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Announcing the Release of the book

Digital Creatives and the Rethinking of Religious Authority

The Network for New Media, Religion and Digital Culture Studies is happy to announce the release of Dr. Heidi A Campbell's newest monograph, *Digital Creatives and the Rethinking of Religious Authority*. Dr. Campbell has researched the intersection of emerging media, religion and digital culture for nearly three decades. In recent years, her work has focused on religious digital creatives (or, RDCs) and what constitutes religious authority. The book examines both the relationship and interplay between religious authority and RDCs.

In an interview, Dr. Campbell explains she became interested in writing this book after noticing how digital media was becoming an "integral part of the work of many religious communities and organizations." Digital expertise and involvement often elevates certain individuals to new public roles, as they become the media's face of a given religious institution. Digital creatives serve as identity curators and cultural interpreters for the religious groups they are a part of in ways that draw attention to their work and opinions. Their work and presence raise important questions about who holds influence or religious authority in a digital age.

Through in-depth interviews with over 100 religious digital creatives, Dr. Campbell identifies three unique categories of religious digital creatives – digital creatives, digital strategists, and digital spokespersons – and outline how these positions shape religious organizations and communities in ways that give them authority, especially in the eyes of community outsiders. By studying these different RDCs, their online and offline religious influence, and how they understand religious authority, Dr. Campbell shows how "they are challenging religious establishments as they find themselves serving as unintentional influencers and authorities." Ultimately, *Digital Creatives and the Rethinking of Religious Authority* provides a rare and detailed investigation into both the historical roots and beliefs about religious authority, and what authority is becoming in the 21st century.

Dr. Campbell is a Professor of Communication and Presidential Impact Fellow at Texas A&M University, and she is the founder and Director of The Network for New Media, Religion and Digital Culture Studies. She also serves as Managing Editor for the *Journal of Religion, Media &*

Digital Culture, Vice President of the International Society of Media, Religion & Culture, and prolific researcher in Digital Religion studies.

The book is now available to purchase through the publisher's website:

<https://www.routledge.com/Digital-Creatives-and-the-Rethinking-of-Religious-Authority/Campbell/p/book/9781138370975>, Google Books, and Amazon.

Find more information about Dr. Heidi Campbell's work, including her academic involvement and other publications, on her websites:

<https://www.drheidicampbell.com/> and <https://digitalreligion.tamu.edu>

