

Worldview and religious-cultural orientations of the "Digital Age Human"

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the impact of the digital era on fundamental aspects of human life, including issues of faith, morality, and cultural identity. It highlights that digital technologies have become an integral part of modern human life, making it impossible to ignore their obvious cultural significance today. The focus is on analyzing how contemporary technologies, such as artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things, are reshaping traditional religious practices, facilitating the emergence of new forms of spirituality, and altering traditional religious structures. Both positive and negative consequences of such transformations for individuals and society are discussed. By utilizing digital products and technologies and entering cyberspace, religion strives to make religious heritage, culture, and tradition more understandable and accessible to a larger number of people. The adaptation and transformation of religion can be traced in various directions of activity related to the implementation and mastery of cyberspace and digital space. Examples of the digitalization of religion and religious digital products are provided to substantiate the transformation of religion. The idea is substantiated that studying digital culture today means not so much analyzing its phenomena and artifacts per se, but rather studying the broad transformations occurring with the spread of digital technologies in culture at large.

KEYWORDS

*digital realm,
digitalization of religion,
transformation,
worldview,
traditional,
destructive ideas*

Introduction

A key feature of the early 21st century is the increasing impact of high technologies on shaping the worldviews and religious-cultural preferences of modern humans. Unlike other types of technologies, high technologies can profoundly transform the cultural space due to their culture-generating power. Their development has caused significant changes not only in the economy but also in the socio-cultural sphere, leading to the formation of an information society and accelerating globalization. These technologies are changing the socio-cultural environment by influencing the system of values, ideals, beliefs, and stereotypes of modern people.

High technologies open new opportunities for people, enhance the quality of life, facilitate labor, and provide new ways of organizing leisure. They expand opportunities for self-realization, allow overcoming spatial barriers, and combat diseases that were previously considered incurable. However, along with new opportunities, high technologies also carry risks such as simplifying the manipulation of consciousness, which puts the freedom of choice into question, and they contribute to the loss of a sense of reality and an increase in individualization, which can lead to increased loneliness.

High technologies represent a complex phenomenon that requires careful analysis and understanding. Their rapid development often does not give people time to fully realize the potential consequences. In the modern world,

people often relate to technologies on an emotional-evaluative level: they either idealize them or experience fear towards them. In these conditions, it is the task of philosophy to develop a rational approach to the latest technologies. A scientific analysis of the religious and cultural orientations of people in the digital age will allow us to study changes in religious consciousness in general and religious practices in connection with the spread of the Internet. An analysis of various scientific approaches to the problem and specific religious practices will make it possible to respond not only to the technical and technological challenges, but also to the metaphysical ones, which the digital space poses to religion. This will make it possible to rethink the original authorities and values, to find other ways of practice that would allow religion to continue to be on the Internet, affecting not only identification practices, but also the value dominants of culture.

The aim of this study is to examine the impact of modern information and digital technologies on the worldview and religious-cultural orientations of the "digital age person." This aim encompasses several key research directions:

- analysis of the main characteristics and distinctive features of the worldview of the "digital age person";
- investigation of changes in religious practices and spiritual orientations associated with the use of digital technologies;



- assessment of the impact of social networks and online platforms on the formation of cultural and religious values;
- identification of trends in the change of cultural identity and religious affiliation under the influence of digitalization;
- study of the role of virtual communities and online groups in supporting and transforming religious and cultural traditions.

Research methods

The methodological foundation of this research includes a detailed analysis and reinterpretation of the settings of philosophical and popular science works, as well as digital content, aimed at studying changes in religious practices and spiritual orientations associated with the use of digital technologies; a systemic approach that allows establishing the interdependence of worldview, axiological, and moral components of the information-digital society; and an axiological method that enables the analysis and structuring of the value slice of the worldview of the modern information society.

Conceptual foundation. The basis of this research rests on the main principles that underlie the study of the worldview and religious-cultural orientations of modern humans in the context of digitalization.

Key Features of the Worldview in the Digital Age. The main aspects of worldview in the digital era relate to changes in the perception of reality and self-identification. The development of the internet, mobile technologies, and artificial intelligence has enabled people to interactively engage with the surrounding world. Reality in the digital age becomes a mutable construct, fundamentally changing our understanding of authenticity. Self-identification also becomes more flexible and multifaceted, with the ability to create various online personas, which can affect the understanding of one's own identity.

