Navigating Digital Antisemitism

Liam Bloomfield

Introduction

My academic background is in English and Philosophy. I completed my Master's thesis on Jewish identity and antisemitism.

I currently work for an A.I. company where I help to train a Large Language Model algorithm.

What inspired the idea for this talk?

Why This Talk?

- How do we fight antisemitism on campuses?

- ADL: 9,354 antisemitic incidents in the USA in 2024, the highest on record since they began tracking 46 years ago[1]

- Holocaust education has not slowed down antisemitism among young people

- Social media now decides what ideas rise and fall

- Pew Research 2022: over half of young people 16-30 get their news from short-form social media platforms (Youtube, Instagram, Twitter, Tiktok, Meta)[2]

STUDENTS SHOULDN'T NEED CAMPUS SECURITY JUST FOR BEING JEWISH
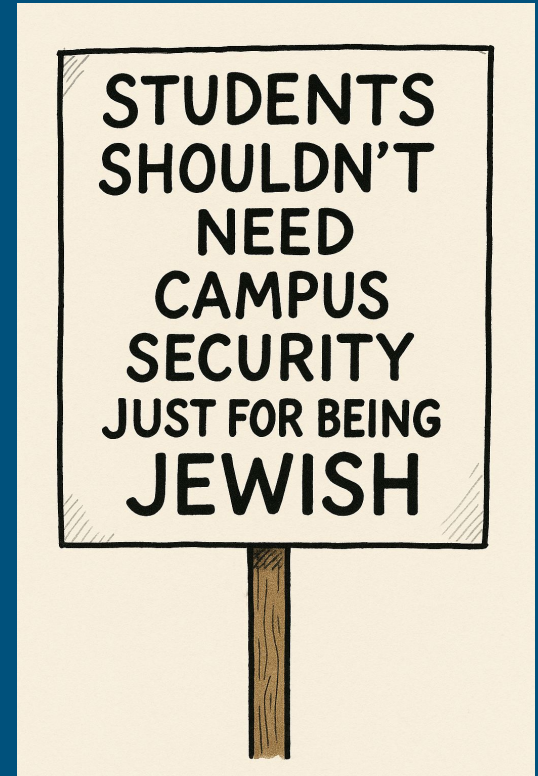
The Surge Since October 7th

The Surge Since October 7th

YouTube

- The Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) analyzed over 5 million comments from 11k videos related to Israel and Gaza between October 3 to 13
- Over 15k antisemitic comments were identified after the attack.[3]
- There was a 4,963% increase in antisemitic comments on conflict-related YouTube videos in the 3 days following the Hamas attacks.[3]

Twitter/X:

- Research from Indiana University showed an increase in antisemitic tweets after October 7, and noted misinformation and algorithmic boosting of low-trust posts.
- Top tweets classified as antisemitic rose from ~27–28% (Sept/Oct 2023) to 51% in early May 2024; posts calling out antisemitism fell from ~39% (Oct 2023) to 12% (May 2024).[4]
- Many were explicitly tied to the Israel-Hamas war and the online environment around it.

The Surge Since October 7th

TikTok:

- Research from Indiana University found that most of the TikToks containing the term "genocide" in October 2024 were accusing Israel of genocide in Gaza, and the algorithm appeared to amplify accusatory content against Israel.[4]
- ADL found that, while TikTok claims to have strong anti-hate policies, users have been able to bypass these by posting photos instead of videos, hiding slurs in hashtags, and using dog-whistles.[5]

The Surge Since October 7th

Telegram

- Researchers tracked large growth in Hamas/war channels and noted extremist/violent content
- Telegram's minimal moderation has enabled rapid spread of propaganda and hateful content.
- ADL reported a 433% rise in violent antisemitic Telegram posts on October 7, with antisemitic activity most concentrated in extremist channels.[6]
- Hamas's Al-Qassam Brigades channel tripled subscribers within days (205k → 620k by Oct 12, 2023), and average views per post jumped ~10×; similar spikes for allied channels.[7]

What is an Algorithm?

A social media algorithm is a data-tracking system in which an individual's internet search history and browsing habits are used to present them with similar or related material on social media or other platforms.

How These Algorithms Work

Algorithms reward what grabs attention. The more reactions a post gets, the more people will see it.

Personalization	Engagement Signals	Amplification
- Platforms like TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and X (Twitter) show each user a unique feed. - What you see is not chronological. It's based on what the algorithm thinks you'll **engage with**.	- Every like, share, comment, pause, or rewatch is a signal. - Algorithms "learn" that if you engage with one kind of content, you're more likely to engage with similar content in the future.	- Posts with high engagement spread faster and further, because the system prioritizes "sticky" content. - Controversial or emotionally charged content often spreads more because it triggers strong reactions (anger, fear, outrage).

The Financial Model of Social Media

The recent surge in antisemitic hate and disinformation online is making companies billions of dollars. Here's why:

Ad-based revenue

- These companies make money by selling ads.
- The more time you spend scrolling, the more ads they can show you.

