



# The specifics of digitalization of traditional religions in modern Kazakhstan

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## Abstract

The article discusses possible ways and prospects for the use of digitalization in the field of religion. The purpose of the study is to provide an overview of the digital content of traditional religions in the context of the expansion of digitalization processes as an integral component of the development of modern Kazakhstani society. The theoretical and methodological basis of the article is the theory of alienation and social mediatization of religion. The authors note that information technologies in religious practices contribute to the restructuring of religious life in accordance with the changing social and cultural circumstances of the modern world. There is a radical transformation of traditional models of social relations and management, an integral artificial world is being formed, created by modern information technologies, ranging from augmented reality to virtual reality, and operating in real time. The article summarizes information about the features of the development of digital content of traditional religions, including official websites, representation in social networks, the development of specialized applications, etc. The methodology employed in this study encompasses a multi-faceted approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods. Qualitative analysis involves the examination of digital religious content, including textual, visual, and interactive elements, to discern trends, symbolism, and the impact on religious practices. Quantitative analysis encompasses data collection through surveys and analytics of online engagement with religious platforms and applications.

**Keywords:** Theology, digitalization, religions, virtual reality, Islam, Orthodoxy.

## Introduction

This article is aimed at reviewing the processes of expansion of religion as a social institution in the digital environment. It is important to note that the digitalization of religion is not just a transfer of functions and activities to an environment with more effective communication practices. There is a radical transformation of traditional models of social relations and management, an integral artificial world is being formed, created by modern information technologies, ranging from augmented reality to virtual reality, and operating in real time. At the same time, both negative and positive attitudes towards this phenomenon make it impossible to ignore its presence. In the system of constructing social reality through the mediation of modern information and communication technologies, the created meanings and meanings acquire a new status. On the basis of digital media, the scenery of modern virtual reality is being formed, and modern man "freed from the fetters of realities" (Sloterdijk, 2001) is increasingly alienated from it.



Ascertaining the importance of digitalization, it is possible to assert that the virtual is becoming today a means of access to the real. In general, researchers note an increasing trend towards the use of the Internet for religious purposes. Thus, Helland notes that the development of religion in cyberspace is not limited to providing information about it. "A significant number of people using the Internet want to get more than just information. They also want to fulfill their needs in the field of religious consciousness on the Global Web" (Helland, 2002). In general, it can be noted that the digitalization of religion occurs initially in official religious websites that have software environments where users can discuss their beliefs, discuss, share religious feelings and experiences, pray together, etc. The desired religious phenomena of virtual reality are in many ways similar to their "real" counterparts and are accessible to most believers of various faiths. These processes are fundamentally different from the tendencies of the formation of cyberspace religions, completely alienated from reality and existing only in digital format (Karaflogka, 2002).

At the same time, the question of the consequences of partial and complete replacement in everyday life of traditional communication models and established forms of communication by their digital counterparts under the influence of informatization and digitalization remains quite relevant. Thus, the format of human existence in the social space changes significantly.

### **Digitization of religion and the phenomenon of alienation**

In modern social theories, the question of the essence of virtual space is represented by both various concepts and various assessments. Virtual reality is essentially an innovative technology that allows you to create computer simulations of interactive and close to reality environments with a high level of immersion. This is a technology that was originally in demand mainly by specialists (military, engineers, etc.), and is becoming more widespread. Although the concept of "virtuality", in fact, existed in its own niche for centuries, denoting "possible worlds" in medieval religious philosophy. Actually, for religious consciousness, the doubling of the world seems to be the basis for the formation of an appropriate picture of the world, which is characterized by the assertion of the illusory nature of the material world as anticipating the true existence of the soul after the death of the body. It is from here that the duality of the attitude of various religions towards digitalization originates: negative as technical, scientific progress and moderately positive as towards the creation of an "intangible" environment that does not contradict its basic postulates. In this sense, it is possible to mention the epistemological position of the German philosopher Ludwig Andreas von Feuerbach (1957), also associated with the recognition of the doubling of the world into religious, imaginary and real. In the sense that religion is a "sacred image of human self-alienation" (Karl Marx), it is one of the ways in which the alienation of human essence exists. Thus, both religion itself and the digitalization of modern society are associated with the phenomenon of alienation. There is an alienation and objectification of the products of human consciousness and their opposition to him.