It should be noted that when analyzing opinions on the impact of the digital information environment on worldviews, one can conclude that there is a group of scholars who believe in the significant role of digital technologies in ideological changes in society. On the other hand, there are groups of researchers who hold a critical view on this matter. There is also the issue of the interaction between technology and values: on one hand, those with worldviews create the digital environment, while on the other, this environment can adjust and change the ideas initially embedded in it.

There is a whole spectrum of main characteristics and features of the impact of digital technologies on the substantive aspects of forming the modern person's worldview. These characteristics might not have manifested in the "offline" society before. At the current stage, digital reality dominates in shaping societal worldviews, as technological needs are prioritized. At different stages of societal development, one reality or another has always prevailed. Today, the priority of digital reality is observed, establishing new types of interactions between different formats of human activity. Another feature of the impact of digital technologies is the cybertransformation of worldview transmission, where virtual agents not tied to any individual by stable social relationships replace humans and collectives. These include bots and cybersimulacra. Often, the formats of interaction with them are determined by the algorithms of digital platforms, which pursue their own goals.

Religious and Cultural Orientations in the Digital Age. The digital age has also brought changes to religious and cultural orientations. Traditional religions have adapted to new conditions, using online platforms to conduct services, which became especially relevant during the pandemic. Virtual reality and other digital technologies offer new forms of spiritual experience, leading to new forms of religiosity, including ideas of transhumanism. This reflects society's effort to make sense of its place in a changing world.

In the era of digital technology, religious and cultural life undergoes significant changes. Traditional religions find new ways to adapt to modern conditions, while emerging forms of spirituality reflect people's desire to understand their place in a dynamically changing world of technology.

In 1996, American researcher S. O'Leary suggested that in the future, traditional forms of religion would undergo changes due to the impact of digital technologies, leading to the emergence of a digital religion (O'Leary, 1996: 195). Over the twenty years following the publication of this hypothesis, a field has developed that explores the influence of the information-digital sphere on religion.

G. Grieve has spoken about the emergence of digital religion as a distinctive process of cultural hybridization. Like many other researchers, G. Grieve acknowledged the obvious fact of the establishment of digital religion as an independent phenomenon (Grieve, 2013: 110).

H. Campbell, in his theory of network religion, considers this realm as an essential component of online culture, which forms and evolves because of reflecting the symbols, values, and practices of the offline world (Campbell, 2012: 68). The phenomenon of digital religion embodies fundamental changes that cannot be reduced to technological innovations alone. They must be considered together with changes in religious experience, values, and mechanisms of religious leadership. Heidi Campbell describes four waves of digital religion studies. The evolution within these four waves of digital religion studies provides a comprehensive understanding of how this field has matured and adapted in response to both technological advances and a growing understanding of their impact on religious practices. Scholars such as Morten Hojsgaard and Margit Warburg were the first to define these waves of research, starting with the first wave, which focused on identifying and documenting trends in religious use of the Internet. This stage was characterized by both optimistic and pessimistic predictions about the Internet's influence on religion. During the second wave of research, researchers acknowledged the fact that manifestations of religion on the Internet were growing, not diminishing. Therefore, the focus was on identifying key trends and typologies of religious practice on the Internet. The emphasis shifted to a more balanced view that recognizes that digital media are not just tools but a transformative force changing religious identity, community, and practice. The third wave of research demonstrated a theoretical turn. Here, scholars saw the importance of applying previous knowledge about media work, as well as theories from sociology and religious studies to study what is genuinely new in the various manifestations of religion on the Internet. It recognized the blending of online and offline realms, focusing on the subtle influence of digital media on religious experience and the practical consequences of these blended spaces. The fourth wave can be characterized as seamless integration and expanded research. At this stage, how digital practices are organically woven into the fabric of everyday religious life, erasing the distinctions between online and offline, is

examined. Scholars explore existential, ethical, political, and social aspects of digital religion, addressing complex issues such as gender, race, and class within religious digital interactions (*Campbell, 2023: 226*).