Engagement = Attention = Money

- Posts that spark anger or fear keep people on the platform longer.
- That extra time = more ad impressions = more revenue.

No moral filter
- The algorithm doesn't care if a post is true, false, helpful, or harmful.
- It only cares whether you're engaging with it.

The Financial Model of Social Media

Shock Value Works
- Disinformation and hate speech (including antisemitism) often use shocking, emotional language.
- This triggers strong responses — people comment, argue, share.

Polarization is Profitable
- Even if people *disagree* with a hateful post, their engagement still boosts it.
  Fighting in the comments tells the algorithm: "This is interesting, show it to more people."

Feedback Loop
- Person sees antisemitic content → reacts → algorithm shows them more of the same.
- Over time, this can radicalize users by surrounding them with increasingly extreme content.
- Hate spreads because it makes money. Outrage fuels engagement, and engagement fuels profit.

How Politics and Ideology Have Spread: The Bot

Russian & Iranian state media networks have a track record of exploiting algorithmic amplification to push divisive narratives.

During and after Oct 7, analysts documented Russia, Iran, and their affiliates amplifying anti-Israel messaging, conspiracy theories, and antisemitic tropes[8]

Strategy: They inject provocative content (memes, short videos, inflammatory slogans) into highly engaged hashtag streams (#freepalestine, #standwithisrael, #fromtherivertothesea, etc.)

How Politics and Ideology have Spread: The Bot

They use **bots and fake accounts** to artificially boost posts so the algorithm thinks: "People love this!"

Bots (automated or semi-automated accounts) are used to "manufacture virality."

- They retweet/repost, like, and share divisive or hateful content en masse, tricking algorithms into thinking content is popular, thus pushing it into trending lists and recommendations.
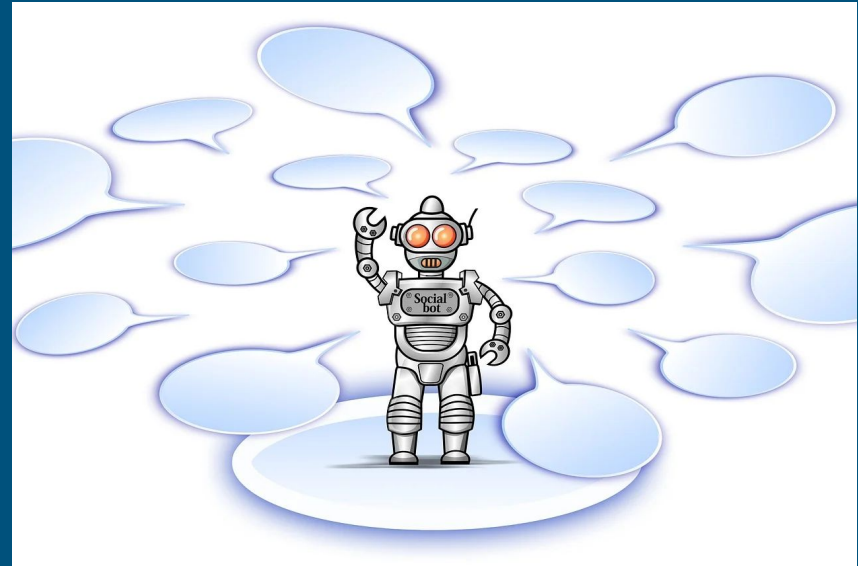
How Politics and Ideology Have Spread: The Bot

Cyabra (an Israeli start-up) found that of the 162k social media profiles they examined that engaged with posts about the Hamas attacks, 25% were bots/inauthentic accounts.*

In a 2 day period, these profiles made over 300k posts, with some posting hundreds of times per day.[9]

To Simplify…

How Social Media algorithms work: 🤬 Outrage → 👍 Engagement → 👀 Visibility → 💰 Profit
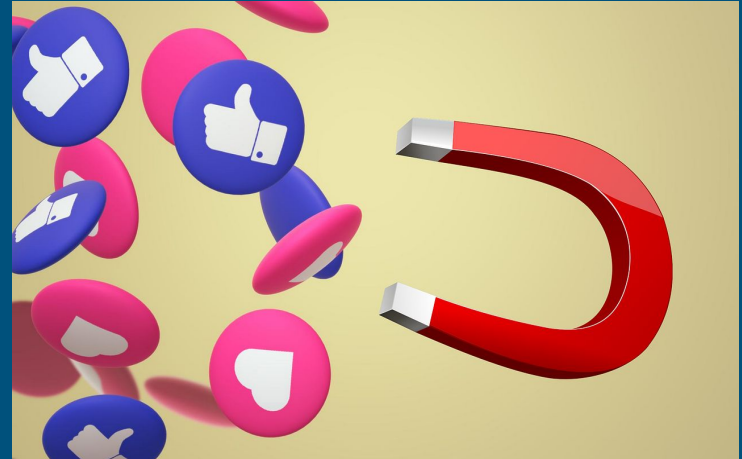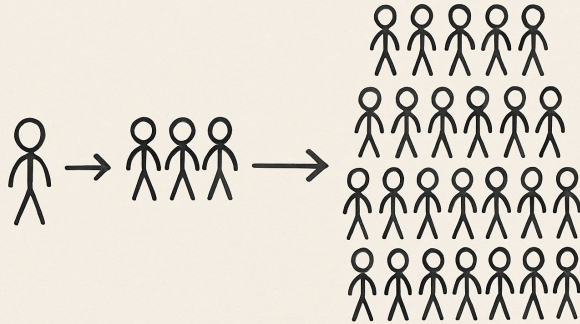
The Solution: Become Our Own Bots!

