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## RELIGION IN THE INTERNET SPACE

***Abstract:** the article discusses the features and key types of interactions between religious institutions and the digital space. The article provides examples of the main types of the interactions. Different religious communities use the Internet as a tool to attract followers and increase interest in the subject.*

***Keywords:** religion, Internet, social networks.*

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## РЕЛИГИЯ В ИНТЕРНЕТ ПРОСТРАНСТВЕ

*Аннотация:* в статье рассматриваются особенности взаимодействия религиозных институтов и интернет-пространства. На примерах обозначены основные виды взаимоотношений.

*Ключевые слова:* религия, интернет, социальные сети.

The phenomenon of rapid development of the Internet and the fact that it is almost daily used by a huge number of users around the World, attributes to the need for multinational communication. Religion as a formation could not evade such an extensive network of international communications.

Religious officials around the world are interested in disseminating information about their confession and proclaiming essential dogmas. Earlier religious organizations gained access to commercialization by providing religious services, books and paraphernalia to a huge number of followers. Thus, previously existing religious ceremonies are altered, being technologically sophisticated.

Various religions get familiar with the Internet and have an impact on religious organizations to shape public opinion about specific doctrines and set new moral principles as the guidelines for web users' activities.

The above listed matters account for the alteration in traditional religious types in response to changing social needs. Religion interacts with the society using various communication channels including the Internet as a wide-scale social media. Each of the universal religions provides an individual approach to interacting with its followers by means of the World Wide Web.

### 1. Christian religion:

Christianity is an Abrahamic world religion based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ described in the New Testament. Christians believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah. Christians do not doubt the historicity of Jesus Christ.

Christianity is the largest religion in the world both in terms of the number of adherents, which is about 2.3 billion, and in terms of geographical distribution – in every country of the world there is at least one Christian community.

The largest currents in Christianity – Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Protestantism. In 1054 there was a split of the Christian Church into Catholic and Orthodox). The emergence of Protestantism was the result of the reformation movement in the Catholic Church in the XVI century.

Christianity originated in the first century in Palestine, then under the rule of the Roman Empire, originally among the Aramaic population of Mesopotamia and in the first decades of its existence spread to other provinces and among other ethnic groups.

The most widespread universal religion mostly inclines to follow the idea that the Internet has become an integral part of the life of the followers, that is why it is necessary to lamp together new patterns of preaching and rendering religious services.

In 2013, Pope Benedict XVI pointed out the importance of social networks on the Internet. Thus he assigned the attitude of the Catholic Church to the Internet. The Church should grapple with a new environment, and not to oppose them. He also established a new tradition of running social media accounts to interact with the congregation. So, by the end of 2013, the Pope's Twitter account had had more than 20 million subscribers. Today, various sermons are webcasted. It is possible to confess online, and pastors around the world are heartily communicating with the congregation by the means of social networks.

In 2015, Patriarch Cyril of Moscow and All Russia appealed of the all Orthodox clergymen to interact with the followers through social networks more extensively. «We have no right but to be where our parish is or may be. And, specifically today our parish is in social networks. Notably it is the most active one» – the Patriarch of ROC declared. In the same year the Patriarch set up a profile on «VKontakte» Russian network, which is currently managed by the press service on behalf of the Patriarch. The account is still developing, however it is not as successful as the Pope's.

There are global websites such as «Pravoslavie.ru» which acts as a religious media. There is a large number of useful features for the congregation there. Among

them are the online links to some functional mobile applications for the followers and a topical online forum where priests answer to users' queries. There are also numerous communities on the Russian social network «VKontakte», and most of them also act as Orthodox religious media being supported by the Orthodox Church institutions.

## 2. Islamic religion:

Despite its age, Islam is considered the youngest Faith compared to others. It was formed in the Arabian Peninsula: Muhammad appeared before the people and called himself the messenger of the One God. Thus began the history of such a powerful and significant religion, which quickly began to grow in the East, Africa, India, Asia, Egypt, Europe, Indonesia and the Caucasus. Modern Islam, as well as the other universal religions considers the Internet as a public weal that can be used as a tool to communicate with followers around the world. The Council of Muftis in Russia approves of the use of social networks for the information exchange and the development of interactions between different religious and national communities. Although the Supreme Mufti of Russia Talgat Tadjudin does not have his own profile on social networks.

Various posts with the hashtag «Mass\_live» were posted on Twitter. Assisted by them, people expressed their admiration for the ceremony and thanked Mufti for the opportunity to see the heart of Islam on the festive day for themselves. According to the organizers, it was necessary to prove Islam to be the religion of peace.

Unfortunately, many radical religious groups use the Internet to recruit new supporters. However, we should note the successful efforts of the national security to crack down on such agitators by suppressing their activities in social networks.

Nowadays religion serves as a cause of the virtual world conversion, and claims its part of the influence in the web. So it gains an offering to influence on significant social struggle, and gets the followers around the world act together.

The Internet provides all necessary conditions to the interaction between religions. It combines the religious meaning and enhances the integrity of different religious groups on the basis of common ideas.

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