This article also used the theory of social mediatization of religion. Mediatization, as a widely used term, is defined by researchers in different ways. Among them, two traditions can be distinguished: institutionalists and social constructivists (Deacon & Stanyer, 2014). While the institutionalist tradition sees mediatization as a process of media acceptance by non-media subjects (including the institution of religion), the social constructivist tradition sees it as a changing communicative ecology of a society influenced by communication technologies.

A distinctive aspect of virtual reality is that it can evoke a particularly vivid sense of reality and presence in relation to computer virtual environments that could not be evoked with such intensity by any other digital technology before. Thus, in the context of the theory of alienation, the digitalization of religion can be viewed as an expansion of the influence of Internet technologies, penetrating almost all aspects of social life and associated with mediatization. "Digital products" in this reality can be seen as independent, alienated from society and traditional culture.



## **Traditional religions in the digital space: world and Kazakhstan experience**

The analysis of various aspects of the existence of religion in relation to virtual reality, carried out in the article, allows us to note the importance of such factors as the interactive participation of people in cyberspace, the form of communication and the level of control used by websites over their Internet environments. At the same time, there is a need to study them in detail, which, in particular, is due to the dynamism of religion, the Internet and technologies that are in constant change.

First of all, it is possible to give an example with Catholicism, which for a long time initiated the persecution of scientists and scientific knowledge. For some time now, the Roman Catholic Church has recognized the Internet and social networks as a charitable channel for communication with the flock. Catholic priests actively use network technologies to communicate with believers. The Roman Curia informed its clergy quite officially about the admission and mechanisms of such use. Thus, in particular, the Pontifical Council for Social Communication notes that “it is important that Catholics at all levels of the Church use the Internet creatively as part of the fulfillment of their duties and the promotion of the mission of the Catholic Church... Hostility and fear of innovation and technological advances are not sufficient grounds for refusal from exploiting their advantages and possibilities” (Norrie, 2011).

On the site of the Holy See of Rome - LA SANTA SEDE (<http://www.vatican.va>) you can find an explanation of what possibilities are meant. Firstly, it is an opportunity to maintain communication and organize a dialogue with believers and, as a result, “strengthen the unity of the Church”; secondly, “instant access to information” and transparency in communication with the modern world; thirdly, by not developing Internet technologies, the church may lose the opportunity to inform the world about the truth, its beliefs, and provide explanations on controversial and topical issues; and finally, the potential for feedback from believers and consideration of public opinion, as well as involvement in civic politics and participation in solving world problems.

In the Catholic Church, there are even special guidelines for preaching on the Internet and social networks. In general, Catholicism supports the following main areas of digitalization:

- creation and maintenance of official web resources (the so-called confessional cyber-religious discourse);
- sending the main rituals in an online format (confession, sermons, visiting temples, and more);
- support and development of information channels in social networks, including such popular ones as Twitter and Facebook;

It should be noted that the approach of Catholicism to work on the Internet is distinguished by sufficient professionalism. Both the official website and the Twitter account of Pope Francis I, who has been Pope since 2013, support versions in nine languages (including Arabic, Chinese and Latin). The number of subscribers and visitors to the account is more than 20 million, and only 1/3 of them use the English version.

There are few official Catholic websites in Kazakhstan. First of all, these are “Catholics of Kazakhstan. Official portal” - <http://www.catholic-kazakhstan.org>, and already traditional accounts “Catholics of Kazakhstan”: YouTube channel ([youtube.com>channel/](https://www.youtube.com/channel/)), VKontakte ([vk.com>catholicz](https://vk.com/catholicz)), Facebook ([facebook.com>catholicz](https://www.facebook.com/catholicz)).