Every like, share, and report is a real action. Together, we can outsmart the algorithm.

Fighting antisemitism today means fighting it online.

What Actually Helps: The Algorithm Strategy

★ **Like & share** the content you agree with
★ **Report** antisemitic posts and accounts
★ **Boost good voices**: Jewish creators, allies, experts
★ **Engage in networks**: we are stronger together

Teaching the Next Generation

- Young people are digital natives - we need to train them to spot disinformation
- Every Jewish adult can mentor a young person online
- Empower them to be mindful, critical consumers of information on social media.

Holocaust remembrance honors the past, but to protect our future, we need algorithmic literacy. We don't need to become TikTok stars, we just need to be smart digital citizens. Because every click is a choice: either to feed the facts, or feed the hate.

Do's and Don'ts

🔵 Twitter / X

DOs

- **Like & reply** to posts that debunk antisemitism or misinformation.
- **Follow reliable accounts** (fact-checkers, Jewish orgs, educators) so the algorithm surfaces their content more often.
- **Report hateful tweets** — mass reports increase removal chances.
- **Use "mute" or "block"** to cut off algorithmic recycling of hateful accounts.

DON'Ts

- Don't quote-tweet hate content to "expose" it — that boosts it in feeds.
- Don't engage directly with trolls; starve them of attention.

🎵 TikTok

DOs

- **Like, comment, and share** videos that correct lies or spread solidarity — even a quick emoji comment helps visibility.
- **Save videos you agree with** — saves are powerful engagement signals.
- **Follow educators** who challenge antisemitism.

DON'Ts

- Don't comment on antisemitic videos (it boosts them). Just report and move on.
- Don't doomscroll hateful hashtags; it trains the algorithm to feed you more of it.

Do's and Don'ts

📸 Instagram

DOs

- **Share Stories** of posts that push back against antisemitism — keeps them circulating.
- **Save posts** you find useful (algorithm loves saves).
- **Comment positively** on good counter-speech posts to lift them in feeds.
- **Follow & boost Jewish orgs/educators** with reshares.

DON'Ts

- Don't reply angrily under antisemitic posts — this pushes them higher.
- Don't tag friends into hate posts (even to mock them)

▶️ YouTube

DOs

- **Like, comment, and subscribe** to channels making factual or anti-hate content.
- **Report antisemitic videos or comment floods** — YouTube does remove them
- **Let accurate videos play through** — watch-time boosts ranking.

DON'Ts

- Don't watch antisemitic videos all the way — it boosts their "watch-time" score.
- Don't argue in toxic comment sections — report instead.

Do's and Don'ts

📱 General Tactics

DOs

- **Boost the good stuff fast**: early likes/shares make the algorithm spread it further.
- **Make micro-networks**: share reliable posts with friends, and agree to like/comment to give them extra lift.
- **Curate your feed**: following, liking, and saving from anti-hate voices retrains what the algorithm shows you.
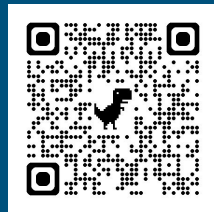
DON'Ts

- Don't circulate antisemitic content, even to "mock" it — screenshot instead if you want to critique.
- Don't assume silence = neutrality. Even passive engagement with hate lets algorithms push it more.

You don't need to be a content creator to fight back. Simply **liking, saving, sharing, reporting, and curating your own feed** are powerful tools — because algorithms amplify whatever gets the most interaction.

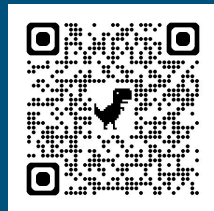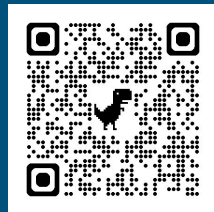# How to Report Posts and User Profiles

Youtube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MdlSvVeq4zo

Facebook:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ktiVJAAkuPI

Instagram:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dt5WOb0wLmA

Amplify Jewish Creators

- We can't make everyone go viral, but one person with a lot of followers can help spread so much
- This means we should really curate and hone our focus of which voices to amplify

Some creators I follow:

Debbie Lechtman @rootsmetals

Nissim Black @nissimofficial

Tashager Araro @Blackjewishmagic

Shai Davidai @ShaiDavidai

@PoliticalJew

@holylandspeaks

Citation Links

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-https://nypost.com/2025/06/10/world-news/inside-the-us-telegram-group-chats-hamas-is-trying-to-radicalize/

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Thank you!

Email: liambloomfield3@gmail.com