

## **F.A.Q.'S ABOUT THE GENERAL CONVENTION'S VIRTUAL BINDER**

### **What is the General Convention's Virtual Binder?**

The Virtual Binder is how the Deputies and Bishops of the General Convention will follow the progress of legislation and elections for the 2015 General Convention. It is new this year and is accessed by an iPad. It replaces the paper binders that Deputies, Alternates and Bishops were given in past conventions to track legislation and elections at their seats during convention.

### **How difficult is it to use the Virtual Binder?**

The Virtual Binder is simple to use. The Virtual Binder is contained in an iPad, an electronic tablet with a touch screen. You simply turn on the iPad, touch the Virtual Binder icon on the screen, and the Virtual Binder opens for your use.

### **What is available on the Virtual Binder?**

All the information that has been contained in the paper binders of past conventions is available in the Virtual Binder. With the Virtual Binder users have access to all resolutions, legislative calendars, committee reports, messages to and from their House about actions taken on resolutions, election ballots and candidate biographies, and the daily agenda.

### **What new information does that Virtual Binder provide that has not been in the paper binders?**

Legislative Committee meetings are now listed on the Virtual Binder as they are scheduled, so you don't have to walk down to the Secretariat to see when committees are meeting and hearings are held. You can also look up the current status of resolutions and see both the original text and the current text of a resolution in process. The proposed budget will be available on the virtual binder when it is ready the afternoon of the 7<sup>th</sup> legislative day. The entire Constitution and Canons and the Blue Book are on the iPad for your reference. You will see the language for floor amendments on the Virtual Binder as they are filed. Ballot results for elections will also be available on the Virtual Binder.

### **What other advantages does the Virtual Binder have over a paper binder?**

One obvious advantage is portability – no more lugging heavy binders! The iPad is lightweight and can be used on the floor of the House and off the floor between sessions with an outside Wi-Fi connection.

The Virtual Binder also eliminates lag time in the Print Shop: Now, as soon as Legislative Calendars are available, they are posted on the Virtual Binder; and translations are available as soon as the translation of a document is completed. You will see messages of actions taken by the House on resolutions as soon as the message is sent, and these messages can be sorted by committee, giving committees a heads up when action is needed on one of their resolutions.

Finally, there is a "Current Action" button on the Virtual Binder to take you to the report that is currently on the House floor. No more flipping back and forth among calendars and ballots to find the correct report – just hit the current action button and you're there. This will come in handy especially in the final days of Convention.

### **Can I get a paper copy of what's in the Virtual Binder? Are paper copies available?**

There is no Print Shop for the 2015 General Convention, and so paper copies of what is on the Virtual Binder will not be distributed. However, copies of all resolutions, Daily Calendars with committee reports, house messages, daily agendas, election results, and legislative meetings are available through the General Convention website (<https://www.generalconvention.org>) – anyone with access to the Internet is able to individually download and print a copy of these documents. It is up to the individual to make paper copies. The Salt Palace maintains a Business Center for accessing the Internet and printing and copying documents. The General Convention's mobile guide, downloadable from <https://guidebook.com/g/GC2015>, also contains a list of hotel business centers and their hours and costs.

### **Who receives a Virtual Binder?**

All registered Bishops and all registered Deputies at General Convention receive an iPad with the Virtual Binder. The iPad is rented and must be returned at the conclusion of General Convention. In addition, one Clergy Alternate and one Lay Alternate per Deputation receive an iPad with the Virtual Binder, which may be shared among other Alternates. Bishops, Deputies and Alternates receive their iPad as part of on-site registration.

### **Is anyone else able to receive a Virtual Binder?**

No. Tablets are only given to persons authorized as users by the Secretary of General Convention. However, guests attending the House sessions may view the Virtual Binder's current action since it will also be projected on the big screens.

### **Can I bring my own tablet and access the Virtual Binder with my device?**

Outside of the Houses access to the virtual binder mirrored site is available to those who have the confidential website URL. This URL may be purchased. However, legislative information is freely available in a different format on the Legislative Resources page of the General Convention website at <http://generalconvention.org/home/legislative-resources>. Therefore it is not necessary to purchase the virtual binder mirrored site URL to see legislative information. In addition, as there is no Wi Fi internet in the Houses, this URL is not usable in either House.