In general, the development of Catholicism in virtual reality is focused on declarative openness and, inspired by the time, the desire to speak the same language with the modern world, since new media have already become an integral part of everyday life.



**Islam.** While there are also radical currents, modern Islam also has a positive attitude towards the spread of Internet technologies. Among the presented opinions and discussions about the influence of the Internet on Islam, the emphasis is on its informative nature, and “knowledge” as such is a blessing, on the one hand, and the ability of believers not to understand the avalanche-like flow of information, on the other. This refers not only to secular information, but also directly to the religious context, the subtleties of the teachings of madhhabs, destructive influences, etc. The conclusion of theologians is quite obvious - the presence of Islam and the Muslim clergy on the Internet is necessary, without which the development of the modern world, at the moment, is not possible. For example, in the article “Misconceptions and the Internet” published on the website of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims in the Republic of Belarus (<https://islam.by/post/zabluzhdeniya-i-internet>), it is noted that “the Internet is a mirror of our life.”

Islamic spiritual leaders, explaining their attitude to cyber technologies, appeal to the rule set forth in one of the hadiths: "Action is judged by intention." It is also emphasized that “Islam, as such, focuses on knowledge as a mechanism for human development. The Internet, being only a means of communication and dissemination of information (the essence of which is knowledge), almost initially began to be used by Muslims for the purposes of *dagwat*. Here, theologians of various denominations are practically unanimous in their assertion that the Internet is an unprecedented means of disseminating the "Word of the Almighty" in its scale, and it is "sin" not to use it. The opinion of Islamic theologians regarding this issue is presented in sufficient detail on numerous websites. For example, in the article “Muslim Internet: a tool for *dagwat* and business” on the site <https://islam.global/> it is noted that the active expansion of the presence of Islam on the Web allows solving a number of issues:

- development of ties directly within national, cultural and religious communities;
- popularization of information about the inner life of Islam, the essence of the dogma, etc., in the context of getting rid of negative stereotypes, in the public consciousness of many countries;
- communication of followers of Islam, preaching and mentoring.
- improve the efficiency and quality of outreach activities.

There are also quite popular mobile applications Appstore and Play Market. There are a lot of them, from simple ones (prayer schedules, determining the direction to Mecca, listening to the Koran and Hadiths), to technologically complex and multifunctional ones. For example, an application that allows you to make a virtual Hajj based on Android and iOS is Mecca 3D. Its developer, Bilal Chbib, emphasizes that the software product he created is equally interesting both for followers of Islam and for any users who will have an educational opportunity to learn about the history of Islam, its holy places and traditions. Such applications are especially useful for children and educational purposes. “There are thousands of works by famous scientists on how to perform the Hajj, but for those who cannot do this, they will be less useful than the opportunity to see all this “with their own eyes” - to see how believers circumambulate the Kaaba, attend standing on the mountain Arafat and many other important elements of the pilgrimage. The modern world has become so global that if you just touch it with your fingers, it would be unwise not to use it to study Islam.” In addition, the application makes it possible to visit such an important Muslim shrine as the Forbidden Mosque in Mecca, which is not possible for Muslims in the real world (Virtual Hajj. Islam-today with a link to HuffingtonPost // <https://islam-today.ru/obsestvo/nauka-i-tehnologii/virtualnyj-hadz/>). In the context of a global pandemic, this element of digitalization is also gaining importance.

At the same time, in order for the Internet to bring only benefits, certain advice to believers is still necessary. They are also featured on numerous official Muslim general websites. Some of them are quite typical and can be applied not only to religious life, but also to everyday practices and situations:



- It is necessary to check any information. This applies to both secular and religious information. Of course, this is not easy work, but it is necessary in the life of a true Muslim. It can be added that in the life of a sane person;
- This is especially true of "harsh", categorical information, not only about the foundations of the dogma, but also about individual councils. It must be explanatory, persuasive, and must also be taken critically.

