Enroll in one of our exciting TRAINING EVENTS today to help you maximize your expertise in the powerful ACS software SOLUTIONS.

We have just what you need. Please visit us at: www.acstechnologies.com/training or call 1.800.669.2509 to find out about our affordable online, phone, or in person training school options.

The transition of learning new technology with an ACS trainer was smooth, and I would not have done it any other way! Our ACS trainer was extremely patient and helpful with our training, conveying it on a level that was easily understood. I am so pleased! ACS training has truly made a difference in the way our church operates. Thank you ACS.

"Lisa, Business Administrator
Highland United Methodist Church"
From the President

Over the past 27 years ACS has had the opportunity to help tens of thousands of churches navigate the ever changing maze of technology. In the late seventies, that was helping our clients begin to use technology for the first time to track finances and member information. With the use of computers being limited to the very early adopters, it was an uphill effort but one we knew would eventually lead to real advantages for the church.

Today, we’re continuing those efforts as we help our clients use the data in their systems in new ways. One of the exciting ways to do that is through the use of the Internet. No longer is the information only available to the church staff inside the walls of the church. Now that information can be used by members of the church in many different ways. From as simple as allowing an individual to make changes to their personal information to giving Sunday school teachers and small group leaders the tools to help manage their groups, to allowing the individual member to view their giving statement on-line instead of waiting for the quarterly statement. These tools and many others are available to ACS clients today.

We chose the theme “Pioneering the Future” for this issue because we want to communicate that we share your vision and are committed to bringing you the technology solutions that will help you achieve your ministry goals. Wilshire Baptist Church is a client that exemplifies this commitment, which is why we chose them for our “Visionary Spotlight.” As you’ll see, embracing technology has allowed them to touch more people than they ever thought possible. We are proud of the long relationship we have built with them and the pioneering spirit that it represents. Our goal is to build the same kind of relationship with each one of our clients.

Also in this issue, we have several new products and enhancements to tell you about. We are continually making changes in ACS and HeadMaster that take advantage of the Internet. We are also excited to introduce LiveStor, an on-line backup system that allows you to backup critical data to ACS servers off site and hassle-free. We have also introduced Checkpoint, a People Suite module, that offers users added security and accuracy for managing groups, classes and/or activities. This product is a check in/out system and is particularly effective when users need to carefully monitor the activity of children, such as parents dropping off and picking up their children.

We are in the development stages for many other exciting new technology offerings that we will tell you more about in upcoming issues of Vision magazine. In the meantime, we want to continue to provide you with very practical, yet inspiring ways to help you do what you already do better.

I hope you enjoy this issue of Vision.

Hal Campbell  
President & Chief Executive Officer

ACS Technologies Releases Checkpoint Security Software

The new product, designed for both self and staffed checking in and out, promises to be particularly effective when users need to carefully monitor the activity of children, such as parents dropping off and picking up their kids. Checkpoint allows users to keep precise records of who is where and when through scannable bar codes and security badges. Users can also print reports to show specifics on who is checked in or out by class and to review details on the class setup. After receiving a lot of client feedback on the desire to keep better track of younger members comings and goings, ACS Technologies designed this new product to help families feel more confident about having everyone accounted for.

Access ACS Tracks Attendance and Supports an Online Calendar

ACS Technologies continues to help churches access vital information online by releasing an updated version of Access ACS. This latest version of Access ACS allows lay leaders to mark attendance for small groups from their home or office, removing the need to call the church office. It also allows church staff to set up online calendars that can work with the Ministry Scheduler or on their own. Access ACS makes it easy for group leaders and members to build group rosters, access group information instantly, mark member’s attendance, and view group calendars from anywhere, at anytime.

For more on both news stories, and others, go to www.acstechnologies.com.
Maximize Your Return on Investment
For those who rely on support for their church management software and systems, the return on investment is obvious in terms of time saved, spending reduced, and missions fulfilled: “Without support, it’s a much longer learning curve,” says Drew Altom, Student and Education Pastor at Rosemont Baptist Church in Colorado. “At any point, if there’s something I want to know more about, I can call.” Drew adds that the investment in support can be quickly made back in staff and minister time saved. “One call can be worth several months in support fees,” he says.

Perform Tasks More Efficiently
Support has also proved critical to Bethel Assembly of God in Oroville, California, where Pastor Jerry Whitten often requests support. “We were stuck a number of times,” he recalls. They weren’t big things, just questions about how you do it, what you do.” As other users of support have said, Pastor Whitten insists that help from support, compared to the staff and volunteer hours it might take to find the answers on their own, more than justifies the investment in the service. “It has already saved us considerable time,” he says, estimating the time saved as several days worth of work. “It just makes sense.”

Discover More Possibilities
On other occasions, the help support can provide does more than save time; it makes something possible that probably could not have happened as quickly otherwise. Suzie LaMonda, school registrar and systems administrator for the Washington, D.C. Hebrew Congregation Religious School, found great time savings with ACS People and ACS Financial suites, but was unable to produce reports in the same format as she had with another system. “These reports on class attendance, class lists, confidential student records and other matters are presented regularly to administration, teachers and directors of the school and are considered vital to the school’s management and operation,” LaMonda recalls. After tinkering with ACS’s robust reporting features herself, LaMonda placed a call to ACS support, and she quickly had what she needed. “They showed me how to group things so the reports would come out the way I wanted them,” she says. “If it hadn’t been for support, I couldn’t do the reports I’m doing now.”

