



Cool Solutions Group Offers Intuitive Web-Based Room and Facilities Management Solutions for Churches

by Steve Hewitt

This month, I'm excited to share with you a new facilities management solution on the horizon that is truly exciting. In this economic climate, it's great to hear about companies serving the church market offering free solutions to small churches, church plants, in addition to robust services for medium sized churches on up to mega-churches. That's just what Tim Cool with Cool Solutions Group is doing: Rocking the boat just a little as he launches two new web-based solutions for the church space that aim to help with room scheduling and facility management at churches far and wide. I hope you enjoy learning more about Tim's passion for this market and how his company aims to meet a need expressed by churches of all sizes.

What was your motivation to develop ministrEspace and facilitEspace?

I come from a background of working with the facility needs of ministries. For the past 24 years, I helped churches plan, develop, construct and maintain their facilities. During that time I saw many churches spend millions of dollars to build new facilities and then gave very little attention to the care and day-to-day operations of those facilities. This baffled me and caused me to wonder why we don't do a better job with the stewardship of the facilities God has entrusted to us. So as [Cool Solutions Group](#) was doing its due diligence in the market, we found a couple of voids that we think we can fill.

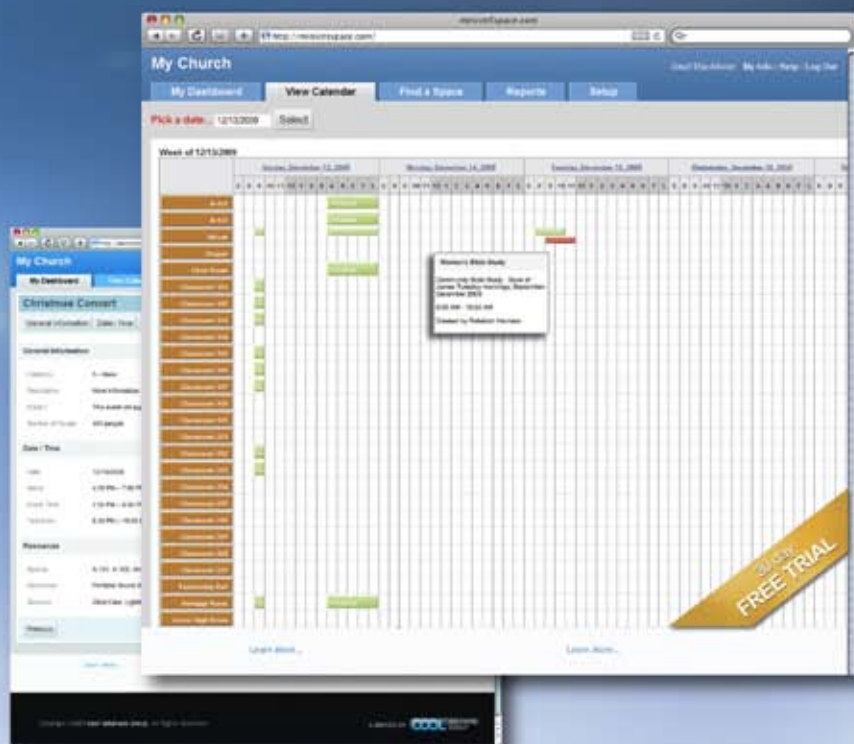
The first solution we developed is a web-based application (SaaS) room scheduling program that allows for unlimited

users while remaining very cost effective. There are some good companies in this space, but we found most were either expensive when unlimited users were required, or they were not web-based, or they just felt clunky. We wanted something that felt more like Outlook or Basecamp (By 37 Signals) and was more graphical than textual. [ministrEspace](#) responds to those needs.

The second void we found in the market was a Work Order/Facilities Management software program that was web-based and geared toward the church community. Again, we found programs that were acceptable, but none whose sole market was churches, ministries and other non-profit organizations. [facilitEspace](#) allows ministry property and facility managers to respond to daily demands quickly and efficiently.

"The easiest-to-use room scheduling solution..."
...now has a **FREE VERSION!**

"Forever Free"
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click. schedule. save.



ministrEspace, the low cost, web-based software solution for your ministry space scheduling needs presents, *"Forever Free."*

"Forever Free" is a special offer including our basic ministrEspace features:

- Requires little instruction to get started and **no setup fee**
- Schedules your...X, Y and Z...in a few simple clicks
- Has Outlook-style calendar view
- Is subscriber-based with **no long-term contracts**

For more information, go to ministrEspace.com/signup or call 888.448.5664.



ministrEspace.com and facilitEspace.com are services of Cool Solutions Group. Please see those websites for more information, or email info@CoolSolutionsGroup.com.

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What differentiates ministrEspace from other room scheduling programs in the market?

First of all, it looks great! A user's events are displayed on the dashboard chronologically, and each event is a live link that immediately opens the event in the Event Viewer so that all the information about the event is available. ministrEspace offers access to all ministry staff, yet allows authority to be controlled so that events can only be approved in the way that they ministry permits. It provides calendar views that show all events in a way that identifies their status (pending, approved, or conflicting) so that everyone can see at a glance whether an event can be created for a given time, date, and space. It is web-based, so there is no software to install or maintain. Notifications are generated within the ministrEspace system but can also be sent via the user's email system. Event details can also be printed right from ministrEspace, with varying levels of detail depending on the need.

What differentiates facilitEspace from other facility management programs?

Like ministrEspace, facilitEspace is web-based and intuitive. It is designed to aid the church administrator, property manager, or facility manager with the daily tasks that need to happen, but (in my experience) frequently don't happen when they should. Things like scheduled maintenance for equipment, building repairs, and maintaining an equipment database. FacilitEspace puts everything in one place and allows the manager to receive service requests, create work orders, and keep track of projects. It eliminates multiple spreadsheets, to-do lists, and sticky notes!