The development of these waves reflects the growing complexity in the study of digital religion, moving from initial observations and reactions to a more sophisticated and detailed understanding of the complex interactions between technology and religion. This event signifies a transition from considering digital media as external tools to recognizing them as integral components of contemporary religious life, influencing and shaping contemporary spiritual landscapes. As this field continues to evolve, future research is likely to delve deeper into the theoretical and practical implications of these findings, exploring new digital innovations and their impact on the religious sphere.

Digital media play a key role in transforming religious practices. Although contemporary society often seems "secularized," religion continues to be an important element in the lives of many people. Despite skepticism about religion in the scientific and technological era, it still retains its influence as many seek meaning in life and understanding of their place in the world.

The Impact of Digital Media on Religious Practices. The internet and social networks have transformed traditional methods of believer interaction, providing access to religious materials and means for online communication. Believers can participate in religious events remotely, which is especially important for those living in remote areas or facing physical limitations. Social networks facilitate the creation of virtual religious communities where participants can share their experiences and receive support.

Furthermore, digital technologies facilitate the development of prayer and meditation apps, making religious practices more integrated into everyday life. For example, many religious organizations offer apps with prayers and biblical quotes, improving access to spiritual resources.

Thus, digital media not only modify the ways of conducting religious practices but also open new opportunities for spiritual development and communication on a global level. New communication tools allow for the creation of horizontal social connections between traditional and new religious groups, improving their informational and communicative interaction. At the same time, interreligious dialogue in the digital space remains limited, with each religious group often forming its own autonomous segment, not interacting with the resources of other denominations.

The influence of digital media on religious practices. The merging of various media platforms and the shift to interactive media systems are becoming key trends in the development of the Internet. The advancement of information technology leads to a multimedia approach to presenting information, known as convergence, becoming a main feature of modern internet resources. Convergent sites integrate text, illustrations, videos, infographics, and other elements, enriching the user experience. This process includes the use of internet radio and television, widget inserts—small videos—and content created using mobile devices. It is important to note that video content can not only be the main content of a site but also serve auxiliary functions, supplementing textual information. Many religious sites use videos to enhance their message.

Research into religious communication in the blogosphere allows for an analysis of interest in religion among active young people on the Internet, the self-organization capabilities of members of various religious organizations,

and the processes of forming virtual communities. Participants in virtual religious communities, while remaining part of their parish communities, actively engage in blogs on religious topics, leading discussions and making acquaintances. In the blogosphere, interreligious and interdenominational discussions often take place with less tolerance than at the official level, sometimes escalating into fierce polemics and insults.

The significance of the Internet as a platform for religious speech and practice has increased, and some consider it a suitable medium for magical experiments and rituals. Sects and religious gatherings have also found a new home in digital networks. Some religious societies have decided to move their activities online, leading to a hyper-mediated religious experience. The adoption of digital technologies also fuels religious imagination, particularly in the context of animism. The use of digital technology for spiritual purposes, known as technoshamanism, is becoming increasingly popular among neopagans, occultists, and New Agers. Technoshamanism is a cultural movement that combines technology, electronic dance music, and spiritual or religious components. Technoshamanism challenges traditional views of spirituality and religion. As a result, the Internet has become a sanctuary for digital deities and technoshamanism, opening new avenues for religious expression and practice. Digital deities and the broader framework of digital religion challenge and change traditional notions of religious experience and spiritual engagement. This phenomenon opens a perspective where technology not only supports but actively participates in creating and mediating religious practices (*Munir, 2023: 120*).

