**Short and Shareable: Lessons in Digital Media**

**from a Popular Online Evangelism Series**

How can we effectively and powerfully use digital media as a platform for the gospel? Andy Bannister will share some key lessons that the Solas team have learnt from Short Answers, their popular series of videos tackling common questions about the Christian faith, which have been viewed, downloaded, and shared almost two million times. Andy will explain how and why the Solas team developed Short Answers, what’s worked, what’s failed, and what they’d do differently if they started again from scratch, as well as some of their plans for continuing to use digital media to reach people who might otherwise not step across the door of a church.

**Andy Bannister** is the director of the Solas Centre for Public Christianity headquartered in Scotland. He holds a PhD in Islamic studies and is an adjunct professor at Wycliffe College, University of Toronto. Andy has written several books including *An Oral-Formulaic Study of the Qur’an*, *The Atheist Who Didn’t Exist (or: The Terrible Consequences of Really Bad Arguments)*, and his latest — *Do Muslims and Christians Worship the Same God?* When not traveling, speaking, or writing, Andy is a keen hiker, mountain climber, and photographer. He is married to Astrid; they have two children, Caitriona and Christopher. See more at [andybannister.net](http://andybannister.net/)

1. **Introduction: A Short History of *Short Answers***
   1. Introducing the Short Answers series ([www.solas-cpc.org/shortanswers/](http://www.solas-cpc.org/shortanswers/)).
   2. From the corner of an office, to floating in white space, to on location in HD!
2. **Method in the Madness: The Reason for a Short Video Series**
   1. The need to both reach the sceptic and equip the Christian (1 Pet 3:15-16; Col 4:5).
   2. Especially to engage the sceptic who won’t come through the doors of a church (Acts 19:8-9).
   3. An increasingly digital world.
   4. Low budget but maximum reach and impact.
   5. Playing to our strengths as a small organisation.
   6. The ability to try ideas out, iterate fast, and learn through trial and error.
3. **Breaking Down the Process: How We Make a *Short Answers* Film**
   1. Identifying a question that we need to address.
   2. Treating it like we would a question asked in a live Q&A.
   3. Figuring out the key points that can be addressed in five minutes.
   4. Figuring out the gospel landing (e.g. Acts 17:16-31).
   5. Filming without a script.
   6. Keeping things natural.
   7. Minimal technical requirements (filming crew, editing time) but still professional.
   8. Leveraging social media to get the content out.
4. **The Benefit of Hindsight: The Lessons Learnt from 120+ Videos** 
   1. The importance of regularity and consistency.
   2. Create a continual feedback/improvement loop.
   3. You can’t predict what will work (and what won’t)!
   4. Generosity of copyright (e.g. allow/encourage others to use your material).
   5. Don’t *assume* that you know the questions or issues (e.g. Mark 10:17-27).
   6. The power of freelancers.
   7. The importance of a good description and the right keywords.
   8. Using social media advertising effectively (and cheaply!).
   9. Figuring out how to deal with comments (be they positive or negative!).
   10. The different feel of different platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube etc.).
5. **The Future**
   1. The evolution of *Short Answers* (series 1, series 2) etc.
   2. How many questions are there to be answered?
   3. Plans for series 3 connecting to Solas’s *Beginner’s Guide to Apologetics* blog series.
   4. A short pre-evangelism course designed for churches, campus groups etc.
   5. The ‘fittingness argument’.
6. **Conclusions**
   1. Reflections on the journey.
   2. We’re not experts: we’ve just learnt a lot in 6 years!
   3. Entrepreneurial evangelism.