Resources
- For more information on support, visit www.acstechnologies.com/support.
- Email us at vision@acstechnologies.com for the complete white paper “Supporting Your Investment”.
- Hours and information are located on page 20.
- Have a question for support? Consult the Knowledge Base at www.acstechnologies.com/support.
These updates and revisions are vital to keeping your church or organization running as smoothly as possible, using the most up-to-date tools available. So do you really need all of them? The answer is yes!

First, we should establish that new updates or versions include major product changes (many changes or high impact changes) and happen less frequently than revisions, which are minor enhancements or changes to the product. Revisions can occur monthly or quarterly and are released as needed when new features and enhancements become available that can improve processes.

Web products are more easily updated via the Web. Because these applications, such as Extend and Access ACS, are Web-hosted, updates and revisions are easily implemented without requiring clients to take the time to download them. We make the changes right here from ACS Technologies and simply make clients aware of the new features and changes to look for. This method is preferred because it is automatic.

For desktop applications, such as ACS or HeadMaster, all revisions, and some updates, are placed on the support Web site. Clients in the Preferred Client Program with a current support agreement can download the new revision or update easily; you simply have to remember to actually go to the site and retrieve the download. Some updates are very comprehensive. In these cases, you receive a CD in the mail that you use to upload the software to your computers. Revisions to the software can be downloaded from the Web site.

It is important for you to maintain the latest versions or updates so that you can take advantage of the latest enhancements to the product. But don’t worry if you miss one; each new version and update builds on the last one so that you won’t have to go back and download each one that you missed. However, if you miss several updates and/or versions, you will leave yourself with a more significant learning curve when you go to catch up with the new features. For payroll clients, updates and new versions are extremely important for current tax information.

For ACS Technologies products, you can expect one update per year for ACS software and several revisions. HeadMaster tends to release one or two updates per year and several revisions. Web products like Access ACS maintain quarterly revisions (new enhancements are incorporated via the Web), while Extend has monthly revisions scheduled for the next two years.

To download the latest versions of your current products, visit www.acstechnologies.com/support. If you would like to update your software version, and you aren’t currently in our Preferred Client Program, call 1.800.669.2509.

Did you know there is a quick and convenient place for you to access all the products and services you use from ACS daily? Go to www.acstechnologies/clientportal.
You’re In

You are invited to be a special guest of ACS Technologies! If you’re going to be in the Florence, SC area, we would love to see you. Whether you would like to meet a specific person, learn more about what we do, or simply take a tour of our campus, our doors are open to you. We are conveniently located at Interstate 20 and Interstate 95 (see map).

To set up a tour, please call:
1-800-736-7425 extension 8021
or email us at info@acstechnologies.com.
vited!
Wilshire Baptist Pioneers the Future

Sharing the Vision
Many of the things that once seemed pie-in-the-sky are now becoming affordable realities. Now an Internet connection can take you anywhere and help you do almost anything. Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas, is an example of a church making the most of technology to achieve its goals.

WHERE WILSHIRE HAS BEEN.
As a part of a fast-growing big city community, Wilshire endeavored to become a technology leader in order to keep up with the needs of its fast-paced and technology-oriented congregation. It all began in 1993 when the congregation growth really picked up. Wilshire’s Associate Pastor Preston Bright made the decision to purchase ACS™ to manage the church’s membership and financial information in a more efficient manner. Prior to this, the church had not used a church management software program to run the church. It was a wonderful change to have all their data right at their fingertips.

In 1994, David Norris joined the church as the business administrator and had seen ACS in use at other churches; he was extremely pleased to see that Wilshire was already set up and ready to go. This was the beginning of Wilshire’s desire to become a technology leader among churches. Church leaders loved the idea that software technology could aid their church in many different ways and became excited about where technology was taking them.

Several years later, Wilshire switched to another product in order to alleviate an internal technological issue that turned out to be a church networking problem. When Norris determined which church computer was fouling up the entire network, he took it straight out to the dumpster and never turned back! During those years away from ACS, Wilshire missed many of the user-friendly people management features that ACS had provided them.

In 2001, Wilshire began assessing its needs to track volunteer ministry involvement more closely and began examining available tools to do so. Norris had heard that ACS Technologies was developing a volunteer ministry program and was interested to see how the company had changed in the years Wilshire hadn’t been a client. On a trip to visit family that same year, Norris took the opportunity to drive to Florence, South Carolina to meet with Hal Campbell and staff to get a better feel for the company’s culture and ability to serve clients. Along the way, Norris stopped at two churches he knew of that were already using ACS™. He interviewed them about their experiences in order to better prepare himself for the meeting at the ACS Technologies headquarters. Norris was pleased with what he found, and in June of 2001 purchased and implemented the People Modules, and in July, implemented the Financial Modules. “I’ve always liked ACS™ better,” notes Norris. “Hal Campbell is a friend of mine and I loved the service and support that ACS Technologies offered.” Wilshire has been a client ever since.

