

Logos in the Classroom

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Hi, I'm Dale Pritchett, co-founder of Logos Bible Software. Thank you for listening.

Can you imagine the scenario of coming home and saying to your spouse, "Honey, I just went to the bookstore. I got this book, and it completes my collection. This is the very last book I will ever need. My collecting days are over. That's it. This is the end."

Well, this fictional story must have taken place on Mars because here on Earth we just never tire of books. We know. We're in the business of digital Bibles and digital Bible reference books. In fact, last year Logos sold more than 5.2 million digital books. We have 9,000 books now available, and our goal is to release 2,000 additional titles every year.

People often think of us as Bible software in the same way that other products are called Bible software. Yes, we parse Greek and Hebrew verbs. We do all those things that other software packages do, but for us that is only the beginning. We are, in reality, an extension—in some cases a replacement—for the bricks and mortar Bible college or seminary library. We have become the world's largest producer of digital Bibles and academic Bible reference works. We have become an affordable alternative for standard, unabridged books representing more than 100 different publishers. We have become the tool of choice for writers and researchers. And we've become a very convenient publishing platform for faculty. We're a useful resource for distance education and remote campuses. We're a supplement for classroom demonstration. We are a fully linked, interactive seminary library on a notebook computer. We are, in short, the future today. And we're totally digital right now. And that's a good thing because the digital revolution is almost 30 years old.

If you're over 30, let me ask you this. Have you ever owned a record player? Have you ever threaded a movie projector or a reel-to-reel tape recorder or played an 8-track? Have you ever used a pager? Have you ever watched black and white TV? If you answer yes to these things, you, like me, are pre-digital. You've lived through the digital revolution. In contrast to you, the students, who you teach, missed the revolution. The people walking into class today don't know about the revolution. They were born and raised in it. They entered school predisposed to digital media rather than print. It has been estimated that as much as 85% of everything they already know has come from a computer screen or a television screen. They have more

hours logged on a computer than hours logged reading books. They have more hours logged watching TV than visiting libraries. When instructed to look something up, a student today automatically thinks about a computer and the internet, not books. The internet—that vast sea of unvetted data where sense and nonsense share equal billing.

Classrooms, in a sense, are like time machines. Today's classroom may be your only real chance to experience medieval living. A student comes into the classroom, gets introduced to all these old resources and methods that have remained constant for almost 1,000 years. But in a sense they're all foreign and strange to the student. Have you ever noticed that new students don't really know how to function well in a library? They don't understand basic research tools. Some of them can't even find the library without a GPS. They're not so sure they even have a reason to go there. And as crazy as it sounds, students will say things like, "I can't afford to go to the library because of the gas." This is not a complaint about cost; it's a statement of value. The libraries are in trouble. They're underappreciated, underfunded, underutilized. Libraries are in jeopardy much the same way newspapers are in jeopardy. It's not that people are less interested in news; it's that people are less interested in getting their news from newspapers. People actually want more books and want more information; they just don't want more paper. They want to search the books in their library the same way they search the web. Paper has lost its appeal.

The world has changed. We used to hear the question, "Who'd want to read a book on a computer?" Today we hear, "Who'd want to read a book on paper? How cumbersome. How do I search paper? I don't understand the interface of books." Many students today don't know what the difference is between a table of contents and an index, an appendix and an addendum. They're strange and foreign words because they don't understand books. And, of course, because you teach biblical studies with books and many of these books go back for hundreds of years, there's even interface challenges on the paper like, have you ever tried to find anything in Calvin's *Institutes* and said, "Ugh, how is this thing organized? Who put this together?" Well, you go to a computer and you have a common interface for all books. You just search through all the books with a single command. The computer eliminates these "book format" distinctions. Students who have grown up in the digital generation have a hard time transitioning backwards to books. And books are the whole issue. We may talk about Bible software, but it is really a discussion about books: digital libraries which include Bibles, Bible reference books, Greek and Hebrew texts. Ultimately, it comes down to a library of resources that serve the needs of today's pastors, educators, and students.

Like other software companies, we've spent a lot of time working on Greek and Hebrew tools because the Greek and Hebrew departments have traditionally been the early adopters on campus, and as a result they're often the gatekeepers to technology. But the world has changed, and whereas you can expect to find computers in the Greek and Hebrew department, you can now expect to find computers everywhere.

Textbooks cost a lot of money these days, so much money, in fact, that three states right now have pending legislation to regulate textbook prices. The average cost of textbooks in the U.S. as of early 2008 when I read the article was \$1,100 per student per year. Here's a great irony: a student spends \$1,100 a year for textbooks, and then, because the student places such a high value on the book's usefulness, contribution to life and vocation, and in recognition of the time spent by professors in choosing just the right book, the books get sold to the incoming class at the end of the semester. They don't stick. The student doesn't keep this well-selected book. Or, in some cases, students form little buying groups to buy and share their textbooks. Or, in some schools, they've just given up, and they rent the textbooks because they know the students aren't going to keep them.

What we found, kind of by surprise, is that one of the big driving forces selling Logos Bible Software these days is the massive savings over printed textbooks. In fact, if you buy a digital library, as opposed to a single textbook, the savings is close to 80%. Textbooks offer very poor price performance. Students come from a digital world and plan to return to a digital world at the earliest possible moment. In today's world, textbooks are seen as temporary, computers as permanent. A broad digital Bible reference library serves as an excellent alternative to individually selected high priced paper textbooks. This is really an important point: use a library instead of a book. The digital library is more powerful and web-like in functionality, richer in content, than any single required textbook. It's also more likely to survive graduation and be used for years.

