

Paul O'Briant, Expert on Cybersafety, to Help Parents and Educators Explore Internet Safety as a Christian

7:00 PM, Thursday, March 8 Sherman Center, DWU Campus and Via Live Streaming



Paul O'Briant gives the opening address at the CyberSAFEty in Ministry conference in Nashville. A UMNS photo by Jeanette Pinkston.

According to the most current statistics released in March of 2011, over 78% of individuals in the United States use the internet. Of that 78% over 322 million of them have Facebook accounts. "I think it's important for churches to consider a presence in cyberspace because that is where the people are," said Paul O'Briant

Director of technology for Currituck County Schools in North Carolina, O'Briant cited U.S. statistics . . .that two-thirds of Internet users have searched for spiritual topics online. "So much of the population uses cyberspace on a daily basis and searches for answers in that space, so we need to be there where they are," he said.

With the opportunities of cyberspace come dangers as well. "I think it's important if we are going to go into that space we understand the dangers and how to keep our people safe. Understanding that our kids and congregations are already in those spaces, we need to provide them the tools they need to keep safe," said O'Briant.

We encourage individuals in the Mitchell area to attend personally. However this is such an important topic the presentation will be live streamed so any one any place in the Dakotas and beyond can participate. Gather your friends, members of your Christian Education Team and members of your congregation to join you on the "big screen" at church or where ever it is convenient to participate. Go to <http://www.dwu.edu/live/>. Further instructions on how you may interact with Paul during the presentation will be given at the beginning of the evening.

Mark your calendar, invite your friends and join us on Thursday, March 8 to learn more about cybersafety. Paul has also co-authored "Cybersafety for Families". This kit is available in our Conference Resource Library by contacting Bonnie Carlson, resource librarian (605-996-6552 or bonnie.carlson@dakotasumc.org).