

### Networked Resources for Religious Studies

Perhaps one of the most significant advances in scholarly communication since the development of the printing press is networked electronic publication. When a document is made available via the "Net" (a term referring to the collectivity of interconnected computer networks) in electronic text the structural and economic limitations of print based publications are overcome. With electronic publication there is no limit to the potential size of a document and there are no distribution costs involved. These two factors, limited number of pages and high distribution costs, have had a nefarious effect on the dissemination of intellectual production and have significantly limited the genre of journal publication. Networked electronic journals are redefining scholarly publication by overcoming the structural and economic limitations of print based publication.

Two examples of electronic serial publications of relevance to Religious Studies are OFFLINE and the *Religious Studies Publications Journal*. Robert Kraft's OFFLINE column appears on the Net prior to publication in the *Bulletin of the Council of Societies for the Study of Religion* and in *Religious Studies News*. OFFLINE is distributed over the Net and is archived on a number of publicly accessible networked databases. This electronic column covers all aspects of the actual and potential use of computers in religious studies. It is an excellent example of how an author can write for both electronic and print-based publications.

Another electronic serial directed towards religious studies research is the *Religious Studies Publications Journal* (CONTENTS) published by Michael Strangelove. CONTENTS provides a free information service to academic publishers and scholars in religious studies and related fields: it posts table of contents; abstracts; standard bibliographic, pricing and ordering information for new books and journal issues; works in progress; dissertations; networked documents; and audio-visual resources. All publication records posted to CONTENTS are archived at [LISTSERV@uottawa](mailto:LISTSERV@uottawa) or [LISTSERV@acadvm1.uottawa.ca](mailto:LISTSERV@acadvm1.uottawa.ca) and may be searched or downloaded by the network community. CONTENTS anticipates the developing commercialization of the academic networks and the growing trend within publishing houses for accommodating individual chapter and single article purchases. Subscribers are, for example, encouraged to order texts via the network.

More information on networked electronic journals can be obtained from the *Directory of Electronic Journals, Newsletters and Academic Discussion Lists*, edited by Michael Strangelove and Diane Kovacs (Association of Research Libraries, 1991).

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Did you know that an e-mail account provides one with the opportunity to access directly the on-line bibliographic databases of over 300 university libraries? For those who are part of the McGill community, information is available in a publication entitled *Accessing On-line Bibliographic Databases*. It can be obtained free-of-charge from the McGill Computing Centre. A regularly up-dated version can also be viewed electronically on MUSIC's infoMcGill, or for those outside the McGill community, *UNT's Accessing On-line Bibliographic Databases* can be downloaded via anonymous FTP on the node FTP.UNT.EDU (information about FTP sites can be obtained from any university computer centre).