Logos offers the best of both worlds with an affordable digital library with internet-like performance, all the time using unabridged, standard, peer-reviewed texts from a broad spectrum of publishers. Logos also serves as a platform for thousands of additional titles, as well as class notes and other information authored by faculty. It becomes a basis for lifelong learning. It provides a legacy for teachers who contribute their own work to that digital library. Logos is the most economical way to buy books. The question is, "Can you live with our collections as opposed to your finely selected textbooks?" I would suggest that a collection of hundreds of digital titles is going to serve you better than any individual textbook.

I want you to understand, we are committed at Logos to making our collections affordable to students. We will work with you to spread the cost of a collection over multiple semesters to insure that that semester fee is a good deal for the students. And they're getting so much more for their money than they do with printed texts.

We believe this is in your interest as well as ours. Why is it in your interest that people use Logos Bible Software instead of a textbook? For one thing, it allows students to perform at a higher level in a familiar internet-like environment. It creates a uniform playing field for you. I tell the story of a friend of mine who's a mechanical engineer. He went to work for a bridge building company. At the bridge building company he's introduced to this large team of engineers who are already there. They're of all different ages and all educated at different places and at different times. The oldest engineer in the room learned with a slide rule. The next group was educated with electronic calculators. And then the newest group was educated with computers and engineering work stations. Well, in the world of mechanical engineering, he explained to me, the difference between the slide rule and an engineering work station is like the difference between a Boeing dream liner and a yellow school bus. An engineer using a slide rule can calculate the stress on a single joint in the bridge. With an engineering workstation, an engineer could alter the dimension of a single bolt and recalculate the stress of every joint in the bridge. And he could do it instantly, not in three months. "So what happens?" I said. "How's this work when you bring these people together on the same project?" He said, "Actually it works pretty simply. The old guys give all the work to the new guys trained with the new tools."

Some of you remember that transition from slide rules to calculators. I do because I was there. If you were there, you also remembered going through this goofy period when calculators were banned from the classroom. It was such a creative act to ban them. Teachers would say things like,

"It's really important that you learn all the principles that you show your work because the calculator doesn't really show your work."

"It can't be demonstrated that you really understand the concepts."

"The calculator is really a crutch."

Well, this is all very creative, but as soon as calculator prices went down, we never heard those arguments again. Everybody had a calculator, and then more powerful calculators, and then

computers. And in hindsight we see the real issue: the students were more ready to purchase and adopt technology than the faculty. The technology created an untenable position in the classroom where it became impossible to teach the same course to two different generations of students. It was impossible to teach the exact same lesson to students with vastly different capabilities. That's exactly where we are in biblical studies today; because when you see all the things you can do with a full-blown digital library system and the speed at which you can do them, you realize that to deny it in the classroom is like reverting to slide rules.

We entered 2008 saying, "While our focus in the past has been to offer educational discounts to schools, our focus now is to suggest to schools that they standardize on digital libraries and replace textbooks with digital libraries." We have moved into the textbook replacement business. Now, that's not just a marketing scheme. It's an acknowledgement that time has come to create an even playing field with every student empowered with identical tools. The need has existed for a long time, but the runaway rising cost of textbooks has established our price-performance argument far better than any statements we have ever made. Logos Bible Software digital library solution instantly converts negatives into positives.

"It's not convenient for me to go to the library when it's open."

"I can't afford the gas."

"I live too far from the library."

"I got there, but the books were checked out."

"I'm taking a distance ed. class. I can't even find a library that has the books required."

All these problems go away when the library's on your computer and you adjust your curriculum to the books in the library. It solves a lot of problems. Is there any question in anybody's mind that students won't use digital resources when they graduate? They're not going to be out there buying records. They will be living and ministering and working in a digital world. We find in the senior year, while many students are dumping textbooks, Logos users are scrambling to acquire more electronic titles before they lose their academic discount. It's a totally different mindset.

And this reminds me, we found that we can perform an important service for you as faculty. We can provide you with the tools with which you can publish your notes as a Logos book. You can put your notes in the student's system, and your materials stay with the student long after they have left class. You build a legacy. The tool is called Personal Book Builder. It allows

you with a word processor to build a Logos compatible book that you can distribute to your students. You can even get the students involved in creating Logos compatible books from class assignments. Ben Phillips, professor at Southwestern Theological Seminary, Houston campus, has his students in Systematic Theology create a Logos book each semester. The students will use each other's work for years because it's a part of their library. Now you can probably find some really geeky kid on campus who will even do all the work for you because, here's one of the secrets—the students know more about computers than you do. They have more computers. They have better computers. Let them build the books for you.

Distance education is adopting technology faster than the traditional classroom. Now, that shouldn't be a surprise because the uniformity there really works for them. And yet on campuses, there's a digital divide. The digital divide is technology nay-sayers vs. technology adopters, and it's an interesting, unique phenomenon that occurs. It doesn't necessarily follow age as you might expect. You've got old people who love computers and young people who don't. In either case, it creates division. There is, however, little or no technology resistance among students. The resistance is all on the faculty. And let me just say this, resistance is futile. Slide rules are not coming back.

One other thing that's really important for you to consider. As the technology gap widens, the digital reference materials become less and less like their print equivalents. What's that mean? It means the next generation of books will go digital first and print second. We're facing the probability that major reference books will be abridged in print. Only the digital editions will be unabridged because there's no page count limit in post on digital works. And in closing, here's a great quotation:

"Religious truth is imprisoned in a small number of manuscript books which confine instead of spread the public treasure. Let us break the seal which seals up holy things and give wings to Truth in order that she may win every soul that comes into the world by her word no longer written at great expense by hands easily palsied, but multiplied like the wind by an untiring machine."

Great statement written in 1455 by Johan Guttenberg. I think it's significant that the church has been the beneficiary of cutting edge technology through the years.