“Wilshire has been one of our most significant client partners,” notes Campbell. “I remember when they began using ACS”; they were so impressed and grateful to have us working along side them. We were sad that they left us for a short time, but they came back with gusto. They’ve been technology leaders among churches from that point on.”

During the short period away from ACS, Norris noted that with the other product, the church was bumping up against many limitations in what the software could do for the church. “We wanted to do more, and ACS allowed us to do it,” he added.

Wilshire purchased nearly every ACS module in order to meet their continually growing needs. “The Accounts Payable module was so easy to use that we didn’t have to have any training before we started using it. After switching to the Windows version, it was easier to total numbers in General Ledger and the fund accounting side was very good. I particularly liked the tools to allow ministers to have access to...
An Administrative Assistant’s Perspective

On Extend

“I was employed with the City of Rowland, Texas, several years back and was part of the committee that worked with the software designers selecting elements for the city Web site. I was able to see how Web designers work and what their challenges are. I was eventually responsible for the original online content for the Public Works Department. Their Web site was simple to use, but it no way allowed the same flexibility as Extend does for laying out content and graphics.

I really like the ease of the actual content production of individual pages. Everything is extremely user-friendly. What you see is what you get, which is quite the opposite of many Web-based programs out there.

Since I’m relatively new to Wilshire, I had the opportunity to attend the convention and was able to learn more about all the products and services that the company offers. I’m so impressed with ACS software across the board. The company provides a whole new level of software to all of us here at Wilshire.

ACS is easy-to-use all the way around from the People module to the Financial module to Extend and Access ACS. This software has truly helped our church see into the future and implement technology advancements right now.”

Teresa Meyer, Financial Administrative Assistant

“Their own accounts,” commented Norris. Even though Norris is now at another church, he’s still using and loving ACS. “It’s much more intuitive than other software—the output and integration options with Microsoft are really great.”

WHERE WILSHIRE IS NOW.

In September, Wilshire began a program called “Fresh Start Sunday” where they work to encourage better attendance for people who haven’t attended Sunday school for a long time. The ministers of the church contact those who have fallen off in attendance and encourage them to make a “fresh start.”

“We’re targeting families who have a less than 50% attendance record,” states Susan Kimball, Records Administrator for Wilshire. “I love being able to easily review our attendance records, pull up and print a report of names to give to ministers for contacting. This would be extremely time-consuming without a computer program to handle everything.” She adds, “We use all the ACS modules daily. It keeps our church running smoothly and we love the fact that all our church software programs speak the same language and work together. It’s one of the blessings of partnering with such a great company. It’s also great to know that as we grow, ACS Technologies can offer us what we need each step of the way.”

Wilshire has over 600 accounts in its chart of accounts and relies solely on ACS for all of their financial management needs. Teresa Meyer, Financial Administrative Assistant for Wilshire comments, “I would have no idea how to do my job without ACS. It’s very easy to use and makes my job run smoothly.” She loves the user-friendliness of the program and has given the church’s eleven ministers access to view their own accounts.

“Having access to their accounts allows the Singles, Youth, Adult, and Missions Ministers to run reports right from their own desks.”

Susan Kimball, Records Administrator
It saves me time and gives them more control over their data. This is one of the aspects of the program that I love—the ability to customize features for my church and its specific needs,” Meyer adds.

Many people know the church pastor by reputation throughout the country and desire to receive news from the church; also, missionaries overseas need lots of communication with the church. Wilshire uses Special Mailings to handle people who want to be on their newsletter mailing list, but who don’t attend the church. The program allows Wilshire to separate these people from the church’s membership list and send information, news, sermons, and notices of special events.

Kimball had been using Excel for years to keep track of Wilshire’s Wednesday night dinners. After attending a seminar on the Reservations module at the ACS Convention this past year, she had a revelation: Here was an important program that was sitting on her computer virtually unused. During the seminar, they presented an example of keeping track of Wednesday night dinners. Susan thought, “Now why aren’t we using this? It’s so easy and here we are doing it the hard way.”

Now Wilshire not only uses Reservations to keep track of Wednesday night dinner attendance, they use it to keep track of the church youth camp—who has paid, t-shirt sizes, etc.; ski trips—ski level, rental equipment info, payments, deposits; and more. Wilshire has also just purchased and implemented HeadMaster to manage its Parents Day Out program.

WHERE WILSHIRE IS GOING.
But even with all the success Wilshire has experienced in managing day-to-day financial and membership operations, the church staff wanted even more functionality. They wanted to create an atmosphere of ownership surrounding each ministry and allow leaders to communicate with their members more effectively, and more often. Church staff members were already using ACS to do all of their communication and tracking of members; now they wanted to expand these efforts through their Web site.

Wilshire wanted to continue growing their church, expand their ministry offerings, and put more control in the hands of the
leaders. The church had a Web site that it was trying to keep up-to-date, but the growth of the church convinced them that they needed something more, something that could help them accomplish their goals.

With the release of the Extend Platform, a Web site building program, last year, Wilshire was excited about the possibilities of achieving their goals. Then Access ACS was introduced. Wilshire had been keeping track of Access ACS through its developmental stages, and once the program was integrated to work with Extend and ACS, Wilshire jumped on board.

