

The internet may be secular, but religious Americans aren't worried, survey shows

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Despite the pervasive use of the Internet in everyday life, most Americans report they never use it to find religious or spiritual content, and most never use it to share religious views, according to the Baylor

Religion Survey.

That holds true regardless of religious tradition, said Baylor University sociologists, who recently presented the latest [survey](#) findings at the Religion Newswriters Association's annual conference.

"Even the most religious typically refrain from using the Internet to proselytize, but Evangelicals and Black Protestants are the most likely to share their religious views online," said Baylor sociologist Paul McClure.

When asked about how the Internet affects their spiritual lives, 62 percent Americans said the Internet has no effect on them spiritually. Of those who attend church weekly, 45 percent said it has no effect, while 50 percent believe the Internet affects their spiritual life positively. Only 4 percent of weekly religious attenders believe the Internet has a negative effect on them spiritually.

Despite some worries that we spend too much time online, most Americans, especially older ones, do not think they are addicted to technology. But younger Americans feel differently, with 43 percent of those ages 18 to 24 reporting that they feel addicted to their technological devices, according to McClure and Baylor co-researcher Justin Nelson. Those with no [religious affiliation](#) are also the most likely of all religious groups to feel addicted to technology, they said.

Nearly 9 in 10 Americans disagree with the claim that science and technology will make [religion](#) obsolete, and no [religious groups](#) predominantly agree with the claim that [technology](#) will undermine religion.

Meanwhile, "just over one third of Americans with no religious affiliation think that religion is destined to the dustbin of history," McClure said.

The findings were included in Wave 5 of the survey, with the theme of "American Values, Mental Health and Using Technology in the Age of Trump." Participants were 1,501 adults chosen randomly from across the country. The survey was designed by Baylor scholars and administered by the Gallup Organization.

Other findings from the 2017 survey:

- Trump supporters tend to describe themselves as very religious. They believe that the United States is a Christian nation, that Muslims are threats to America, that God is actively engaged in world affairs and that gender roles should be traditional.
- Nearly half of Americans are sure they will go to Heaven; more than a third have little to no fear of Hell. About 10 percent feel life has no clear purpose. Those who think they will go to Heaven say they are "very" or "pretty" happy; people who do not fear Hell also are consistently happy. But those who say they have found a purpose in life are the most likely to be very happy.
- Most rural Americans believe that the [federal government](#) should allow religious symbols in public spaces; that success of the United States is part of God's plan; and that the federal government should allow prayer in public schools. Nearly half believe that Middle East refugees pose a terrorist threat to the country, compared to 1 in 5 Americans in large cities who believe that.

Provided by Baylor University

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