As an example, the requirement to achieve ritual purity before prayer through ablution is given. However, in real life there can be many circumstances, and then "tayammum" comes to the rescue. A "good", high-quality Internet resource will definitely mention this," the authors emphasize. Also, an example with the 2020 quarantine is also possible, since official resources cannot call on believers to violate quarantine measures in the name of observing the accuracy of rituals.

Another very interesting advice: communication on the Internet should only complement real communication. If you meet or communicate by correspondence and have not seen a person (and therefore do not know his values, views, lifestyle), then you need to be careful. Evidence of negative intentions may be assessments of your family's lifestyle, appeals, etc.

The general message of Islam in this matter, as well as in other traditional religions, can be interpreted as the assumption of a "virtual reality" of being, indistinguishable from the real one in its attributive characteristics. This can be understood first of all from the recommendations for believers on what can or cannot be done in real and virtual life. For example, you can even ask such a question: "Are there any actions that are unacceptable in everyday life, but allowed in a "virtual" form?". For example, Mufti of the Republic of Dagestan Akhmad-hadji Abdulaev answers this question in his interview about the influence of the Internet on Islam (<http://scienceport.ru/en/library/liball/4063-internet-i-islam/>). In general, the answer can be described as negative - everything that is allowed in a person's everyday life is also allowed on the Internet, and everything that is forbidden remains forbidden. In particular, that in assessing the intentions of a believer is the most important element of Islam, no matter what the consciousness of a person was turned to. And here, once again, you can read advice on ensuring the information security of yourself, loved ones, and especially children, since "a Muslim is obliged to protect his family everywhere, and the Internet is no exception."

In general, the latest research notes that the results of quantitative analysis show that, for example, Islamic videos on YouTube are constantly growing every year without any decline, that is, social networks affect the distribution (production and consumption) of religious content and change the previous practices of Islam (Al-Zaman, 2022).

Considering this topic, we should dwell separately on the development of Islam in the digital space of Kazakhstan. According to official sources, the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan (SAMK/KMDB) not only approves the use of the Internet and social networks for religious purposes, but also actively cooperates in this matter with the Ministry of Information and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The main Internet portal of Kazakhstan is the "Official site of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan" - [muftyat.kz](http://muftyat.kz) > [ru/kmdb](http://ru/kmdb). Social networks are gaining more and more popularity: Youtube channel - MUFTIYAT KMDB - YouTube, Instagram - [instagram.com>muftyat.kz/](https://www.instagram.com/muftyat.kz/), Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/muftyat>, V Kontakte - [http://vk.com /muftyatkz](http://vk.com/muftyatkz).

It can be noted that since 2013, the relevant ministry, together with the SAMK, as well as a number of educational institutions, has been implementing the project to create the Kazislam Internet portal. Its purpose is to provide believers or the general public with objective information about the doctrine, spiritual foundations and culture of Islam, the development of Kazakh national culture





and spirituality, as well as countering destructive information influences and modern processes. The Committee on Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Information and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan participates in the implementation of several information projects: "Kazakhstan dintanushylary / Religious scholars of Kazakhstan", "Din zhane zaman / Religion and modernity", "Din alemi / World of religion", "Omira zhayly") . The scope of their activities also includes the discussion of the problems of religion in the social networks familiar to modern people Facebook, VKontakte, Instagram, Twitter. Their audience has already exceeded ¼ million, although this is not much on a global scale.

**Orthodoxy.** The initial attitude of Orthodoxy and the ROC to the use of Internet technologies in a certain sense recalls the origins of Christianity as a religion that gives comfort to the oppressed.