“We had been monitoring the progress of Access ACS and wanted to be on board as soon as we could be,” said Mark Wingfield, Associate Pastor and Communications Director for Wilshire Baptist Church. “For several years, members have asked for the ability to access personal information through the Web site. They wanted us to give them access to the database. We’re responding to this desire.”

Wingfield ultimately made the decision to go with Extend because of its ease-of-use, database integration abilities, and because it is an ACS product. “We have such a good relationship with the company as a resource provider whom we have learned to trust throughout the years. Extend is user-friendly and in an easy-to-maintain format. It just makes sense that Extend works with ACS to deliver information online.”

WILSHIRE’S GOALS.

Wilshire wanted a program that was more efficient. One of the main goals Wilshire had was to reduce the administrative time it was taking Susan Kimball, the church’s systems administrator, to upload and layout content each week. With the old Web site, Kimball was spending five hours a week of her time posting sermons, pictures, newsletters, and calendar items on the Web site. And during the summer when camp counselors would email digital photos from camp to post online, it would take Kimball 10 hours each week to keep the site current.

“Our number one goal is to give leaders within the church the ability to have ownership over their ministry’s portion of the Web site,” Kimball adds. “With our new site, we will have three administrators within the church that will monitor and approve content submitted by leaders and teachers within the church. This will be great because it will eliminate me as the middle man.”

The church’s new Web site (www.wilshirebc.org) combines the power of ACS People Suite with Access ACS to give Wilshire real, powerful ways to improve communication. The future of church communications is expanding to external sources, such as the Internet and e-mail, so that more people can interact with church data and critical information.

“We will be able to give ministers and Sunday school class teachers their own pages to post their own announcements, class notes, homework, and roster information,” adds Kimball. “These leaders will even have the ability to update and edit class members’ information online that will automatically update their record in the database at the church.” Wilshire’s three Web site administrators will be able to review and approve content and post layout...
Sign up now for your chance to win a FREE iPod Mini.

Go to www.extendplatform.com/webanalysis and fill out the Web Ministry Analysis to enter.
Creating More Connectivity Between Churches and Denominational Offices

We have been working diligently on new products, which allow regional offices to access selected information, such as their member churches’ Access ACS™ records (i.e., member name, address, phone number and date of birth). The sharing of this information is significantly reducing the administrative time of both the churches and denominational organizations currently using it.

The following scenario might sound familiar to you. Whenever a member’s contact information changes, you must fill out a slip informing the denominational office of the change and mail it. The denomination must then make the change in their database and mail the slip of confirmation back to the church. For many churches we have talked with, these changes can exceed hundreds per month and can be an administrative nightmare!

A new product, DataShare, resolves the issue by allowing denominations to upload member data from participating member churches on a periodic basis. They can import the information into their own databases, eliminating all of the manual changes that move back and forth between the two entities. Not only does it eliminate paperwork, but it allows members to receive communication, such as newsletters and newspapers, from the denominational office in a more timely manner.

Not only does it eliminate paperwork, but it allows members to receive communication, such as newsletters and newspapers, from the denominational office in a more timely manner. A new product, DataShare, resolves the issue by allowing denominations to upload member data from participating member churches on a periodic basis. They can import the information into their own databases, eliminating all of the manual changes that move back and forth between the two entities. Not only does it eliminate paperwork, but it allows members to receive communication, such as newsletters and newspapers, from the denominational office in a more timely manner. The paperwork shuffle can take weeks, not to mention the cost of returned mail incurred while continuing to communicate with outdated information!

And because DataShare has such potential, the possibilities of further expanding this communication are endless. We are ecstatic about further improving the lines of communication between organizational offices and member churches. Our goal is to make the exchange of information between them seamless and near instantaneous.

Stay tuned for more information about DataShare, and other products, as they become better and more widely used. We firmly believe that this product is pioneering the future of technology and will make your jobs easier, ultimately allowing you to focus more time on your mission.

For more information, email Bonnie McCune at bonnie.mccune@acstechnologies.com or call her at 843-413-8124.

“"All the ACS modules integrate with the database we have now—it makes the most sense. It just makes our jobs easier and allows us to spend more time ministering to members.”

Susan Kimball, Records Administrator
Wilshire’s specific goal for the Web site was to make it very user-friendly. The Web team wanted to organize the site so that everyone can get to where they want to go within two clicks. They want visitors to be able to find what they are looking for quickly and easily.

Wilshire wanted to give staff and members more access. The church hopes to give Sunday school teachers the ability to enter their weekly roll online, and they hope to eventually take online registrations for camps and classes and even take payments for events online using PayPal. The online registrations and weekly rolls would filter into the ACS desktop program and make the church administrator’s job easier.

Lastly, Wilshire wanted to ramp up its volunteer ministry by utilizing online databases. With Access ACS integrated into the church Web site, Wilshire can direct members to the volunteer portion of the membership record via email and have them update the page themselves. This puts valuable information about members’ talents and gifts into the hands of the church leaders.

