**Radical Technology & Religion**

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**Introduction**

As a man born and raised in Panama, the Catholic Church greatly influenced my earliest spiritual and religious experiences. But, as I've gotten older, I've become more spiritual, in search of knowledge and deeper meanings to my existence, viewing myself and others around me as kings and queens in our own right, rather than mere followers of a certain religion or cultural belief. I find the convergence of technology and spirituality to be a fascinating issue that raises crucial concerns concerning the role of technology in molding our ideas and behaviors about God and religion. In this paper, I will examine the influence of technology on religious practices and beliefs, including how digital media have altered our access to and participation in religious communities, as well as the difficulties that arise when we rely on technology to spread religious propaganda. My ultimate objective is to obtain a better knowledge of how technology is influencing our view of God and religion in the twenty-first century, as well as the implications this has for our individual and collective spiritual journeys.

**The impact of technology on religious practices and beliefs**

The advancement of technology has had a substantial impact on many faiths' rituals and beliefs. People may now get religious material, contact religious communities, and participate in religious ceremonies online more easily than ever before, thanks to the growth of internet connectivity. Because of advances in digital media, religious content can now be generated in a variety of formats such as podcasts, videos, and blogs, among others. Social media and big data have arisen as new pathways for connecting people with like-minded persons, independent of their geographical location or traditional religious affiliation, as we become more aware of globalization and have access to knowledge at our fingertips (McClure, 2015). As a result, online religious communities have sprung up where people may connect to share experiences, provide support, and engage in the spiritual practice without having to join formal institutions. These changes have also resulted in the emergence of new religious movements and alternative spiritual practices, both of which would not have been conceivable without technology's accessibility and reach. On the other side, technological advances have created concerns about the authenticity and authority of religious beliefs (McClure, 2015). Because of how easy it is to spread and change content online, verifying the truth of religious claims and teachings has become considerably more difficult. Aleks Krotoski states that because of emerging technologies and ease of access, religious leaders must adapt to modern media and communication tools. In general, the impact of technology on religious practices and beliefs is a complicated and dynamic subject that requires a comprehensive examination of both the opportunities and problems given by technological innovation (Krotoski, 2011).

**The dangers of using technology to spread extremist religious views**

We may find a lot of information with a Google search. This technology can also be used to disseminate extremist religious views. Targeted marketing and algorithmic behavioral identification patterns might lead people to extremist content and disastrous decisions. First, let's start with, a mental model, TEDx-Talk. They say reckless social media use divides communities and changes people's identities. YouTube illustrates extremism and social media filtering algorithms. Users are presented with videos to enhance their experience, but the system also distributes unquestioned preconceptions and views, which can radicalize them. The speaker's experiment showed the sorting algorithm's power to radicalize (YouTube, 2018). A professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) made an anonymous comment, stating that there is a troubling trend of individuals who conflate free speech with the ability to express hateful or non-evidence-based opinions. These individuals use unmoderated technology as a platform to amplify their views, which allows them to attain a position of influence (Rainie, 2022).

We've seen how any search engine, not just Google, may lead some users down a rabbit hole of overwhelming information, but this isn't the end. Pandora's information box opens new triggers or influences, giving users a sense of agency and leading to rational or irrational actions. These websites and information funnels use dark algorithms and behavioral recognition algorithms to "sniff out" potential leads for their specific costs, for both positive and harmful objectives.

**The ethical implications of using technology to promote religious beliefs.**

Due to the rapid growth of "big data," huge amounts of information that can be used to identify a single person have been collected. Using this information for religious outreach raises serious ethical concerns. Some people think that using personal information for religious purposes goes against privacy rights and ethical ideas like autonomy and knowing what you're agreeing to. Others, though, say that using personal information for religious outreach can be a good way to get people involved in their communities and share their faith with others. Because of this, it is important to carefully look into the complicated ethical implications of using personal data for religious purposes and to have a strong, open discussion about it. Laws and rules exist to stop bad people from taking advantage of computer systems and using personal information for fraudulent purposes. The Computer Fraud and Abuse Act (CFAA) is one of these laws. It says that computer fraud and unauthorized access to computer systems are illegal. The CFAA says that people who access computers without permission or more than they are allowed to get information or commit fraud can be charged with a crime. This law covers a wide range of things that have to do with computers, like hacking, cyber stalking, and spreading dangerous software. The use of personal information for religious outreach raises a lot of ethical questions, and it's important to talk about the pros and cons of this kind of behavior. Some privacy rights are protected by laws like the CFAA, but more needs to be done to make sure that people's privacy rights are respected in the digital age (Lanw, Stodden, Bender, Nissenbaum, 2014,)