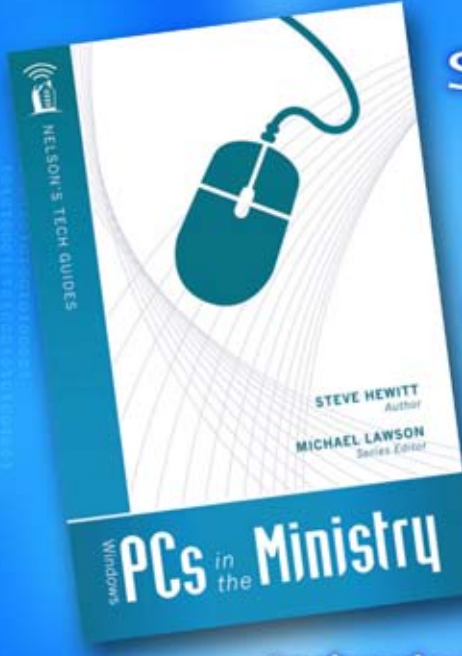
I hear you've recently released a "FOREVER FREE" version of ministrEspace. Can you tell us about this offering?

I have always had a heart for the small church, church planters, start-ups and the like. My dad was a church planter so I guess that passion started early in life.

As we developed ministrEspace, we knew that not every church would be able to afford the tool and would continue to use an Outlook calendar or Google Calendar or even a spreadsheet (or worse... a legal pad) to schedule rooms in their facility. I have firsthand experience with the conflicts that can arise from these types of systems. A room was supposed to be reserved, but then you find out that the page of the legal

pad was removed or someone's hard drive crashed and all the data was lost, or someone else reserved the space in a different calendar. Suddenly the room you had reserved is not available and the event is in jeopardy.

We wanted to provide every church with the opportunity to have a professional software solution that was developed for churches and would help them avoid these situations, even if they could not afford the PRO version of our service. FOREVER FREE is an excellent tool that has many of the same features as the PRO version, with some exceptions. It is a very simple application that allows up to 3 users to schedule rooms (what we call spaces, as they can include things like ball fields, parking lots, etc.) and approve Events. And like the PRO version, it is



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What type of technical (or non-technical) background is needed to use these two solutions? Describe how a user would integrate this into their day-to-day tasks?

I do not have a technical background – I have a degree in music and have been in church construction and facility development all of my adult life. I needed something that I could understand, use and explain to others. We have tried to make our solutions as user-friendly and non-technical as possible. We made a conscious decision to provide products that did not require an IT degree to use.

With both products being web-based, they can be utilized from any computer, anywhere. As long as you have internet access, you can login. The products will alert users of tasks and duties that need to be accomplished on a daily basis and even provide the necessary requirements for room set up configurations or when a vendor is scheduled to make a repair or perform product maintenance on your equipment. The combination of these two products can save administrators, facility managers, property managers and those responsible for the scheduling and care of their facilities an enormous amount of time and money.

Your website talks about “trellis work” and how this is your company focus. Can you share what this means?

We are all familiar with a trellis in a garden or yard. It is the structure constructed to support the growth of a vine or other plant. In most cases, once the vine or plant is fully grown, the trellis is virtually unseen and is clearly in the background so that the reason for the trellis can be fully visible and enjoyed by the onlookers.

Just as some sort of frame work is needed to help a vine or plant grow, so our churches, ministries and organizations also need some structure and support. It may not be much, but every organization has some kind of trellis that gives shape and support to the Vine Work. As the organization grows, the trellis also needs attention. Buildings, facility management/maintenance, finances, administration, and infrastructure – these all become more important and more complex as the vine/plant grows. The common mistakes most organization make is that they allow trellis work to take over from the vine work. When this happens, the Vine suffers and people take the eye off the ball.

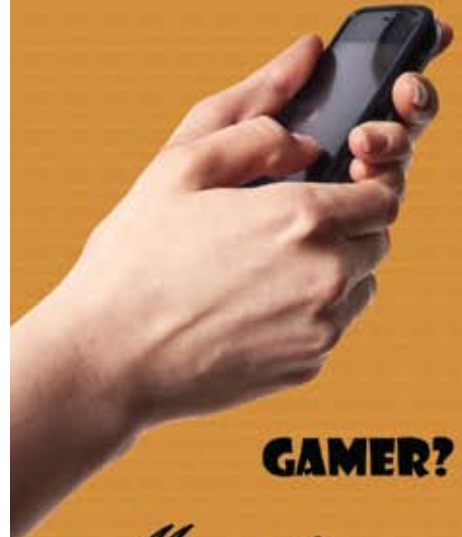
Our mantra is “We focus on the facility (i.e. Trellis) allowing you to focus on the ministry (i.e. Vine).” We have developed our solutions to assist you to stay focused on the ministry/Vine and your core competencies as an organization.

What is next on the horizon for Cool Solutions Group and your Web-based Software Solutions?

We are dedicated to meeting the needs of our end users. Our products are for them, so it's important to us to constantly look to improve in order to meet their needs. In fact, for ministrEspace, we have developed a list of enhancements for our 2.0 version that we trust to release later in 2010. We have received great feedback and also can see new ways to add features that the market could benefit from. In addition, we are exploring the possibility of developing an API interface so that the products can function with other software solutions to provide a more integrated end-to-end facility solution.

To download several white papers on facilities management visit <http://coolsolutionsgroup.com/resources>.

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