Facebook, Twitter, email, the church directory, and more has never been easier, faster, or more mobile than now.

Current clients that either are planning or have started purchasing tablets for their organization see that tablets offer something for everyone: staff can record contact information while greeting visitors, leaders can unobtrusively take notes on important conversations, pastors can schedule counseling visits, and the welcome committee can send an informational email before the service has even ended. Congregations can download an electronic bulletin, sermon outlines, and even a recorded sermon video before leaving Sunday morn-



**Download our new smartphone apps for our online community!**

**iPhone?** Go to the app store.  
**Android?** Go to the marketplace.  
**Blackberry?** Go to the Blackberry appworld.

To find the app for download, be sure to search for “Mobile Membership”. Look for the one with the icon you see above!

Download and install and scroll through communities to find “Christian Computing”

**Remember, you must be a registered user at our online community to use the apps. Simply log into the app using the same email address and password!**

ing. Educators can keep track of children's information immediately without having to wait for an administration break. Helpers can take attendance while on the go. Classes can be enhanced with extra interactivity and multimedia. Additionally, tablets are often an attractive way to show visitors information about the church or available small groups. They can even be donation kiosks!

Bill: IconCMO's fund accounting package offers an additional array of possibilities. Church councils can review up-to-date financial information at any time—keeping the church in a proactive fiscal position and reviewing detailed transaction registers during board meetings. Church accountants and auditors can reconcile bank statements and prepare payroll checks for printing while traveling or commuting. Volunteers no longer need to frequent the church office to complete tasks—they can now do their work with nothing more than a tablet and an Internet connection!

***Q: Has this mobile technology been a difficult transition for you?***

Bill: While moving to a tablet required significant modifications to IconCMO, starting with a web-based product meant our turn-around was measured in weeks, not years. In addition, since IconCMO is in the cloud, the changes for tablet compatibility improved the user interface for all of our users—both tablet and desktop.

***Q: How are your customers using tablets in their ministries?***

Page Ackler of Elevate Church: We use mobile technology in a number of ways. It has increased our productivity through project management apps which sync to all staff mobile devices as well document and media management software accessed by leadership. We use ToDo to update project statuses and modify task lists remotely to ensure critical items don't get overlooked, even on the go. Dropbox allows us to access everything from PowerPoint sermon slides to leadership team meeting minutes anywhere with an Internet connection.

Access can be limited or expanded and those with mobile devices can set them to wirelessly sync all new reports or other documents as desired. We even run a digital decibel meter from several iPhones to ensure the worship music volume is at just the right level. One unique area we've leveraged mobile technology is through the use of the Open Eye camera system app.

This allows our ushers to use an iPad, iPhone, or any computer to view real time video from our security cameras. This capability means they can count attendance without disrupting services, monitor and secure any area of the church from one location, and even check on the facilities throughout the week from home.

***Q: Do you think members benefit when they have a tablet?***

Page Ackler of Elevate Church: Members can not only use their mobile devices to take notes, by downloading our Elevate Church app from iTunes or the Android Market, they have access to audio and video of previous sermons, video announcements, update blog, and campus events calendar, as well as a text and audio integration of our church endorsed Bible reading plan. Members can watch a previous message, check coming events, read or listen to the days selected scriptures and post a passage and their thoughts to Twitter or Facebook—all from their mobile device.

***Q: Is there anything else we should know about tablets or IconCMO?***

Bill: Tablet computing is going to become more intertwined with our personal lives than ever before and Icon Systems will be in the forefront of this technology for churches. Tablets will continue to complement the increasingly mobile church, from its missions at home and abroad to multisite strategies to staying connected within the local community. Icon Systems is looking forward to serving pastors, churches, and their ministries for many decades to come, utilizing the latest in technology to help accomplish the oldest task of mankind. We hope that we can serve you and your church soon!

For more information please visit our mobile products or call us at 1-800-596-4266.