Within the framework of Orthodoxy, both official websites and mobile applications based on Android and iOS (Bible, prayer book, church calendar, etc.) function. According to experts, one of the most popular are religious calendars, which clarify the list of numerous small and large Orthodox holidays, fasts, etc. Among the large number of sites are: "Pravoslavie.ru" (<http://www.pravoslavie.ru>); official website of the Moscow Patriarchate (<http://www.patriarchia.ru>); "Sedmitza.ru" (<http://www.sedmitza.ru>); "Radonezh" (<http://www.radrad.ru>); "Vera" (<http://molitva-info.ru/>), also unofficial sites: Andrey Kuraev's blog (<http://diak-kuraev.livejournal.com/>) and the Achilles web resource.

Among the Kazakh Orthodox web resources can be listed:

- "Orthodoxy in Kazakhstan. Official site" - <https://mitropolia.kz/>
- "Dioceses of the Orthodox Church of Kazakhstan" - <http://www.cerkov.kz>
- Astana church deanery - <http://www.sobor.kz/> and others.

The websites of regional dioceses are also presented on the Internet, and with almost any search query containing the concepts of "Orthodoxy" and Kazakhstan, links to social network accounts "Metropolitan District in the Republic of Kazakhstan" appear: VKontakte - [vk.com>mitropolia\\_kz](https://vk.com/mitropolia_kz); Instagram - [instagram.com>mitropolia\\_kz](https://www.instagram.com/mitropolia_kz); Facebook - [facebook.com>Mitropoliakaz/](https://www.facebook.com/Mitropoliakaz/), and even Odnoklassniki - [ok.ru>kzmitropolia](https://ok.ru/kzmitropolia).

The content and structure of the sites is relatively stable and of the same type - a selection of information to clarify the main tenets of the faith, relevant theological information on the topics of theology, dogma, hagiography, church history and art. There is a column "Questions to the priest" and a section of church news. Both are devoted to problems and controversial, tense issues in today's church reality.

In the context of the problem under study, it is interesting to substantiate the peculiar ontological status of cyberreality. "Virtual reality is a complete reflection of the real human world. Here are the same passions, the same sins and the same temptations. There is nothing new. And to behave in the network, a Christian must be the same as "for real", which is most related to the rules of communication. Indeed, on the Internet, people are more open and often more aggressive. But anger and hatred are not compatible with Christianity. And insulting a person on the forum is the same sin as in person. In addition to that, it is important to avoid addiction, writes the Orthodox information portal "Faith" (<http://molitva-info.ru/duhovnaya-zhizn/pravoslavie-ob-internete.html>). The article also provides counterarguments against the statements about the "incompatibility of faith and digital technologies, the Internet" (the author calls them myths). There are five such debunked "myths", and their content can be briefly summarized as follows:

"The Internet is not the right place for preaching Christian truths." Orthodox theologians argue that the Internet cannot be evaluated in a system of axiological dichotomies (good-bad, good, etc.). Telecommunication technologies are simply a means that expands the possibilities of communication and information exchange. God allowed (initiated) the invention of computers, computers, the Internet, and the content of information exchange must be filled with Christian



truths (in the terminology of Christianity - "Good News"), instead of "meaningless news and gossip".

1) *The Church does not need to create and maintain its own media and communications.* This is not true, since the media offer their own vision of the situation, create an information space for society, giving significance to some events, while only mentioning others, or generally leaving the news channels behind the scenes. The church, on the other hand, needs to expand information about its activities. Thus, the Internet allows not only to clarify the schedule of services in almost any parish, but also to make available any religious information, recommendations to believers, decisions of Councils, etc.

2) *The Internet can harm the education of the believer.* This is not true, since it is the Internet that contains an incomparable amount of information, including information useful for a Christian.