Kimball adds, “This will be a great way to meet more people and find out how to get them involved. It’s hard to get this information from people, but we know that they’re out there. This will be a great way of ministering to our members.”

Wilshire has come a long way since 1993. They have witnessed the birth of change in church software management and jumped on board with technology that has given way to a new form of communication. These new communications tools allow church leaders to exceed time and space limitations and connect people regardless of location; everyone is now linked together; all programs and databases communicate with one another; and Wilshire is able to maintain critical information while doing what it does best, spread the gospel.

Resources

ACS Technologies offers integration of many different products to fill nearly every organization’s need. For a complete list of product and services offered, see page 21.

- To receive the white paper “eMinistry Basics: Making Your Web Site a Daily Part of Church Life” email us at: vision@acstechologies.com
- For more information about Extend visit: www.extendplatform.com
- For more information about Access ACS visit: www.accessacs.com
- To receive the white paper “Developing an Effective Web Strategy” email us at: vision@acstechologies.com
- To see how other organizations are using Extend, visit: www.extendplatform.com/action
- For quick and convenient access to products and services you use daily go to: www.acstechologies.com/clientportal
If you’ve ever had a dream about what your ministry can do through technology…

At ACS Technologies, we are dedicated to making the dream a reality by developing the software that you will need for the future.

Whether your ministry needs have expanded as you have grown, or if you are looking for new shortcuts within the software, your feedback is crucial. We have established several great venues that encourage a free flow of information and ideas between you and our staff members. We encourage you to tap into some or all of these venues so that we can help you achieve your future goals.

Support

Hearing how ACS helps clients meet ministry needs is one of the rewards of being a Client Support Representative. Often, we hear about new ministry needs in this process. As an example, some years ago, clients would call the support lines for assistance in keeping multiple databases. Today, ACS includes a multi-dataset option. Any time a CSR hears a need that can’t be handled in ACS today, he or she will turn that in on behalf of the client. Those requests run the gamut from a misspelling we missed in the Help files to a complete new program. Your comments to our CSR’s are the #1 source for enhancements requests for all programs.

Enhancement Requests

If you have a suggestion for any ACS application, enter it directly into our enhancement database by visiting www.acstechnologies.com/clientportal. Each request is reviewed by the R&D coordinator for that product. Sometimes that means you’ll receive a call back right away letting you know the program already does what you need and helping you see how to use that feature. All enhancement requests are acknowledged by email so you know your request has been received. The more client requests we have for a particular feature, the higher that request is ranked in our system, so please take advantage of this database to alert us to your needs.

User Groups

User groups are conducted to allow ACS software users to connect and share ideas and tricks for making the most of what the software has to offer. If there’s an active user group in your area, consider having an ACS Technologies representative join you annually for an enhancement brainstorming session. The ACS Technologies representative will then enter the ideas as enhancement requests. If there’s not an active user group in your area, let us know if you can help us get one going!

Training

At ACS Technologies, training takes many forms. Whether it is online training, phone training, on site training or our annual convention, training of all types promotes a free exchange of information between trainer and students, as well as between students. Client training allows instructors to guide users through the software. Once the users make the connection with the software and understand it, they begin to see the possibilities that the software offers. Trainers often return from sessions with more than one enhancement request.

Annual Convention

Each year, we hold a three day convention where hundreds of like minded ACS software users come together to learn and have fun. In addition to what ideas come out of the training sessions, clients often seek out product managers who are in attendance with ideas and suggestions. Long time clients know that if they have a goal that they need help reaching, we want know about it so that we can develop a solution. So if you plan to attend the 2005 convention in Asheville, or the 2006 convention in Orlando, don’t hesitate to discuss your ideas with a staff member.

Beta Testing

Feedback from clients who test our software is extremely important. Because beta testers are working with a product before it is officially released, we rely on their input in order to release a highly effective...
and functional product. Although the product has been tested numerous times by ACS programmers and trained testers, the real test comes when the product is used on a daily basis by clients. Client feedback might include pointing out a small tweak to the program to recommending a change that would increase functionality for all clients. In exchange for this valuable input, beta testers receive complimentary support plus other incentives.

Product Managers

Every ACS product has a product manager assigned to it, that is, a person tasked with managing the inception, development and release of every product, product enhancement and product update. The most important job for a product manager is listening to the needs of the users and ensuring that the best product solution is released. As many of you know, the product managers often solicit input from clients about products, and many clients even call product managers directly to discuss their goals. This line of communication is critical to a successful product. Product managers know that the key to serving their product’s market is to understand the needs of its users.

As you can see, the communication you provide us with today really does impact the product that you will benefit from in the future. Without your input, it would never be as successful as it is. Please do not hesitate to call us with questions, comments, concerns or even compliments. Your feedback will continue to help us serve you in the best way possible... now and well into the future.

Resources

- To reach a Support Representative, call 1-800-669-2509, email us at support@acstechnologies.com, or visit our Web site at www.acstechnologies.com/support.
- To submit an enhancement request for a product, visit www.acstechnologies.com/support.
- For more information about User Groups, visit our Web site at www.acstechnologies.com/support.
- To find out more about ACS Training classes and schedules, call 1-800-669-2509, email us at training@acstechnologies.com or visit our Web site at www.acstechnologies.com/training.
- To learn more about becoming a beta tester, see the side-bar on this page or email Rebekah Gibbs at rebekah.gibbs@acstechnologies.com.
- For quick and convenient access to products and services you use daily go to: www.acstechnologies.com/clientportal.

