Conference
Digital Religion III
Challenges of Communication and Excommunication

Call for Papers

International Conference

Digital Religion III: Challenges of Communication and Excommunication

October 17–18, 2024
spinPLACE, Katowice, Poland

In the present discourse on new developments and interfaces in media, communication, and religious studies, many questions are being raised within an emerging field of digital religion. While acknowledging the role of technological affordances in changing communication dynamics, the main focus is placed on the transformative potential of digital culture understood as a space for new spiritual and religious activities. In addition to their dialogic and community-building function, digital platforms simultaneously foster the growth of the so-called unedited public sphere along with the us versus them divide, where the voices of the radical minority, whether expressed explicitly or veiled, echo strongly. These two phenomena, when placed on a continuum of religion and media as intertwined forces connecting and disconnecting people, draw attention to communication and/or polarization, ultimately leading to a form of "excommunication" practice. The core of our interest lies in analyzing the current relationship between communication and excommunication within the sphere of digital religion. How do spiritual leaders as well as religious authorities and institutions enact, reinforce, and perpetuate their either uniting and connecting or polarizing and dividing impact through digital platforms? What are believers' new forms of religious involvement and disconnection via social networks? How are spirituality, religion, and atheism represented and co-constructed in contemporary media? Situated within an interdisciplinary field of digital religion examining the extent to which traditional religious practice adapts to the digital environment, the conference aims to discuss the influence of new communication technologies on the formation of contemporary religious communities and exclusions, along with religious identity construction and negotiation, collective mobilisation, extremism, hate, and polarisation.

This event is a continuation of the annual workshops on Digital Religion organized by Palacky University Olomouc. This year, held at the University of Silesia in Katowice as part of the European Science City Katowice 2024 initiative, it aims to assemble a group of digital religion researchers from diverse areas of expertise to examine the communicative and potentially exclusionary functions of digital platforms and digital religious narratives. The conference will be of interest to media and communication scholars, experts in religious studies, theologians, as well as linguists and sociologists of religion.

A confirmed keynote speaker is Prof. Heidi A. Campbell from the Department of Communication, Texas A&M University, United States.

Conference leaders

Institute of Journalism and Media Communication, University of Silesia in Katowice
Department of Communication, Palacký University Olomouc
Institute of English Studies, University of Lodz

Conference venue

University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland
Spin-PLACE building, Bankowa 5, 40-007 Katowice

Submissions and deadlines

Abstracts in English, along with a short bio including full name, email address, and affiliation, should be sent via the registration webpage https://www.ethicsinmedia.eu/digital-religion24 no later than July 1st, 2024.
Notifications of acceptance will be sent to authors by July 10th, 2024.

Conference fee

The conference fee is EUR 120, and the payment deadline is September 30th, 2024.
A reduced price for PhD students and participants from low-income countries is EUR 70.

Proceedings

Selected papers will be published in a Scopus-indexed journal and an edited volume.

Organizing committee

Damian Guzek, University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland
Jaroslav Franc, Palacky University Olomouc, Czech Republic
Renata Sedlakova, Palacky University Olomouc, Czech Republic
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Ruth Tsuria, Seton Hall University, US

Patronages

Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Silesia in Katowice
Network for New Media, Religion, and Digital Culture Studies

Making your submission