### **How does the Virtual Binder work?**

General Convention will set up an internal Wi-Fi system on both House floors that is only accessible to the official Virtual Binder iPads. The Wi-Fi' system's access points will be directly wired to the legislative processing system on the on-site server, so what is being processed on the computer system will be seen on the Virtual Binder. The system is maintained and monitored by the Episcopal Church's Department of Management Information Services.

### **Can I access the Internet on the Virtual Binder?**

No, the internal Wi-Fi system has no access to the Internet. This is to help ensure adequate bandwidth on the Wi-Fi system so information can be efficiently delivered to all the Virtual Binders.

**Can I access my email on the Virtual Binder?**

No, there is no email access on the iPads. This, also, is to help ensure adequate bandwidth on the internal Wi-Fi system.

**Can I access the extranet on the Virtual Binder?**

No, the virtual binder iPads do not have access to the General Convention's extranet.

**Can I use a Bluetooth device with the Virtual Binder?**

No, use of Bluetooth may interfere with the Wi-Fi network. (This was discovered late in the testing process, so this information is different from what was reported in some Provincial synod meetings and other meetings.)

**Can I take notes on the Virtual Binder? Should I try to take notes on the Virtual Binder?**

The iPad default note-taking application is available on the Virtual Binder iPads, and may be used if one leaves the virtual binder application and opens the note-taking application. To retrieve notes taken on the iPad one must bring an usb thumb drive to the tech support staff, who will copy the data from the iPad to the thumb drive. A personal device or a notepad may be an easier solution for taking notes.

**Can I use the Virtual Binder outside the House Chambers?**

You will be able, if you have standard Wi-Fi access in your hotel room or at another hotspot, to have your Virtual Binder link to the Internet and access the same information that you see while in session. You will not, however, be able to go to other websites on the Virtual Binder iPads. This is necessary to protect the cached information on the iPad browser. We cannot guarantee that any Wi-Fi will work correctly with the Virtual Binder, nor is there tech support available at night. However, we have had no issues with Wi-Fi connectivity in our testing thus far.

**How do I connect to the internet on the Virtual Binder when away from the House floor?**

To connect to a Wi-Fi internet connection on the Virtual Binder first swipe to the left on the main iPad screen. This will bring up the additional icons available. Now tap on the Settings icon. Tap Wi-Fi. Nearby networks will be found automatically. Tap the network you want and then enter the password for that network if one is required. Once the password is entered, tap "Join." Once you are connected press the iPad's round "home" button to go back to the main screen. Once back at the main screen, tap on the virtual binder icon to open the virtual binder application using the newly connected internet connection.

**What if my iPad has a problem or stops working?**

If your iPad is not functioning, first ask someone who has experience with the device for help. If the problem persists, return it to Tech Support. If it cannot be immediately fixed, it can be traded in for a spare unit.

### **What will happen to the iPads at the conclusion of General Convention?**

These are rental iPads, which was the most cost-effective option available. At the end of Convention they must be returned, or a replacement fee will be charged. They cannot be purchased by individuals or Dioceses after Convention.

### **Is there a training session planned before or during General Convention?**

Yes, there will be a training session for the iPad and Virtual Binder as part of the orientation session at Convention. In addition, a Virtual Binder Demonstration video is available on the General Convention website's Orientation web page at <http://www.generalconvention.org/r/gc-orientation>. And, until June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015 a testing version of the virtual binder application is available at <https://staging-legislation.generalconvention.org/vbinder>.

### **Will there be technical support in case of issues?**

There will be volunteers on the floor of both Houses to assist users who are having problems with their devices, with some technical staff available for second tier support.

### **What if I get stuck or can't access something in the Virtual Binder?**

Review the Navigation tips for the iPad. When in doubt, go back home to the home page of the Virtual Binder, or hit the backwards arrow to retrace your steps. The Virtual Binder is built in a web-browser environment, so it should be a familiar way to navigate and find information.

### **When and where should I charge the batteries of my iPad?**

iPad batteries should be recharged every evening in your hotel room to ensure there is enough power for the next day. If batteries run out completely there is a waiting period before an iPad will boot up. So it is best to make sure they are re-charged every night.

### **Should I turn off the iPad to conserve power?**

It is good to turn off the iPad screen when not in use, but best not to completely power down the device. To turn off the iPad screen, orient the iPad vertically so that the round "home button" is at the bottom, then you will find a small button at the top right that turns the screen on or off.

One cannot do a complete power down by accident. To power down completely one must swipe a power down display which shows up if one holds the screen off button too long. If this power down option shows up, simply do not swipe it.