Are YOU Interested In Learning How To Become A Beta Tester?

What is a Beta Site?

Being a beta test site means you receive programs that have been tested by our quality assurance specialists. Although our testing lab uses different scenarios to test the programs, there are many more that we don’t know of, and that is where beta site testing helps tremendously. We don’t ask that you spend extra time testing the enhancements that are on the update, even though that is great. We only ask that you load the beta version as soon as you receive it (as soon as possible) and do your day to day work and report any inconsistencies that you find.

If you are interested in becoming a beta tester, email Rebekah Gibbs at rebekah.gibbs@acstechnologies.com

What are the Advantages?

You receive your update early! Although the version you receive is a pre-release version, the programs have gone through our testing lab testing process.

You have a direct line to a specialized group to immediately address any issues you encounter. This allows you to get quicker response from us in R & D to find out what problems exist and get them corrected.

The beta period is short. It usually lasts about three months, and based on your location you may only beta test 1 or 2 months.

You get money back! In return for your beta testing, we credit your account the amount equivalent of one month’s support fees.

Take a look at what client beta testers had to say about the process.

“When we have a problem with anything, someone is always right over to fix it so that we are never inconvenienced. We get a credit towards our monthly service contract, which is helpful. I’m always looking for ways to save us money but ensure the best possible service,” says Debbie Anderson of First Church of God.

“We definitely appreciate being able to get the products first,” says BJ Greene of Liberty Baptist Church. “This allows us to become familiar with new enhancements and changes to the software. Through our experience with beta testing, we have become close to the programmers. This is an advantage because we can make product recommendations, and we often see them incorporated into the software. It helps us get a more compatible product.”
Tiger Testing

Testing methods for different products vary, but the common denominator among all methods is that testing is meant to really “tear” into the product so that it can be deconstructed and a better product can be achieved—before it leaves the shelves. This idea of tearing into the products’ capabilities inspired the idea of “tiger” testing, a term that ACS Technologies uses for a very focused and aggressive testing method that involves bringing together a large group of testers at one time to knock out the process in one day.

Tiger testing is employed once the testing by developers and professional testers is complete but before the product is released. The beta testing, or client testing, phase signals a final stage of the product development process. Once it has begun, the research and development and support teams begin planning their attack on the software. The support and IDD departments meet at a time when they won’t interrupt client support hours, but also at a time when the teams can focus just on the task at hand.

The benefits of tiger testing are many. Daphne Wallace, quality assurance manager points out that, “First and foremost, just the number of testers ensures that clients receive the highest quality product. Few other software providers can say that their product is tested by over 80 qualified testers before it is released.

Secondly, it is important for the research and development team to see the product used among connected computers. Wallace explains further, “We are able to create specific scenarios during the tiger test that may or may not have occurred during a beta test, or a beta client may not have been aware that someone else was working in the system doing the same function and could not relay back accurate results on this type of testing. We make sure that the action works without error and that the amount of time to perform the action has not increased from prior versions.” As the support personnel test the software, there is a flow of dialogue between the support team and the research and development team. The results of this tenacious testing method have often brought about some important time-saving modifications.

Possibly the most important advantage to tiger testing is that it allows the support team, who will be answering client questions about the product, to see and use the final product. “Although the support team is an integral part of initiating changes to the software, the tiger testing day is the team’s first chance to experiment with the final product, and it prepares them for future support calls from the field and helps us serve clients better,” says Wallace.
Let LiveStor™ Manage Backups For You.

I remind my staff constantly that the number one priority of our department is to ensure successful backups and storage of those backups.

I’m approaching my 14th year with ACS Technologies and have had the privilege to meet a relatively large number of clients, like you.

I can’t tell you the number of those clients that:
■ Do backups only when they remember to do them
■ Perform backups but then leave the CD or disk right next to the computer
■ Change the tapes but aren’t sure if the backup is even running

Sound familiar? Although it isn’t easy to admit, it happens.

Incorporating the things we have learned as a company about what makes the most sense for backing up data, our talented product developers have created a product that eliminates the need to worry about these common backup mishaps. This new product, LiveStor, manages backups for you. The data is backed up automatically! You won’t even need to think of it on a daily basis!

How does it work? Through the wonders of the Internet, of course. LiveStor is a remote backup program designed to protect your most valuable data files by automatically transferring them over the Internet and storing them safely in our secure servers. You can have peace of mind knowing your membership, financial, and any other data files are securely stored in a remote location should a traumatic event occur at your organization. This is a scheduled backup, so the only thing you need to remember is to leave your computer on in the evening—the backup is performed automatically.

For more information about LiveStor or protecting data, visit www.livestor.com or contact me at dean.lisenby@acstechnologies.com.

Don’t take chances with your data any longer, especially when preserving it is so simple!