In "Digital Youth and Religion," O. Golan explores the nuances and dynamic intersections of youth culture, digital culture, and religious studies. In it, he highlights the significant changes taking place in the religious practice and identity of young people due to the proliferation of digital technologies and online platforms. The way young people interact with religion differs significantly from the methods of previous generations. Their use of digital tools to explore, express and experience their faith often leads to new forms of religious expression that are less tied to traditional institutions. Digital platforms facilitate a wide range of religious activities, from virtual worship and online religious events to digital expressions of faith. These platforms not only provide new opportunities for religious participation, but also challenge traditional religious authorities and hierarchies. Particularly on platforms such as Instagram and YouTube, visual representations of religion play a crucial role in the construction of religious identity. These visual interactions can range widely, from creating content that aligns with traditional religious imagery to using religious symbols in new and sometimes secular contexts. Very often there is a mixture of religious beliefs with elements of modern culture, which helps to establish their religious identity while adapting to modern social norms. Online platforms help to bridge and strengthen social and religious boundaries. They can serve as "imagined communities" where youth create and participate in religious or spiritual communities outside of their local environment. However, these platforms can also exacerbate existing divisions within and between religious groups. The digital space, while providing various opportunities for religious exploration and expression, also poses challenges such as the commercialization of religious practices, potential loss of connection to community, and privacy and surveillance issues. It is worth noting that Galan's article aims to advance understanding of the complex ways in which digital media

influences religious practices among young people, suggesting that young people are at the forefront of reimagining religious engagement in the digital age. It invites scholars to consider how these transformations might develop further and what they mean for the future of religion in society (Golan, 2023).

In the modern world, religion on the internet is turning into cyber-religion, where the information environment facilitates a shift to virtuality, which can lead to a superficial and fragmented perception of various mystical and pseudo-scientific ideas. Digitalization provides opportunities for interaction and connection between representatives of different denominations at a global level, transforming religious texts and contexts, making them more flexible and accessible.

Interaction of Technology and Cultural Norms. The virtualization of religious reality creates a new version of reality in cyberspace, loading it with social, political, and cultural processes related to religion. The interactivity of cyberspace allows users to actively interact with and modify the images, texts, values, and ideas available to them. Hypermedia accelerates social processes, meeting religious needs at both individual and community levels.

Results and Discussion

Thus, at the beginning of the XXI century, despite claims of the marginalization of religion, it continues to occupy a central place in cultural life thanks to the opportunities provided by the internet. The internet allows religious communities to form and communicate regardless of geographical distances and gives religious leaders the ability to constantly interact with their followers.

Information technology changes the traditional methods of transmitting religious knowledge, forcing believers to seek new ways of communication. The complex and diverse nature of modern culture makes the perception of religion and the world in general fragmented and full of contradictions for modern individuals. Researcher A. Moles analyzes these changes, pointing out that modern people perceive the world anew, selecting individual facts from a stream of unstructured information without logical connectivity (Moles, 1971: 226). He notes that people's knowledge is statistically composed of disparate data collected as needed, and only after accumulating enough information do hidden structures begin to emerge. This chaotic and simulacrum thinking can lead to an intensification of social problems, participation in internet discussions by various quasi-religious groups, whose activities are difficult to control, and which can contribute to the marginalization of society.

Transformation of values in the information-digital society. Technologies play a key role in shaping and changing cultural norms and values. They provide new means for communication and interaction, influencing social structures and cultural perceptions.

In the 1970s, Professor Ronald Inglehart conducted a series of significant studies aimed at exploring the dynamics and variability of human values through time and across the cultures of various peoples. These studies led to the development of the "Generational Replacement" theory, which posits that each new generation arrives with shifted value orientations, moving from materialistic to post-materialistic values (Abramson, Inglehart, 1992: 207). This process was documented through a series of public opinion surveys (Eurobarometer) initiated by the European Commission since 1973 in the member states of the European

Union, as well as in the "World Values Survey" project and other international studies.

Inglehart argued that economic, cultural, and political changes are interconnected and occur concurrently with the transformation of human perception and values. He believed that shifts in people's worldviews impact the economic and political environment, though with some delay, manifesting in the subsequent generation. Inglehart linked these changes to evolutionary theory, increased economic and physical security, and greater accessibility of education and information. He pointed out that social development follows a vector from agrarian to industrial society, and further to a knowledge society inhabited by highly educated people capable of independent thinking. Thus, cultural changes occur in two main stages: industrialization facilitates the transition from traditional to secular, rational values, while the post-industrial society fosters a shift to values based on self-expression.

