





# Judaism and Digital Culture



Exploring Media Use,  
Community Building, and  
Representation in a Modern  
Digital Age





# What is "digital culture," and why study it?

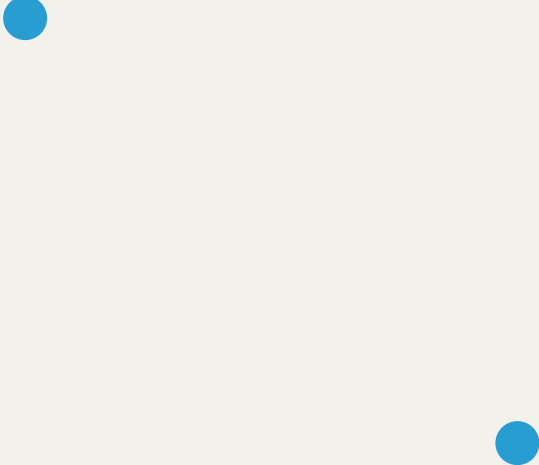
- how we access information
- how we form community
- and how we build relationships

in online spaces





# This has become increasingly important


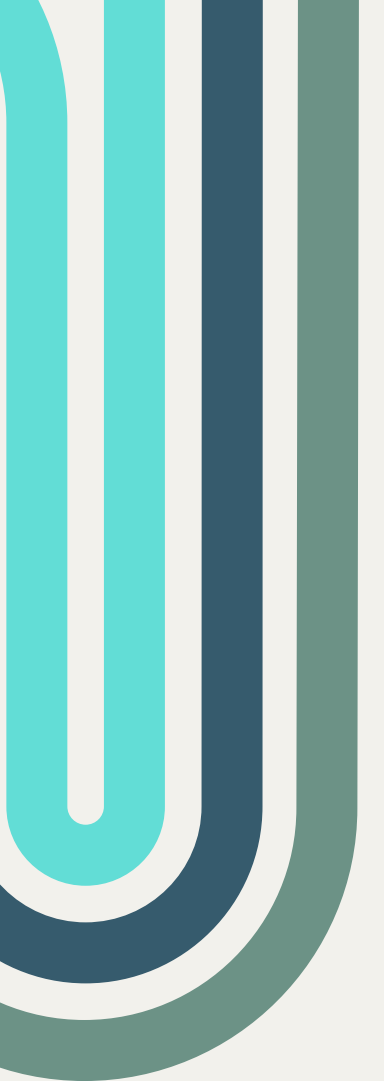
- the ubiquitousness of digital media
  - misinformation/disinformation
  - the pandemic
- 







**What Jewish digital spaces  
do you use? How do you use  
digital media for your  
Judaism?**



Let's start with how and  
why we use media in the  
first place



# Uses and Gratifications Theory





# Uses and gratifications theory assumes an **ACTIVE, not passive, audience**

## We make choices

about what kind of media we are going to consume

## The choices are conscious and intentional

But we aren't always cognizant of why we make those choices!

## These choices fulfill certain needs

Those needs are: cognitive, affective, social, personal, tension release

# ✦ Finding Jewish Communities in Digital Spaces

We can apply these basic Uses and Gratifications to  
why we seek out Jewish digital spaces

# COGNITIVE

<

kosher food

×

Current Location

Kosher Food Near Me

Kosher Food

Kosher Food Trucks

# AFFECTIVE



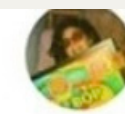
# PERSONAL INTEGRATIVE



**SOCIAL  
INTEGRATIVE**



# TENSION RELEASE



Sam Corbin  
@ahoysamantha

why 🙌 isn't 🙌 this 🙌 called 🙌 a 🙌 loxbox 🙌



Eka Bakie @EkaBakie · Feb 2

Fun in Singapore!