3) *Believers need only live communication.* The answer emphasizes that virtual communication does not carry a complete alternative to real communication or the Sacrament of Confession, but there is no harm in it. It is useful both with friends, and with fellow believers, and with a priest. The latter, by the way, may well instruct "holy children" through social networks

4) *Christian virtue and helping one's neighbor are possible only in the material world.* It is emphasized that this is fundamentally wrong, since the collection of money, donations online is greatly simplified by many services and is convenient for those who need help. Spiritual help, however, is generally not limited in virtual reality, and a "kind word" can freely spread in an environment whose deep nature is text and hypertext.

Much material for the analysis of this topic can be found by referring to traditional and modern Buddhism. It should be noted that Buddhism itself has a positive, even somewhat distant attitude towards the existence of virtual reality. The origins of this understanding can be considered the statements of the Dalai Lama XIV, who proclaimed that Buddhism must not deny, but integrate with modern science, otherwise it will become obsolete and lose its uniqueness and attractiveness. He also initiated the creation of the international institute "Mind and Life", aimed at implementing the planned integration. (Dalai Lama, 2003).

With the development of cyber technologies, a specific digital sphere is being created around Buddhism, uniting religious and non-religious elements. The main goals of Buddhism related to finding peace of mind and personal growth, on the one hand, do not contradict the postulates of the existence of virtual reality, and on the other hand, are fully consistent with the challenges of the time, the spiritual searches of modern society. This circumstance makes it possible to single out two directions in the development of virtual Buddhism - 1) the direction of the digitalization of Buddhism, similar to other traditional religions, and 2) a specific syncretic cyber-Buddhism, which has only an indirect relation to the classical one.

Regarding the first direction, it can be noted that these are purposefully digital products with a pronounced Buddhist specificity. For example, since 2009, the official Twitter account of the Dalai Lama has been gaining popularity, with the number of subscribers approaching twenty million. The content of the account consists mainly of statements about self-improvement, life, peace, the nature of human relationships, etc. Mobile applications have been developed - Buddhist Meditation, Buddha Quotes 500. Their functionality is relatively simple, and is aimed at helping in meditation and philosophizing; it includes time for meditation, image of mantras, their recitation, daily useful tips for the development of spiritual practices, quotes from primary sources, etc.

The problems of virtual Buddhism are discussed in detail in a number of works by Helland (2014). He notes that the Tibetan tradition was one of the first organized religions to deeply embrace the Internet, recognizing both its potential to communicate and communicate with its people in the diaspora and its power as a mass medium to communicate with the world (Helland, 2014) . The



primary reason for this is rooted not so much in religion as in politics, in the so-called "Tibetan situation". Its essence is that despite the fact that "geographically" Tibet is subordinate to the Chinese state, the Tibetan community and religious organizations are motivated to use the Internet to promote and preserve their religious and cultural identity. As the World Wide Web developed, a number of websites were created to promote and support the "Tibetan situation", while Tibetan communities in the diaspora began to develop comprehensive websites that provided information on everything from Tibetan restaurants and crafts to localized political activities and international news. "The power of the Internet in creating virtual communities," writes C. Helland, "has fascinated the Tibetans also because the followers of Buddhism scattered around the globe turn this hobby into a series of cyberspace activities that, due to their ability to instantly transmit information, profoundly change the world. In the course of this process, a virtual Tibet has been created that is virtually inaccessible, free, enjoying its freedom and growing (Samphel, 2004).

The representation of the Buddhist community in modern Kazakhstan, according to official data, is insignificant, mainly the so-called "Won Buddhism". The activities of this religious association in Kazakhstan are covered mainly on news and information portals.

In accordance with the typology of religious discourses Karaflogka A. in Kazakhstan, the so-called scientific, objective religious discourse is quite widely represented. In particular, the application "Religious movements of Kazakhstan" has been developed in the Republic of Kazakhstan, available on the Play Market or Appstore, and presenting a variety of information about traditional confessions, information about the features of extremist religious movements, and recommendations on how to avoid destructive influences (Lifanov, 2022).

