ChurchInfo-Pi

initial beta, version 0.6, now released

November 4, 2013

ChurchInfo is a Free and Open Source church database program, supported by a community of volunteers, to help churches track members, families, groups, pledges and payments. The feature set is comparable to expensive church management software systems making ChurchInfo an excellent choice for churches of all sizes. As a web application, it is accessible from any computer on the network via a web browser even by multiple users simultaneously.

The only downside is that initial installation, setup, and configuration, as it requires an operating system running a php enabled web server in conjunction with a mysql database can be quite challenging. This is not really a problem for churches having a IT staff member, consulting firm, or qualified volunteer, but can be insurmountable for churches not having available funds or other access to such resources.

As a big stride forward in simplifying this initial installation, setup, and configuration process to minimize the obstacles and make ChurchInfo a viable option for as many churches as possible, a community member has come forward with ChurchInfo-Pi, a turnkey image for the Raspberry Pi with the operating system, php enabled web server, the mysql database, and ChurchInfo already preinstalled and configured. All the church needs to do is download this image, transfer it to an SD Card, insert it into the Raspberry Pi, and power it up (with it already connected to your local network) and begin using your new ChurchInfo database (via a computer connected to your network.) Detailed instructions are included in the "readme" file with the download image.

Due to limited testing and feedback, this first release had to be labeled a "beta", however all indications thus far have shown it to be production quality and ready for use. As always, be sure and perform regular periodic backups of your database.

What hardware does ChurchInfo-Pi require?

- A Raspberry Pi (Model B), Protective Plastic Case, and Power Supply.
- An SDHC Card (>4GB). Class 10 is highly recommended.
- An Ethernet Cable (minimum Cat 5 of appropriate length [100m max.])
- An existing Local Area Network / Router with an available Ethernet port

What will this cost?

A Raspberry Pi (Model B, 512 MG RAM, ethernet).	$35.00
Protective Plastic Case (one is indeed needed)	$7.00
Power Supply, 5V (switching), 1 amp,	$7.00
SDHC Card 16GB, Sandisk (45 MG/sec.), Class 10. (max.)	$23.00
Ethernet Cable (prefabricated)	$10.00
Shipping (estimated)	$13.85
Total Projected Complete Cost:	$95.85

Yes, your total cost for a complete functional Churchinfo-Pi database web server is less than $96.00! Further, since your will be hosting locally, there are no ongoing monthly costs.

Where can I purchase these?

http://elinux.org/RPi_Buying_Guide

http://mcmelectronics.com

http://www.microcenter.com

http://amazon.com

Be careful and check prices closely. The base price for a Raspberry Pi, Model B, should not be more than $35.00 (package deals which include a protective case and/or free shipping excepted.) Most organizations will need to secure three bids (which is good.)

A couple of links about the suggested SDHC Card are:

http://thewirecutter.com/reviews/best-sd-card/

http://www.amazon.com/dp/B0037FLUYU/?tag=thewire06-20

If you already have a Class 6 or 10 SDHC Card that has a capacity of 8 or 16 GB and a transfer rate of 30 MB/sec and is a name brand card, that should be fine, too.