Old value paradigms are gradually giving way to new, digital ones: values of information, transparency, standardization, functionality, adaptability, speed of information exchange, pursuit of profit, focus on "likes," and comfort. Max Tegmar, a Swedish-American physicist, emphasizes in his work "Life 3.0: Being Human in the Age of Artificial Intelligence" that humanity, as a form of life, will be able to maintain its dominant position on Earth thanks to the continuous transmission of knowledge (Tegmark, 2017:175). The progress of human knowledge steadily increases, with each new discovery laying the groundwork for the next: from language and writing to the printing press, modern science, computers, and the internet. This active cultural evolution is a key factor shaping the future of humanity. We are confident that the new digital era opens opportunities to create a socially secure society based on both traditional and new values. The success of this value transformation and its integration will depend on the approach of new digital governments and their responsiveness to the expectations of their citizens.

Conclusion

Addressing complex issues related to the development of a digital worldview undoubtedly requires the participation of various specialists and experts. It is impossible to stop scientific and technological progress, but it must be regulated and directed towards achieving sustainable societal development. In this area, it is important to develop strategies that facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary for maintaining information culture, hygiene, digital literacy, ethics, and censorship, which collectively ensure the mental safety of individuals. Implementing these competencies can radically transform the information-digital environment, turning it into a place for peaceful and creative self-realization, and sustainable interaction with the environment, society, and social institutions. The internet, serving today as the main media channel for religious organizations, not only allows highlighting the activities of believers and attracting new followers but also actively influences doctrines and practices, making religious institutions more open and adaptable to the realities of life. Under its influence, traditional religious practices can evolve, creating new forms of worship activities.

The digital environment is becoming not only a convenient, comfortable, and mobile virtual space for various interactions, but primarily a global digital space with its own value-normative system, symbols, and digital identification, which are gradually and steadily displacing social-cultural

identification of the individual, traditional socio-political forms of public organization, and social interaction. Digital platforms are increasingly initiating public discussions and social actions, consolidating social interests and needs, and actively participating in public assessment and decision-making, directly influencing the formation of worldviews.

Researchers in the field of Digital Religion need to develop competencies not only in understanding the nature and reality of the relationships between religion and digitization but also in mastering the broader context that arises beyond these interactions within the global network. Future theoretical research should delve deeper into how new and adapted forms of existence in so-called digital "third spaces" contribute to the emergence of new types of religious hybridity on the internet and assess changes in religious thinking and practices occurring outside the network. More extensive and comparative studies are needed to explore the interdependencies between online and offline contexts and to analyze understudied aspects of agency and power in digital religious practice, particularly in the context of religious identity and authority formation online. It is also important for studies of Digital Religion to integrate more with established theoretical resources from media, religion, and cultural studies, as well as to develop new methodologies based on internet research.

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Світогляд і релігійно-культурні орієнтації "людини цифрової епохи"

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Ця стаття досліджує вплив цифрової ери на фундаментальні аспекти людського життя, включаючи питання віри, моралі та культурної ідентичності. Підкреслюється, що цифрові технології стали невід'ємною частиною життя сучасної людини, що робить неможливим ігнорування їхньої очевидної культурної значущості сьогодні. Основна увага приділяється аналізу того, як сучасні технології, такі як штучний інтелект та Інтернет речей, перетворюють традиційні релігійні практики, сприяють виникненню нових форм духовності та змінюють традиційні релігійні структури. Обговорюються як позитивні, так і негативні наслідки таких трансформацій для особистостей та суспільства. Використовуючи цифрові продукти та технології та входячи в кіберпростір, релігія прагне зробити релігійну спадщину, культуру та традиції більш зрозумілими та доступними для більшої кількості людей. Адаптацію та трансформацію релігії можна прослідкувати у різних напрямках діяльності, пов'язаної з впровадженням та освоєнням кіберпростору та цифрового простору. Наводяться приклади цифровізації релігії та релігійних цифрових продуктів для обґрунтування трансформації релігії. Обґрунтовується ідея, що вивчення цифрової культури сьогодні означає не стільки аналіз її явищ та артефактів саме по собі, але скоріше дослідження широких трансформацій, що відбуваються з поширенням цифрових технологій у культурі загалом.

Ключові слова: цифровий світ, цифровізація релігії, трансформація, світогляд, традиційні, руйнівні ідеї.