

CHAPTER

Religion and Online Community in African Contexts [Get access Arrow](#)

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Abstract

Spirituality and religion define the African worldview and lifeworld. From time immemorial, community and religion have been the driving forces that have shaped African culture. This chapter looks at how new media communications interface with religion and community. The chapter examines how cybermedia both strengthens and threatens these critical foundations of Africa's communal religions and religious communalism. It critiques technological and cultural determinism and indeterminism in relation to religion and online community in Africa. The questions that emerge include who sets the agenda and ethos for the online faith community or communities, when interactions, leadership structures and focal points are diffused and decentered? Others include what elements of religion in the online environment are liberating, empowering, helpful, or detrimental to the mission of faith communities. The chapter proposes ways to balance enduring core values of community with the instrumentality and novelty of worshipping under the "glocal" electronic tent.

Keywords: religion, online community, communalism, African culture, cybermedia, diaspora, triple heritage

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