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# *Emerging church bloggers in Australia: Prophets, priests and rulers in God's virtual world*

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Proposed chapters

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## Background reading

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### Researching religion online

- Short history of research into online religion
- Three waves of research
- This research's position in the field

### Blogging

- A short history
- Implications for researching religion online

### Religious identity online

- Religious identity
  - Identity in the fall of modernity
  - Identity as performance
- The construction of identity online
  - Construction as creativity
  - Construction as fluid, not separated from offline identity
- Religious identity online
  - Dependent on social capital
- Religious identity in blogs
  - Blogs as unfinished products
  - Creative process, not product
  - In relationship to offline and online communities

### Religious community online

- New understandings of community
- Shifting understandings of Christian community
- Notions of online Christian community and responses
- Identifying, mapping and measuring community in blogging

### History of emerging church

- Local missionaries of 1960s
- Jesus Movement of 1970s
- Postmodern theology of 1990s
- "Religious Right" and Christian politics late 1990s – early 21<sup>st</sup> century
- Emerging church movement today

### Discourse analysis

- What it is
- How it helps discern the process of individual and communal identity construction
- Nexus analysis – placing discourse analysis within a media ecology framework

## Methodology

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### Approaching the sample

- Online content
  - Identifying the sample
  - Compiling the data
- Interviews

### Questions asked of the data

- Text
- Text and image
- Text and design
  - Page design
  - Site design (pages, posts, categories, comments)
- Text and hypertext

## Exposition of data

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### Bloggers as cyber-religious

- Bloggers' relationship with cyberspace
  - Notions
  - Judgments
  - Intentions

### Bloggers and being "emerging" online

- "In truth, in very truth, I thought the door was here" – theology in emerging church blogs
- "Jesus is my boyfriend" – bloggers' view of the emerging worshipping community
- "Okay, Baptist, I'm okay with that" – church structures and powers and the emerging voice
- "is it wrong to want to hit Joel Osteen?" – the emerging churches view of Christian mission in a postmodern world
- "As much as it pains me sometimes to admit it, Jesus does in fact love John Howard." – bloggers' social commentary
- "don't ya wish your boyfriend was emerging like me?" – the emerging place of the church in the world

### Bloggers and the online "emerging" community

- Role and responsibilities of a blogger
  - To their audience
  - To the blogosphere
- Connections with other bloggers through comments, references and blogrolls
- Bloggers' understanding of their place in the community

### Bloggers and the emerging movement

- Bloggers' understanding of the movement and their place in it
- Bloggers' intentions to shape the movement

## Concluding analysis

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- The online identity project of emerging church bloggers
- The online identity evolution of the emerging church movement
- Future directions for researching religion online