Finally, it follows separately about the unique scientific and information project of the Office of Public Development of Almaty - "Religious Map" - <http://religionmap.kz/>. This is a fully interactive project that allows you to carry out a detailed search for information about all religious sites in the city of Almaty.

The search is carried out according to several criteria, according to which the information is systematized:

- "Confession" (in the drop-down menu you can choose: Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Jewish religion, new religions);
- "Type" (it is possible to choose options: a place of worship, a place for the sale of religious literature and paraphernalia, a prayer room;
- "District" (you can specify a specific district of Almaty).

The site is very useful not only for believers, but also for scientists, students and teachers, religious scholars, specialists from government agencies and public associations, etc. creeds, but also accumulated detailed information about all places of worship (as of May 1, 2020 - 180 registered religious associations), the activities of missionaries in the Republic of Kazakhstan, an information and analytical base was collected on a wide variety of religious premises, including bookstores, prayer rooms, associations non-traditional and much more. An important feature is the ability to make adjustments, leave a request in case of new information about the places of religious activities, the sale of attributes and literature, etc.

The preamble of the site states that "180 registered religious associations operate in the metropolis, representing 17 of the 18 confessions of Kazakhstan. It follows from this that about 95% of all confessions in Kazakhstan carry out their religious activities in the city."





## Conclusion

As part of the study of the issue of digitalization of religion, both the consideration of confessional features and the forms and mechanisms of individual religious practices are relevant. As shown in the article in cyberspace, religions in general exist in the format of information presented in a scientific-descriptive and preaching-missionary form. The user accesses information about religion, rituals, dogmas, similarly to any other information on the Web. The desired new form of religiosity does not seem to arise here, since in this case it could be argued that everyone who seeks, for example, information about space, becomes an astronaut. The transformation of religion in cyberspace is based on the desire of people to realize their religious needs through the Internet. These will be the desired religious practices, representing, first of all, elements of religious communication, since one of the most important components of the development of the Internet is the expansion of its communication capabilities.

The religious online environment is being shaped by two equally powerful forces. One of these forces is the "end user", the other is the "content provider". There is a unique relationship between these two groups, much like the relationship between religion and the media (MacWilliams, 2006), they are not separate realms, but are powerful forces that come together and combine to create religion on the Internet. Thus, it is possible to distinguish between "online religion" and "online religion". "Religion-online" is information about religion, where the Internet is used as a medium. This type corresponds to the type of communication "one-multiplicity" - a form of one-way communication, when the user does not have the opportunity to react to the information offered to him and only passively perceives it. In this case, the website was created to use traditional forms of communication to represent a religion based on the vertical concept of control, status and power. Here information is presented about religion in such a way that the Internet can communicate with each other. Information regarding doctrine, dogma, politics, and organization is provided, but no way is designed for members to share their beliefs and contribute to the site. It is a form of top-down communication that is not structured to receive feedback and interaction from the people receiving the information.

Most people who surf the World Wide Web want to use it as a form of multilateral communication. By far, the most common form of religious communication on the Internet will be communication both with clergy and with other believers, in any possible format. Almost all sites support this simple feature: you can write an email, ask a question in a chat, join a video conference, and the like. This also includes preaching. This component of the digitalization of religion, in fact, does not introduce fundamental changes in religious practices. More complex phenomena can be considered any form of "action" in space and time: visiting a temple, visiting holy places (pilgrimages), prayers, rituals, sacraments, etc. Theologians at the same time emphasize that in the context of globalization it is impossible to limit the influence on a person only from the side of the religious community, to recommend viewing only certain sites. This is impossible, both in a secular and religious context, and is actively discussed outside the topic of virtual religiosity, since it affects such a topical issue as the information security of the individual and society. Representatives of religious organizations also focus on this point, offering believers simple advice on ensuring their Internet security. In contrast to the widely discussed topic of cybersecurity from a technical point of view, religions focus on its semantic components.

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