



# Digital Theology

## In plain language

JONAS KURLBERG

Durham University

jonas.kurlberg@durham.ac.uk

The digital revolution unfolding before us has manifold and far-reaching implications. Digital theology (DT) has become a term describe theological engagement with these developments. As the impact of digitality is increasingly being felt in our societies, such reflection has become an imperative for the Church.

DT is explorative in nature. It is inherently inter-disciplinary and draws upon a range of texts, methodologies and theoretical perspectives. In much of the literature to date, there has been a particularly strong affinity with the socio-scientifically orientated research of ‘digital religion’, as well as media studies, and more broadly, computer science and digital humanities.

DT can be divided into several distinct, but overlapping areas of interest. At a basic level, DT reflects on how digital technologies impact theological education. This can be seen in online learning, but also as theological texts become more readily available through digital dissemination. Secondly, digital technology provides new tools and new research methodologies for theological enquiry that demand considering. The very fact that theologians use computers, for example, bears on how theological texts are produced. More importantly, it also influences their final form and content. Thirdly, Christianity is digitally mediated today in many forms: through websites,

ZEITSCHRIFT FÜR EXPLORATIVE THEOLOGY  
CZETH\_3 (2022) S. 191–192

DOI: [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.17885/HEIUP.CZETH.2022.3.24533](https://doi.org/10.17885/HEIUP.CZETH.2022.3.24533)

ZUVOR VERÖFFENTLICHT AUF PUBPUB: [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.21428/fb61f6aa.eef0ce93](https://doi.org/10.21428/fb61f6aa.eef0ce93)

OPEN-ACCESS-LIZENZ CC-BY-SA 4.0

prayer apps, live-streamed services or religious video games, and so forth. DT reflects on the implications of different forms and media. For instance, how does reading the bible digitally impact readers' interpretations of the text? Fourthly, we are witnessing seismic cultural shifts in the wake of the digitalisation of all spheres of life. DT is in this sense theological reflection on the emerging cultural condition we find ourselves in. It involves creative and reflexive conversation between Christian doctrines and ideas on the one hand, and digital discourses on the other. Finally, there has been extensive engagement with the socio-political questions surfacing in the wake of the digital revolution. This ethical or prophetic aspect of DT has sought to participate in wider public conversations about the development, use and impact of technology.

Given the speed of digital innovation and the constant changes that it brings, it is to be expected that DT will continue to evolve. In doing so, DT seeks to resource the Church, critique and inspire the tech industry and be a prophetic voice in society.