

International Symposium on “Spirituality, Culture, and Chinese Societies:
Interdisciplinary and Interfaith Dialogues”

「靈性、文化與華人社會：跨學科與跨信仰對談」國際學術研討會

Session 2
Spirituality and Digital Culture

Understanding the Relationship Between Spirituality and Technology in a Digital Era

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This presentations will explore the relationship between spirituality and technology in the 21st Century, and ear when much of our social, cultural, professional and even spiritual lives have become dependent on digital and emerging technologies. This topic has been an important area of scholarly conversations and research over the past three decades as a part of Digital Religion Studies, an area of study which investigates how religious practices and beliefs intersect with and engage in online, offline and hybrid setting simultaneously. This presentation will provide an overview of how Digital Religion studies has approached and investigated spiritual seeking in and through digital environments. It will also highlight broad cultural trends seen in how individual’s technological use informs and shapes their spiritual engagement and understanding. Finally, it will consider to what extent these trends are also present in the Chinese context and digital spirituality and culture.

Outline:

- I. Introduction**
 - a. Identifying the difference between religion and spirituality
 - b. Defining digital religion
 - c. Overview of presentation themes
- II. Digital Religion Studies Approaches to Spirituality**
 - a. Overview of the four waves of research in digital religion studies
 - b. How spiritual practice online has been documented and researched
 - c. Manifestation of spiritual beliefs in digital spaces and experiences
- III. Trends in Spiritual Practice in Digital Religion**
 - a. Building *Networked Community* through online spiritual resources
 - b. *Convergent Practice* manifest as personal spirituality through smart phone apps
 - c. *Multisite Reality* experienced in religious worship during the Covid-19 pandemic
 - d. *Shifting Authority* and how religious leaders are challenged by web resources
- IV. Digital Spirituality in the Chinese Context as seen through Internet Memes about Buddhism**
 - a. Online versus offline Buddhism
 - b. How internet memes mix sacred and secular ideals
 - c. Creating Lived Buddhism through digital media and technology experiences

V. Conclusion

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