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## VISUAL STUDIES OF OLD BELIEVERS

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Original Article

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### TRAVELLING TO THE OLD BELIEVERS: VIDEO BLOGS AS A VISUAL SOURCE

*The article analyses the content of video blogs dedicated to the Old Believers. What can we learn about the Old Believers from the Internet, how are they perceived by the mass audience, how and with what techniques is the community visualized in Internet products, how is visual communication established between content creators and the audience? The article tries to find answers to these questions by analyzing a number of programs about Old Believers posted on YouTube. Video blogs are a diverse and popular form of Internet content, commercialized and partly integrated into the tourism industry. The Old Believers that virtual travelers visit are far from always the focus of their attention, but rather an abstract destination, the motivation for their movement into a conventionally unexplored space. Nevertheless, bloggers create an image of the Old Believers as a mysterious, distant, inaccessible and exotic community. Due to the openness and mobility of the virtual environment as a field of communication, the process of constructing the image of the group becomes collective, it involves viewers who already have a certain set of perceptions of Old Believers, and sometimes they are Old Believers themselves. The authenticity of the studied environment emerges as the most important concept around which the discussions unfold.*

**Keywords:** *Old Believers, video blog, virtual travel, visual sources, Internet sources*

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