So when he read an article about the new ACS Technologies automated off site backup program, LiveStor, he realized he’d found just what they needed. He assessed his budget and pitched the church staff, explaining that LiveStor was an affordable option and an obvious complement to Christ Church’s existing ACS software packages.

“One thing I talked about was a great idea,” says Paul Poirier. “They understood that it needed to happen and should have been implemented a long time ago.”

Before LiveStor, on top of his full-time job, Poirier was going to the church at least once a week to backup their important data. “That’s why LiveStor is so important,” he explains. “It minimizes the time I need to be at the church. It keeps everything low-key and as maintenance-free as possible.”

Christ Church uses the ACS People and Financial modules to manage its important member and fiscal data. Because Christ Church deals with approximately 500 member records, keeping track of their contributions, and managing the church’s finances, Poirier uses ACS 7.0’s backup function and LiveStor for a little peace of mind.

“I setup ACS 7.0’s backup function to backup our data nightly and then LiveStor backs that up after it’s complete,” says Poirier. “It’s comforting knowing all our backups are off site. If something should happen to the computer or the church, the data is safe.”

Today, even the most advanced anti-virus software can’t keep all the worms out. “You can configure LiveStor to retain a number of versions of the files you’d like backed up,” explains Poirier. “I keep backups for up to five days. I do this in case a virus gets in the system and infects files that are backed up nightly. Let’s say it takes someone two days to notice their computer is infected and it’s tainted some of our backed up files. I can just go back to the files before the virus hit and restore them, virus-free. It makes a situation like that much less damaging.”

The best part about LiveStor for Poirier is the convenience. “LiveStor just lets me automate everything,” he says. “I don’t have to check up on a thing.” And Poirier has spread the word about the ease of LiveStor to the office staff at Christ Church by allowing them to take advantage of the regularly scheduled backups. “I’ve explained that if they want certain things backed up regularly, they can save them in particular directories,” explains Poirier. “It’s easy for everyone to understand and it gives them security.”

Even though Poirier is more technologically inclined than the average individual, he thinks the installation and user-friendliness of LiveStor is unbeatable. “When I was glancing over the installation manual,” he says, “I kept thinking this is a piece of cake. It was very easy to use.” But because not everyone is as knowledgeable about computers as he is, Poirier is grateful for ACS Service and Support. “ACS is doing things smarter and better,” says Poirier. “When the staff at the church needs help with a particular problem, I can call ACS Support and they can give the staff personal, accurate service. The staff just logs onto a Web site and ACS takes over their PC to fix the problem. This is great for me because I have a full-time job and can’t always be there when the problems arise.”
ACS Technologies has added new functionality to its HeadMaster software, along with two new companion products: HeadMaster Online and HeadMaster Billing. In addition to better organizing teacher, parent, and student data, HeadMaster and its new products use networks and the Internet to further assist administrators in distributing and managing key information, including bills, grades, reports, schedules, attendance, and internal communications.

We have worked diligently to bring clients these two new HeadMaster companion products:

**NEW HeadMaster Online**, used in coordination with HeadMaster Pro or HeadMaster Pro with ClassRoom Manager, enables teachers, parents, and students to review information from any computer with Internet access. Parents can log in to monitor their child’s grades and assignments. Students can log in to view their homework and upcoming scheduled assignments.

**NEW HeadMaster Billing**, used in coordination with any of the HeadMaster series, is an easy-to-use billing program where school staff can bill groups of students with a single entry, print immediate receipts for payments, quickly access balance information, and much more.

The software has various new communication tools as well, including a mass communication feature with new methods for personalizing correspondence to parents and/or students. And HeadMaster Pro now has added functionality to the grading system.

HeadMaster now also allows for more diversification and customization with scheduling events, recording attendance and student behavior, and generating personalized mailings through the database.

HeadMaster Pro client David Rigdon of Louisiana expressed his satisfaction with HeadMaster saying,

“**It is faster and more user friendly. Our teachers love that they can manage grading and attendance on one screen instead of having to switch between screens. I’ve even seen one of the enhancements that I suggested!**”

The HeadMaster series, which includes HeadMaster, HeadMaster Plus and HeadMaster Pro, continues to help private schools better streamline and manage student, parent, teacher and class information. One of the many product enhancements is the improved integration of HeadMaster Pro and Classroom Manager. These two products are now even more tightly integrated for efficient sharing of information between the administrative offices and the classroom. New features are coming soon, check www.acstechnologies.com to keep informed.

For more information visit: www.acstechnologies.com/schoolsuite or email us at headmaster@acstechnologies.com.

### New Updates, Features and Companion Products

The check marks on the following page denote the products that have a new update, feature or new companion product. To learn more about what’s new for the checked items, visit the corresponding Web sites outlined below.

