

The Connected Faith Survey Report
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Summary

The Connected Faith Survey is the first study to explicitly explore the association between digital technology use and Black religious life. To date most studies have examined religion and technology as it relates to physically located religious practices (i.e. church attendance) and houses of worship. This study takes seriously the centrality of digital technology in religious belief and practices. The report covers three areas: Religious Affiliation, Social v. Spiritual Connections, and Gender & Relationships. From November 1, 2022- March 21, 2023, over 400 participants provided responses to 48 questions regarding their religious and/or spiritual beliefs and practices around digital technology.

Key Takeaways

Life Satisfaction

- ***There is a likely correlation between gender and life satisfaction in digital technology use.***
 - Men who donate money to online religious ministries report higher levels of life satisfaction. While women who access and engage with content religious or spiritual content report higher levels of satisfaction. However, some realities persist across all groups. For nearly every group studied (men, women, single adults, adults in a relationship) more time spent online decreases life satisfaction.

Diversity

- ***When it comes to religious affiliation a significant number of study participants checked the “something else” box.***
 - Digital technology has facilitated the emergence of those best described as Christian + or Faith Fluid; those who identify as Christian while openly embracing other religions and religious practices or those who move across or borrow from multiple faith expressions.

New ways of studying and new research tools of Black Americans

- Most of the data on digital Black religions has been ethnographic or anecdotal. ***This is the first study to provide hard quantitative and qualitative data on the digital religious lives of Black Americans.*** It signals the importance of both approaches in fully understanding the diversity and complexity of Black life.
- ***We’re making both our findings and the full dataset available on our website (www.digitalblackreligion.com) for researchers as a resource in studying Black religion.*** Beginning June 16th, you can download the complete data set, interviews, and 48 question survey.

Post COVID Black Faith

- ***The study suggests a post-COVID shift in Black religion. Older adults are more likely to turn to digital tools like YouTube for the maintenance of social cohesion since the pandemic.***