

A Church in Wales guide to Data Projectors

If you don't have a data projector, and are thinking about whether you need one, then it is well worth borrowing one and trying it out before buying one. Please particularly consider the importance of light levels in a venue in being able to see projected output clearly – if the sun is likely to shine directly onto a screen, then you've got problems.

If you do decide to buy a projector, then the following webpage has a good summary of the technical specifics that you need to consider: www.projectorpoint.co.uk/projectoradvice.htm (we have no experience of buying projectors from this website, so we cannot comment on their suitability for purchasing equipment from).

There are many different places to buy data projectors from, and we can only recommend that you shop around for a good deal. Please remember that new bulbs for projectors can be very costly, and also to insure your projector – it is a very desirable piece of electronic equipment.

We are sometimes asked about companies who can be contacted regarding permanent installations of Data Projectors in church buildings. We have no experience ourselves of the following companies, but all claim to have experience of installing projectors in church buildings:

- <http://www.itcproductions.com/>
- <http://www.morrisonprojectors.co.uk/>
- <http://www.creativedigitalsolutions.com/>

Computer software

You can use a DVD player or even some iPod and other mobile devices to feed a Projector, but most people use a laptop PC of some kind to provide images. The most frequently used program is **PowerPoint**. This is not your only choice, however.

For displaying video clips, then you can use the standard media players installed on your PC or install VLC (www.videolan.org/) for free. For creating video that can be included in a PowerPoint presentation or played in these players, you can use a wide number of pieces of software. Windows comes with a free program called MovieMaker and Macs come with iMovie, which both have some good basic functionality.

For greater ease of use, Windows XP users can download **PhotoStory** for free from Microsoft. This simple program allows users to easily animate photos, text, and add a soundtrack, before creating a video file from their project.

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/digitalphotography/photostory/default.mspx>

For displaying the words of songs and hymns and bible passages, a number of commercial programs are available. Free programs include www.easislides.com, www.zionworx.org.uk, www.opensong.org and www.openlp.org.

You will sometimes also see material created with Adobe's Flash animation software, but this isn't for the novice. Those who want to mix different video clips, feeds and still pictures together with text might want to look at Arkaos (available from www.arkaos.net, where you can download a free trial version). Arkaos is a powerful piece of software that takes some getting used to, but it allows you to assign individual video clips, still images, video effects, animated text and feeds from video cameras to keys on your keyboard. These will then play when you press the relevant key so that you're effectively "mixing" video clips in real-time. You can also choose to let Arkaos "mix" automatically for you. More information on VJ software like Arkaos can be found on <http://forum.arkaos.net/> and www.vjforums.com.

Images

Whatever software you use, you're likely to want to find some images. Please remember that digital cameras can be purchased very cheaply, and locally sourced images are always going to be better.

When you can't do that, www.morguefile.com, www.sxc.hu and www.imageafter.com all offer libraries of free pictures. If you search the photo sharing site www.flickr.com for pictures, then www.flickr.com/creativecommons gives a summary of the different types of license available and if you choose "advanced search", you can search within these categories. Sites like www.iStock.com will sell you images for a reasonable price. Please note that most of these websites require you to create an account with a valid email address in order to download full-size versions of pictures.

In addition to free programs to edit images like IrfanView (available from www.irfanview.com), you can now go online and edit your images at <http://pxn8.com/> (broadband recommended).

Video

In the UK, One Small Barking Dog – www.osbd.org – produce video and other material for worship for purchase online. In the US, Highway – www.highwayvideo.org - do the same. Visions in York have also produced a compilation of their video work for purchase at www.visions-york.org/video.html (note: the Visions clips are in the .mov format – which need converting before they can be added to PowerPoint). www.proost.co.uk also offer a variety of worship resources for download.

Other

The book *Alternative Worship* by Jonny Baker and Doug Gay comes with a CD-ROM full of video clips and sound and picture files. It's available from SPCK: www.spck.org.uk/cat/show.php?0281053960.

Jonny Baker also has a blog at <http://jonnybaker.blogs.com/jonnybaker/> where a lot of current resources are discussed – he archives particular worship ideas under his "worship tricks" section (link in the top right hand corner).

Questions? Contact the Creative Resources Officer - resources@churchinwales.org.uk or 02920 348200