

# How digital religion is shaping spirituality among millennials

July 27 2022

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The growing trend of digital religion among US and Canadian millennials mostly complements, not substitutes, in-person participation in organized religion, a new study found.

As digital forms of communication increased, many in the [religious community](#) saw an opportunity to stem the tide of secularization in North America. The study by University of Waterloo sociology professor Sarah Wilkins-Laflamme explores if [digital technologies](#)

facilitate a 'spiritual revolution' and if they provide important spiritual and religious spaces for new segments of the population removed from more conventional forms of organized religion.

"We know that more and more people are turning towards digital mediums for [spirituality](#) such as chat groups with pastors, online sermons, and religious content on [social media](#)," said Wilkins-Laflamme. "We've found that while digital religion isn't necessarily attracting a lot of new millennials to participate, it is making the experience of those already involved richer."

Wilkins-Laflamme notes that while digital religion is a phenomenon among many millennials, it's not a part of the lives of the vast majority of this demographic.

"It is still present though for a sizeable minority of the young adult population, and for many of them, digital religion plays an important complementary role to the in-person practicing of their faith," said Wilkins-Laflamme.

While past scholarship has examined the adoption of digital religion and its role in spirituality, Wilkins-Laflamme's report is the first to examine who exactly is practicing it and to what end.

"Social environment does play an important role, with digital religion practices much more prevalent in the generally more religious U.S. context, compared with the generally more secular Canadian context," said Wilkins-Laflamme. "Digital [religion](#) practices are often, but not always, tied to other in-person religious and spiritual activities among millennials."

The study, *Digital Religion Among U.S. and Canadian Millennial Adults*, was published in the *Review of Religious Research*.

**More information:** Sarah Wilkins-Laflamme, Digital Religion Among U.S. and Canadian Millennial Adults, *Review of Religious Research* (2021). [DOI: 10.1007/s13644-021-00463-0](https://doi.org/10.1007/s13644-021-00463-0)

Provided by University of Waterloo

Citation: How digital religion is shaping spirituality among millennials (2022, July 27) retrieved 23 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-07-digital-religion-spirituality-millennials.html>

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