**The role of technology in creating a globalized religious community**

Although it's thrilling to see a transnational religious community brought about by technology, we shouldn't lose sight of the fact that this could lead to problems like cultural imperialism and radicalization online. In addition, we have a responsibility to make certain that the application of technology in the service of religious outreach is consistent with ethical principles and that we are employing technology as a tool to construct a more just and compassionate world that acknowledges and appreciates diversity as well as the unique points of view held by various religious traditions. It is essential to keep in mind that technology is merely a tool, and we should make every effort to employ it in a manner that is congruent with our core beliefs. Bad actors may exploit technology to radicalize specific audiences. These players can alter and shape vulnerable people's narratives and ideas through social media platforms. They can create echo chambers in which like-minded people reinforce each other's opinions, making them more extreme and inflexible (Hunter & Heinke, 2011). This problem has the potential to give rise to extreme groups that constitute a threat not only to individuals but also to society as a whole. Individuals must be aware of the power of technology and how it might be used for harmful reasons (Hunter & Heinke, 2011). Combating the impacts of online radicalization requires education and critical thinking. Furthermore, politicians and technology companies must collaborate to develop ways to reduce the dissemination of extremist content on social media platforms (Hunter & Heinke, 2011). We can help avoid the radicalization of vulnerable persons and promote a safe and inclusive society by adopting preventive actions.

**The role of technology in creating a secular society on the concept of God and religious experience and its impact on religious beliefs**

In the context of extreme views and radicalization, the importance of technology in a globalized religious community cannot be neglected. With the broad availability of social media and other digital platforms, it is now much simpler for individuals to connect with and communicate with like-minded individuals from all over the world. This is especially true for extremists, as the Internet enables them to locate and join online forums that encourage and reinforce their ideals. In the wake of the September 11th attacks, for instance, extremist groups were able to use technology to promote their message and recruit new members (Hunter & Heinke, 2011).

They utilized the internet, chat rooms, and social media to interact with individuals worldwide and spread their ideas. This allowed them to develop a global network of believers eager to take action in favor of their cause. Extremist groups' use of technology is not restricted to recruiting and propaganda (Hunter & Heinke, 2011). They have also utilized it to plan and coordinate assaults, as seen by the numerous terrorist strikes that have occurred around the world. This demonstrates that the impact of technology on the propagation of extremist ideologies is considerable and cannot be disregarded (Hunter & Heinke, 2011).

It is essential to remember that technology is neither necessarily negative nor positive. It is a tool that, depending on the user's intentions, can be utilized for either good or evil. Thus, it is essential to establish measures to oppose extremist groups' use of technology and to promote online communities that foster tolerance, understanding, and peaceful coexistence.

**Conclusion**

To summarize, the introduction of new technologies has resulted in substantial shifts in how people practice religion and comprehend the idea of God. People from all over the world are now able to interact with individuals who adhere to ideas and teachings that are similar to theirs thanks to the proliferation of worldwide religious communities and online religious groupings. People are also able to experience religious events in a new way because of the advancements made possible by virtual reality. Nonetheless, the effect that technology has had on religion is complicated, and this has given rise to concerns about how it may harm individuals. It is necessary for religious leaders and people to be aware of these concerns and to make use of technology to better their religion and their experience of it. It has been shown in the studies that were examined earlier that the intersection of technology and the transcendent is not a new occurrence. Nonetheless, it is essential to continue investigating how technology is influencing religious experiences and beliefs in the modern world.

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