- **LiveStor**: [www.acstechnologies.com/livestor](http://www.acstechnologies.com/livestor)
- **Access ACS**: [www.acstechnologies.com/accessacs](http://www.acstechnologies.com/accessacs)
- **HeadMaster**: [www.acstechnologies.com/headmaster](http://www.acstechnologies.com/headmaster)
- **People Suite**: [www.acstechnologies.com/products/people_suite](http://www.acstechnologies.com/products/people_suite)
- **Check Point**: [www.acstechnologies.com/products/checkpoint](http://www.acstechnologies.com/products/checkpoint)
The cornerstone of all ACS products, People Suite reliably tracks, organizes, and analyzes complex information about the people with whom you interact or serve. From first time visitor to faithful donor, this suite empowers you to foster participation and coordinate various activities and programs. These products are used on a daily basis and provide a central location for all your information and communication. People Suite consists of the following integrated modules:

- People
- Attendance
- Contributions
- Visitation
- Reservations
- Special Mailings
- Checkpoint

The Financial Suite is a collection of fund accounting products that are specifically designed to handle the unique financial needs of faith-based nonprofit organizations. Within a simple interface, users can manage multiple accounts, designate funds, handle tuition or fee-based services, and satisfy IRS and FASB requirements. It consists of six modules that have set the standard for faith-based financial management software:

- General Ledger
- Accounts Payable
- Payroll
- Purchase Orders
- Accounts Receivable
- Fixed Assets

HeadMaster simplifies the administrative tasks of private, parochial, and independent schools or daycare facilities. It manages student, parent, and teacher information in one place and provides tools for flexible grading, reporting, class schedules, attendance, or other customizable fields.

There are 3 levels of HeadMaster:

- HeadMaster
- HeadMaster Plus
- HeadMaster Pro

And 3 optional companion products:

- HeadMaster Billing
- HeadMaster Online
- ClassRoom Manager

The Extend Platform makes it possible to manage your organization’s Web site whenever you wish, whether you want to edit it as a staff or you want us to do it for you. With simple online tools, you and your staff can login and edit your Web site in Extend as you navigate through it in a browser. And depending upon your needs, there are several options to help provide the content, functionality, and applications you need.

Extend is available as:

- A single Extend Web site
- A community of Extend Web sites

Other integrated applications:

- Access ACS
- Media Streaming
- Online Donations
- Online Event Registration

The ultimate reporting tool designed to create flexible reports, support advanced reporting needs, and produce specific information or a particular look.

Ministry Scheduler™

A centrally-accessed calendar and facility management tool that allows users to set up and synchronize calendars for all aspects of the organization – from birthdays to reserving a room.

Church Growth Tools™

Makes it easy to assess the involvement and attendance patterns of people and helps develop targeted communication and programs to engage them.

Provides your valuable data by performing scheduled file back-ups according to customized criteria. All data is securely transferred over the Internet to our remote location so you can have peace of mind.

Mail Modules

CASS It™, Max It™, and Max It! for Periodicals™ are modules that will help organizations sort through postal regulations and prepare the right documentation to save time and money on bulk mailings.

Access ACS™

Access ACS connects you to your People data whenever you are outside of the office – either on the road or at home. It enables organizations to go online and access member information, send group e-mail, or update records. With Member Login activated, members may also go online to submit changes to their own information.

ACS offers items that are guaranteed to work with our software products. Example items that can be purchased in our Forms and Supplies Catalog:

- Checks
- Labels
- Contribution Statements
- Tax Forms

WWW.ACSTECHNOLOGIES.COM | 21
**NEW Online Courses**

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<th>Course</th>
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<th>Time</th>
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**Save and Learn even more with the NEW online course packages!**

Each Package combines related courses that will enable you to get a full understanding of the module and save up to 40% of the standard pricing!

Packages are available for the following modules: People, General Ledger, Contributions, Accounts Receivable, Attendance, Payroll, Visitation, Ministry Scheduler, Organizations, and Volunteer Manager.

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  - Usage 7/20
  - Reports 7/21

*For more information please call 1.800.669.2509*
Email us at:
headmaster@acstechnologies.com
for the NEW School Solutions Brochure and Demonstration CD

See Page 20 for What’s New? in HeadMaster

“HeadMaster is faster and more user friendly than ever. Our teachers love that they can manage grading and attendance on one screen instead of having to switch between screens. I’ve even seen one of the enhancements that I suggested in the update!”

David Rigdon – HeadMaster Pro client

We would like to hear from you about your school administrative needs. We have great solutions that can help. Please call us at 1-800-736-7425 or email us at headmaster@acstechnologies.com to discuss your school’s goals. Plus, check out www.acstechnologies.com/headmaster. There you will find out more information about how we are helping schools, like you, fulfill their mission in new and exciting ways.
Your staff manages irreplaceable data on a daily basis and depends upon the accessibility of the information within your data files. Unfortunately, all data is susceptible to PC viruses, hardware failure, human error, power outages, or even the unexpected physical disaster. Therefore, we have created LiveStor, a simple, downloadable application that will safely protect the time and resources you have invested into your information management. LiveStor helps you protect your irreplaceable data by automatically storing backups of your most valued files on our remote servers.

Use LiveStor™ to protect your most valuable data files.

- Keep your files safe in a remote location.
- Save time and money.
- Easily restore your data whenever necessary.
- Backup every file on your computer.
- Have peace of mind.

Give this incredible tool a test drive.

Try it for 30 days. We guarantee you’ll like it, or we will refund your first month’s payment.

For more information or to sign up, go to www.acstech.com/livestor

Sign up today!

Read more about LiveStor on Pgs 18-19 in this issue of VISION