It is okay to fail, even multiple times. But when we learn from each quick failure, we can build toward a better solution. For the mission world, this might look like taking the extra leap of faith to trust in God with the failures and to test out new ideas.

A #HACK Champion, a leader who hosts a regional hackathon shares about the experience:

> "I loved the environment. As a frequent attendee of hackathons, one thing that stands out with #HACK is the community of hackers wanting to further their faith. There was less of a competitive aspect and more focus on completing the challenges faced to help others in their walks with Christ. Worship music was always playing in the background, and at times I could hear people around me singing as they worked. Overall, just an amazing event and encouraging to experience as a student in the tech industry." ("Champion (Host) - #HACK2022")

To learn more about #HACK, visit https://hack.indigitous.org.

Works Cited

"Champion (Host) - #HACK2022." *Indigitous #HACK*, https://hack.indigitous.org/hack2022/champion/.

"2022 Global Scripture Access." *Wycliffe Global Alliance*, https://www.wycliffe.net/resources/statistics/.

Digital Missions: Another Step in a Rich History

Toward the Edges

KEVIN HIGGINS, PhD, is General Director of Frontier Ventures (FV). He is married to Susan, is the grateful father of Rachel, Sarah, and Emma and grandfather of Henry and Eliza.

This issue of *Mission Frontiers* is focused on "Digital Mission." This topic prompted me to look for a fresh approach. I say this as I think most of our readers will have a familiarity with one or two major approaches to this topic, if not both.

One approach is to question whether something so inherently relational as a Gospel—that centers around an incarnational God who came to live among us—can adequately be communicated through digital mission approaches.

The other is the approach that highlights the ability of technology to gain access to people at a scale that is unprecedented, and if done well, with an equally unprecedented level of audience intelligence.

One approach questions the ability of technology to connect well with people, the other highlights how technology can improve our ability to connect well with people.

But those are not the topics I will address here. They are both often expressed, and I assume other contributors will cover them in ways far more helpful than I can do in my column for this edition.

Instead, I want to take a brief tour; of only headlines and of similar pivot points in ways God communicates with people.

The Oral Traditions and the Patriarchs

Long before written portions of what are now collected into the books of what we call the Bible, the stories, messages, prayers, and prophetic oracles we have come to know and love were all passed on orally, people to people, generation to generation. Many other stories, messages, prayers, and oracles were also circulating in the same way at the same time. And they were not circulating all together.

Some versions of the creation story were told among some, and other versions were told among others.

But eventually, generations after these inspired oral versions of revelation were initially crafted, a process of writing them down began.

I imagine that step was met with some of the same mixed reactions as digital mission: an awesome innovation on the one hand, or a step back, or depersonalization on the other.

Collections, Canons, and Languages

Centuries later, another long process of beginning to collect such written versions of the originally oral messages began such as: Genesis, what we know of as the Pentateuch, etc. Many years would have passed without a completed collection anything like what we take for granted today as the "Old Testament."

But perhaps the process that would have created the most angst was set in motion by the need for translation. What resulted were the two main Old Testament versions, eventually known as the Septuagint (LXX) and the Masoretic Text. The former was written in Greek, the latter, Hebrew.

Again, one can imagine the reactions: If God spoke in this language, why are we translating it? This will mean we are not enabling people to experience God's revelation fully. And on the other side: Unless we translate, we are not enabling people to experience God's revelation fully.

Jesus, the Gospels, and More Canons!

A very similar dynamic as described above for the Old Testament seems to be true for the New Testament. Originally, Jesus' words were orally transmitted in different ways, among different peoples, in different places and settings. Eventually, these began to be written out, and then collected into what we know as the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. But those written versions were originally separate from each other, and only much later were some communities of believers able to have access to all four together. And there were also the letters of Paul, James, John, and others to process as well, which I won't focus on here.

And again, I can imagine at every stage that the responses of people could have been mixed. After the era of the apostles, some early leaders of the church seemed to have more confidence in the oral traditions being handed down than in the newer innovations of written texts. Why? Because the oral versions came through eyewitnesses whose relationships could be traced in clear lines to the apostles. Others embraced the written versions, of course.

Jerome and Beyond

A major translation effort by Jerome was the first time both Testaments of the Bible were compiled into one edition and translated into one common language. This work became known as the Latin Vulgate. Once again there was mixed reception, although over the years Jerome's version became so ingrained that when other translations emerged, they were often stained with blood, as the history of the Bible in English proves.

There have been many other translations since Jerome. Translations, which are attempts to communicate in new ways to new audiences, have usually been met with mixed responses (truth be told, however, primarily negative).

What Does This Have to Do with Digital Mission?

My brief survey is intended to highlight the fact that every new approach taken to communicate God's revelation and message has been met with both welcome and rejection, acclaim and criticism.

As stated in my opening, digital mission is nothing different in that respect. It is also safe to assume this will not be the last such innovation.

No matter how you might assume you will respond to digital mission as a concept, I hope you will keep space in your heart for discerning whether God is in this, and if so, how. That is not to say you won't have questions. *I do*. So will the authors in *MF*.

As we encounter any proposed innovation, it serves us well to stay open-hearted lest, as Gamaliel said in Acts, we find ourselves on the wrong side of something God might be doing.