# Meme Culture and Judaism

“Memes (discrete units of knowledge, gossip, jokes and so on) are to culture what genes are to life. Just as biological evolution is driven by the survival of the fittest genes in the gene pool, cultural evolution may be driven by the most successful memes.”-Richard Dawkins

# humor



# signifier of in-group identity





**Alma**  
@hey\_alma

me, every time 'haman' appears in the megillah

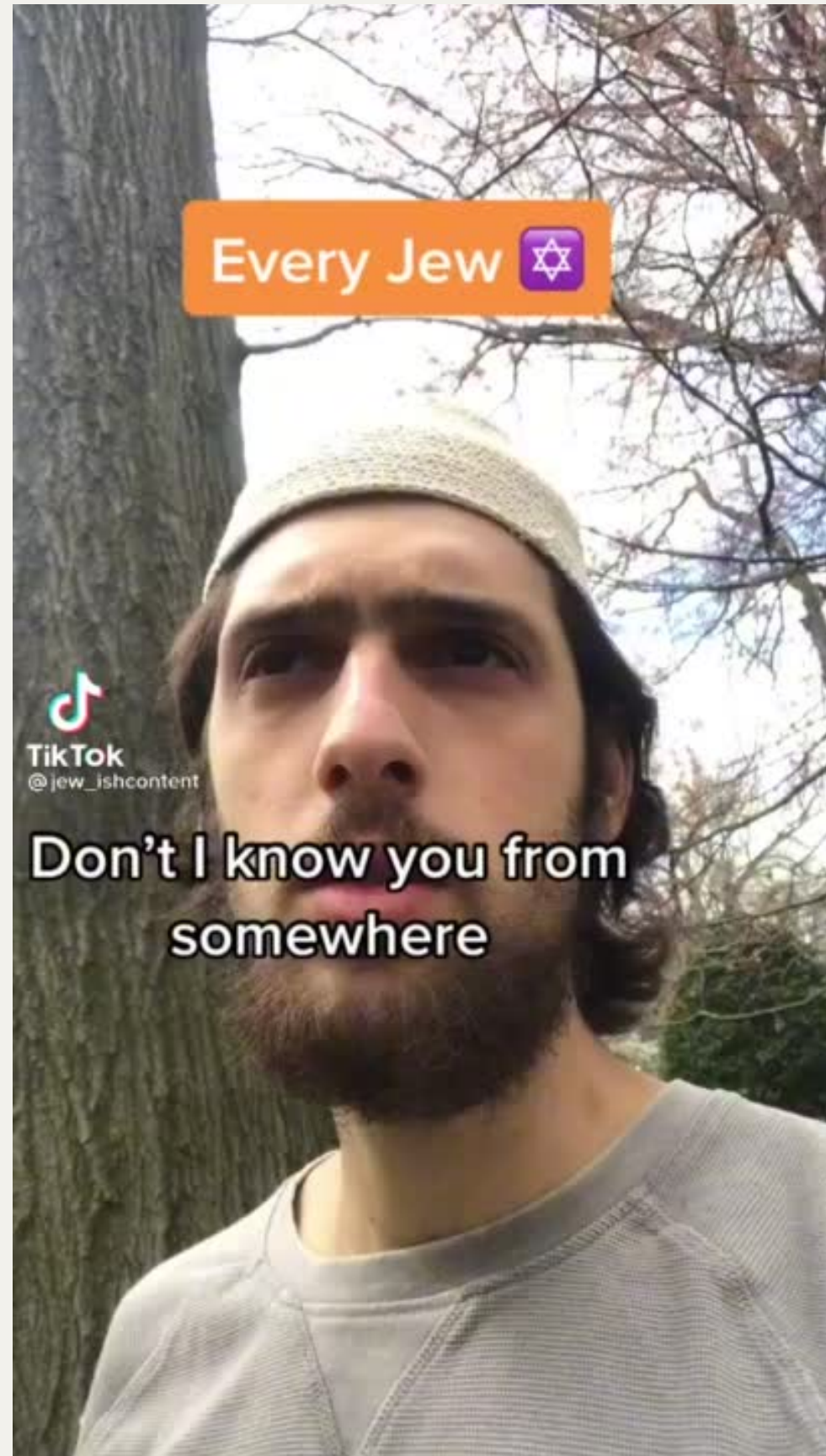




communicating in-  
group norms and  
values



**#JewishTikTok**





# Dangers of Being Jewish Online



Misinformation: false or inaccurate, regardless of intent



# ✦ Misinformation and Disinformation

Disinformation: meant to purposely deceive.

