

Vatican seeks to spread the .Catholic message

April 6 2016



Pope Francis waves to pilgrims gathered in St Peter's Square after his weekly general audience at the Vatican on April 6, 2016

The Vatican has set up a new office charged with promoting the use of the .Catholic domain name, in its latest move to upgrade its communications for the digital era.

With a staff of eight IT experts, the new office will seek to expand the use of the domain name by all Church and Church-affiliated bodies with the aim of assuring Internet users they are dealing with officially

sanctioned sites.

The Vatican acquired .Catholic at the end of 2013 when the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) decided to approve thousands of new personalised domains to cope with increased demand for websites.

In addition to .Catholic, the Vatican acquired the equivalent [domain](#) names in Arabic, Chinese and Russian scripts.

The Vatican's communications department is undergoing a huge reorganisation on the orders of Pope Francis, who has a keen grasp of the importance of the online world.

The 79-year-old pontiff is one of the most prominent global figures on Twitter with some 30 million followers in nine languages.

He recently made his debut on Instagram and has acquired 2.2 million followers on the picture-sharing network in just over two weeks.

He also regularly sends out video messages via YouTube.

In his latest dispatch, a monthly prayer message for April, Francis pays tribute to small farmers around the world and offers them their support in their struggle for survival in the face of myriad economic and environmental pressures.

"Your work is indispensable for all of humanity," he says. "You deserve a life of dignity."

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Citation: Vatican seeks to spread the .Catholic message (2016, April 6) retrieved 24 May 2024

from <https://phys.org/news/2016-04-vatican-catholic-message.html>

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