

Bristol digital company wins contracts to support prayer and mental health as lockdown triggers surge in accessing faith online

Lockdown has driven innovation in many sectors – but a Bristol company is at the forefront of perhaps one of the most surprising new developments of all; the thriving relationship between faith and technology.

Digital impact company [Better Story](#) has won contracts with two national charities to improve mental and spiritual health, as surveys show that since lockdown one in four (26%) British adults* have prayed for an end to the Covid-19 crisis and for people working on the frontline and a quarter** (24%) of UK adults also say they have watched or listened to a religious service.

Better Story was founded by Baptist Minister the Rev Dan Doherty who trained in IT and videoconferencing before working as a minister and charity CEO. Part of his time is now spent leading the Better Story team who are inspired by their faith to tell stories of the world becoming a better place.

Better Story combines story-telling, video-making, graphic design and app development to help organisations share their messages, and has been commissioned by national charity Hope Together to create a digital resource to help new people understand and engage in prayer and is also working with national charity, The Ugly Duckling Company, to create an digital tool to help young people improve their mental health.

Dan said: “There was a joke on Twitter a couple of weeks ago that ‘the Church had broken the internet’ one Sunday morning because of the surge in use by people accessing church online.

“These are the kinds of phrases we could never have imagined a couple of months ago. But the desire to connect is strong and many churches are embracing the opportunities that a digital presence brings.

“A survey commissioned by the charity Tearfund showed that one in 20 people who are accessing services online have never gone to church.

“With that in mind we are working with Hope Together to help people new to prayer to understand and engage in prayer by creating an animated ‘prayer journey’ and interactive ‘prayer wall’ website. The resource will be available online by mid-July and hopefully also in pop-up shops throughout the country, giving people the opportunity to access free resources to continue their spiritual journey.

“We are excited to be able to help people explore spirituality and faith at a time when Covid-19 has led to many of us asking the bigger questions about life. ”

Better Story Press Release – Lockdown

A report by children and young people’s mental health charity, Young Minds***, also found that 32% of young people surveyed felt that coronavirus had made their mental health much worse, whilst more than 50% agreed it had made their mental health a bit worse.

Dan continued: “We are also working with The Ugly Duckling Company to create 10:10, an innovative resource designed to help young people discover and experiment with ideas that can enable them to develop a happier and full life.

“It uses film, expert content, group discussions and creative exercises to help young people explore ideas such as purpose, thankfulness, kindness, forgiveness, healthy relationships and coping strategies to help equip them to look after their mind, body and soul.

“The impact of lockdown and coronavirus has been so far-reaching and to be part of giving people tools to find a way through it is hugely rewarding for us. It feels as if churches and faith organisations are just scratching the surface of where the relationship between faith and technology can lead and we are delighted to be part of that journey.”

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*<https://mediacentre.christianaid.org.uk/embargo-0900am-sunday-10-may-2020brits-praying-for-end-to-coronavirus-crisis-for-frontline-workers-and-the-worlds-poor-new-poll-reveals/>

**https://www.tearfund.org/en/media/press_releases/many_brits_look_to_faith_during_lock_down/

*** <https://youngminds.org.uk/about-us/reports/coronavirus-impact-on-young-people-with-mental-health-needs/>