Cognitive Dissonance and Confirmation Bias



A video, left, appeared to show Jewish Israelis celebrating as the Al-Aqsa Mosque burned in the background, but images taken from a different angle, right, showed a tree that had caught fire outside the mosque. No flames touched the building. (Twitter; Arie Kovler/Twitter)

## Online Antisemitism Report Card

PLATFORMS	HATE POLICY THAT EXPLICITLY MENTIONS RACE, RELIGION, OR ETHNICITY?	RESPONSE WITHIN 24-72 HOURS?	NOTIFICATION OF POLICY REASON FOR ENFORCEMENT?	ACTION TAKEN AGAINST A/S?	TRUSTED FLAGGER PROGRAM?	ACTIONED UPON TRUSTED FLAGGER REPORT?	EFFECTIVE PRODUCT-LEVEL EFFORTS TO ADDRESS ANTISEMITISM?	DATA ACCESSIBILITY GRADE	TOTAL GRADE
Twitter	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	B	B-
YouTube	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	C	
Reddit	Yes	No	No	No	No	N/A	Yes	B	C
Twitch	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	N/A	No	C	C
TikTok	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	F	C-
Facebook (including Instagram)	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	D	C-
Discord	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	N/A	No	C	C-
Roblox	Yes	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	D	D-




•  
♦ **Studies have  
shown that  
digital  
platforms fail  
to act on  
antisemitic  
content**


♦ Is the "nebulousness" of  
these kinds of statements  
to blame?

• TikTok, while a space for  
great Jewish content, is one  
of the worst offenders

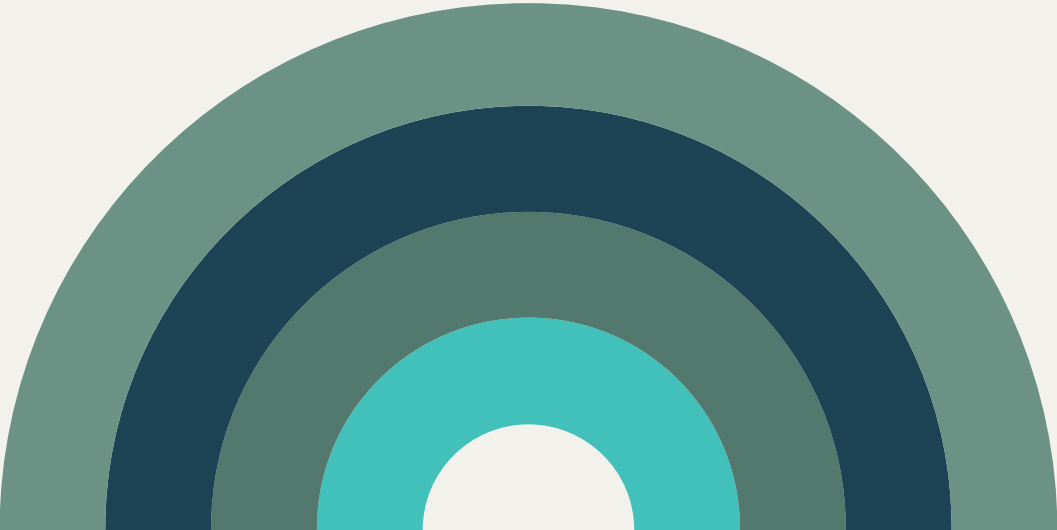
• This content increased  
during the pandemic



**We have more access to information  
today than any other humans in history**




**You have the ability to access more  
information this evening from the  
comfort of your home than your  
grandparents had in their entire  
lifetimes**





# Digital Media Literacy

- Be purposeful and mindful about media use
  - Be educated about where messages come from
  - Double-check sources
- 



# Thank You!

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at  
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