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El Padre: The California Mission Chatbot

[March 1, 2025 - San Jose, CA] – The Spanish missions played a key role in shaping California. Their influence is evident in the state’s architecture, language, cuisine, culture, and agricultural traditions. Many of California’s largest cities developed around these historic sites.

Each year, approximately two million visitors explore the missions, including scholars, history enthusiasts, students, teachers, hikers, religious pilgrims, and tourists.

With countless books, articles, videos, and websites dedicated to the missions, navigating the vast amount of available information can be overwhelming. This may be especially true for students who are learning about the missions for the first time.

To address this challenge, Robert Nicholson — author of the California Mission Guide^[1] — created **El Padre**, an AI-powered chatbot designed to provide clear, accurate answers about the missions. **El Padre** offers both straightforward facts and deeper insights, making it the first chatbot specifically developed to share knowledge on the California missions.

El Padre was built using Chatbit^[2], a cloud-based AI platform. The chatbot was trained on over 2.5 million words of information about the missions. While **El Padre** is still being refined, Nicholson envisions expanding its capabilities to cover broader topics in California history.

Try **El Padre** at:

<https://californiamissionguide.com/el-padre>

References

[1] California Mission Guide, 2nd Edition. WYCK Publishing. January, 2025.

[2] Chatbit. <https://chatbit.co/>