



**Call for Papers for Special Issue of
[Information, Communication & Society](#) on**

Religion and the Internet: The Online-Offline Connection

Guest Editors: Heidi Campbell & Mia Løvheim

Call Description

In the initial waves of religion and internet research focus was often placed on how the internet would drastically change religious practice and ideology, due to growth of religious communities online and integration of religious rituals and practices into digital environments. Much attention was given to the novel uses and trends such as those seen in New Religious Movements online where once fringe or secretive religious groups were given a public platform making them more visible. Focus was also placed on how mainstream religions, such as Christianity and Islam, were appropriating to new media technologies or critiquing internet use and with a particular focus on the United States and Western Europe. As the internet has become increasingly embedded in the everyday lives of many researchers attention is now being drawn to the connection between online and offline religious practice, structures and belief. Furthermore, the rise of new software and models of internet communication, often referred to as Web 2.0, has created a heightened interest in issues of user lead content creation and web based social interaction. At the heart of these developments is an important issue, considering to what degree spiritual practices online are transformative or to what extent they reflect larger changes in religious culture and institutions offline. This special issue of *Information, Communication and Society* seeks to explore this area by considering what we think we know about the relationship between online and offline religion and what issues are still in need of more detailed investigation.

Aims and Scope

In particular this special issues aims to explore the relationship between online and offline forms of religious practice and community. Key questions include:

- What is truly unique about the performance of religion online?
- How is the practice and conception of religion online connected to offline practices, communities and institutions?
- In what ways does religion online reflect trends seen offline in religious culture and practice?
- How do these transformations connect with issues of globalization and glocalization?

Possible topics may include (but are not limited to):

- The interactions between online communities and offline religious institutions
- How participants in online religious activities frame their involvement in offline religious groups
- Responses of offline religious authorities to religious manifestations and practices online from their community or tradition
- Religious organizations and/or denominations use of the internet, or debates regarding official policy towards and new media use
- Attempts of diasporic communities to connect with their faith tradition and sacred sites via the Internet
- Theoretical work that links research on contemporary religious practice to online religion, i.e.

the relationship between internet use and everyday religion, the role of emotions in religious internet use

- How religious actors deal with questions of time, space and information management in online and offline society
- How Virtual worlds and computer games seek to present or re-present "sacred space"

Submission Details

Please submit a 300-500 word abstract to the guest editors as an e-mail attachment to religiononline@yahoo.com no later than 10 February 2010. The four best abstracts will also be submitted as a panel for consideration at the International Media, Religion and Culture Conference to be held in Toronto, Canada (9-13 August 2010). Please include full contact information and a biographical note (up to 75 words) on each of the authors and indicate whether you wish to be considered for the MRC panel submission.

Authors of accepted abstracts will be notified by 6 March 2009 and will then be invited to submit a full paper to the guest editors. Final manuscripts should be no more than 8,000 words, including notes and references, conform to APA style, and submitted by 20 August 2010. Please note all papers will be subject to anonymous peer review following submission.

Important dates:

10 February 2010: Deadline for abstract submission

6 March 2010: Announcement of results and full paper invitations

9-13 August: MRC Conference (<http://journalism.ryerson.ca/cms/websites/CMRC2010/index.aspx>)

20 August 2010: Submission of full papers

October 2011: Publication of special issue

For Inquiries, abstracts, or submission of full papers should be addressed to:

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