

Title: Translation, Religion and Technology

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While it is acknowledged that in a digitally linked world, religious experience can travel at speed and globally, the challenges of the linguistic dimensions of this communication, and the role played by translation have not been adequately considered. As religious content, rituals, and interactions become increasingly present online, attention to translation becomes crucial in the global digital space. The modes of communication of digital religion offer exciting new opportunities for translation scholars which have heretofore been untapped (Blumczynski and Israel 2018). Interaction with technology can encompass religious communities engaging with digital tools—whether through online sermons, virtual worship services, or religious apps—with translation becoming a key factor in ensuring that these practices remain meaningful and accessible across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Much study on digital religion has considered the new opportunities opened up for religion by the internet and user interaction with web-based technologies and social media. For religion online (Helland 2000), organisations and institutions use digital spaces and technological tools to enable a presence that reaches beyond a local or national borders and thereby encounter many translational issues. However, religions also make use of translation technologies in contexts other than digital spaces and it is important to acknowledge the presence of translation technology in physical religious spaces. Where a religious group has a multilingual community, technologies can enable religious practice and communication, especially in the absence of a common language. Moreover, interpreting in religious contexts (Furmanek 2022, Downie 2024), is primed for innovative uses of technologies to enable communication and understanding. Audiovisual translation, ad hoc interpreting devices, and volunteer-led technical innovations can all be present in religious spaces as communities seek to overcome linguistic barriers to enable religious practices.

Chapters will focus on the intersection of translation, religion and technology in the diverse religious spaces mentioned above with topics including a selection of the following:

- The use of translation technologies in religious contexts
- AI-assisted translation and its use in religious communication
- Translation and online religion/religion online
- Institutional religious translation practices and technological change
- Volunteer religious translation activities incorporating technology
- Religious translation in informal, low-resource settings
- Translation, religion and social media
- Interpreting in religious settings and translation tools

- The intersection of religious practice, belief, and community with digital technologies
- Balancing between innovation and tradition, between technological advancement and historical sacred practices and texts
- Alternative discourses and their presence in digital religious spaces
- Enabling religious practice through translation technologies
- Adapting religious content for new digital environments
- The digital realm as both a space for innovation and a challenge for maintaining religious (and linguistic) authenticity and continuity
- AI, ethics and religious translation
- Issues of gender in religion, translation and technology
- Canonical religious texts and technical/digital change
- Untranslatability and religion in digital contexts
- Technology and sustainable futures for religious translation

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