Circumscribere

The role of digital/online resources in the Jewish Diaspora communities

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Abstract

Globalization, in its earlier stages, was expected to erode national and ethnic identities. In contrast, ethnicity and ethnic affiliations persisted, growing socially and politically. This paper examines the role of the globalizing new communications technologies on this process, focusing on Diasporas. The study of trans-state networks based on ethnic solidarity, connections and affinities in the framework of social and political science is quite recent. Following a clarification of the distinction between classical and modern Diasporas we analyse a particular case study, that of the Jewish Diaspora. This diaspora was an early adopter of computer-based communications and the Internet for a wide range of purposes. Early events are described including the diffusion of the Internet to Israel, the planning of a Global Jewish Information Network, Israel 2020 macro scenarios for Israel and the Jewish People and the decision on Jewish Peoplehood through communication technologies. A survey of historical systems (Responsa, BBS, and Usenet) follows by a description of the Jewish population and the wide variety of Jewish Web based activities today. These include the Institutional landscape; Jewish media — press, radio, video and blogs; the impact on Jewish religious observance; Jewish genealogy; Online dating; Social networks; Jewish education; Online learning; Jewish Studies and Digital Humanities; Jewish memory. Judaica Europeana supports the activities previously described by aggregating and facilitating the access and the re-use of Jewish digital culture. Europeana is the leading global digital library for cultural heritage as well as a lively eco-system for relevant stakeholders.

Keywords

O papel dos recursos digitais/onlines nas comunidades da diaspora judaica

Resumo

A globalização criou a expectativa da erosão das identidades nacionais e étnicas. Em contraste, as etnias e as afiliações étnicas persistiram, crescendo social e politicamente. Este artigo examina o papel das novas tecnologias de comunicação neste processo, com foco nas diásporas. O estudo, no âmbito das ciências sociais e política, de redes trans-estatais

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baseadas na solidariedade étnica, conexões e afinidades é bastante recente. Após a clarificação da distinção entre diásporas clássicas e modernas, estudamos um caso específico, o da diáspora judaica. Esta diáspora foi uma das primeiras a adotar as comunicações baseadas em computador e a Internet para uma ampla variedade de propósitos. Alguns eventos iniciais neste processo são descritos, incluindo a difusão da Internet em Israel, o planejamento de uma rede global de informações judaicas, os macro cenários de Israel 2020 para Israel e o povo judeu e a decisão sobre o povo judeu por meio de tecnologias de comunicação. Uma resenha de alguns sistemas de interesse histórico (a Responsa, os BBSs e a Usenet) é seguida por uma descrição da população judaica e das atuais atividades judaicas no Web: o Cenário institucional; Mídia judaica - imprensa, rádio, vídeo e blogs; a observância religiosa judaica; Genealogia judaica; Namoro virtual; Redes sociais; Educação judaica; Aprendizagem online; Estudos Judaicos e Humanidades Digitais; Memória judaica. A Judaica Europeana apoia as atividades descritas, agregando e facilitando o acesso e a reutilização da cultura digital Judaica. A Europeana é a principal biblioteca digital global para o patrimônio cultural.

Palavras-chave

Comunicação; Internet; Globalização; Diáspora; Judaísmo

Introduction

The last twenty years witnessed the wide dissemination of new communication technologies spearheaded by the Internet, the Web that later converged with other media like multimedia, cinema, television, telephony and Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs). This transformation of our civilization has deep consequences for every aspect of our daily lives and phenomena like Diasporas with which this work is concerned.

Diaspora related events are part of everyday news and an outstanding item in the agenda of intelligence agencies. It is hard to imagine that it is just 30 years since Gabriel Sheffer suggested that such trans-state networks were worth studying. He observed that ethnic groups were studied only within the domestic implications of ethnic pluralism in the West and state policies vis-à-vis minorities in the Eastern Bloc or Third World. The various trans-state networks, which are based on ethnic solidarity, connections and affinities (which in turn command powerful loyalties, control significant political and economic resources, and exercise influence on the politics of states and on their international relations) at that time, have not been sufficiently examined.

This work takes as its point of departure the definitions of Diasporas proposed by Sheffer and its refinement by Amersfoort. It will then seek to present some historical and ongoing online activities and digital resources characteristic of the Jewish Diaspora. The Jewish Diaspora was quite pioneer in its early adoption of these new communication technologies. Thus, it has the potential to provide materials for a case study on the diffusion of such innovations and their effect on Diasporas.

This subject matter is too vast for a comprehensive and systematic coverage. This presentation will be restricted and selective, seeking to provide some examples. I will discuss the concept of Diaspora and then the Jewish People and its relation to distance shrinking technologies. This will set the background to the historic part of this article reviewing some early events concerning the Jewish People and the Internet and some of the early applications of the digital and the Internet in Jewish Life. After reviewing some data on the Jewish population today, the article will review Jewish activities based on Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The areas to be covered include the Institutional landscape; the Jewish Media; the impact on Jewish Observance; Genealogy; Online Dating; Social Networks; Jewish Education; Online Jewish Learning; Jewish Studies and Digital Humanities; Jewish Memory.

I must point out, in a personal note, that this work has been an opportunity for me to go back for some of my activities through the years since the opening of the Internet and the process by which it has become a significant platform for the Jewish Diaspora life.

The concept of Diaspora

When concluding his history of the Mediterranean David Abulafia summarizes the recurring role of merchants. It may well provide the gist of Classical Diasporas:

"The pioneer merchant is almost by definition an outsider, someone who crosses cultural and physical boundaries, encountering new gods, hearing different languages, and finding himself […] exposed to the sharp criticisms of the inhabitants of the places he visits in search of goods unavailable at home. This ambiguous image of the merchant as a desirable outsider is there in our earliest sources."[2]

He gives examples of the Phoenicians, (and) Greeks who transformed the villages of rural Etruria into cities. In later centuries he points to

"[…] the phenomenon of ghettoized merchants visiting Islamic or Byzantine territory, enclosed in a inn or fonduk that also functioned as a warehouse, chapel, bake house and bath-house, with one inn for each major 'nation': Genovese, Venetian, Catalan and so on. The sense that the merchant might be a source of religious contamination and political subversion led the rulers of Egypt to lock the doors of these inns at night-time…This only enhanced the solidarity and sense of community that held these merchants together, while underlying the differences between the various groups of Italians and Catalan […]. The Byzantines too set the Italian merchants apart in a walled compound during the twelfth century, feeding xenophobia in their capital city, with the ugly consequences of anti-Latin pogroms. The idea of enclosing distinct communities behind walls was not, then, particularly novel when the king of Aragon first segregated the Majorcan Jews around 1300, and was quite venerable by the time the government of Venice enclosed the Jews in the *ghetto nuovo* in 1516; these merchant communities provided a useful model for the ghetto. The enclosed areas, whether of Jews or of European merchants, were places where a certain amount of privilege — self-government, freedom to practice one's religion, tax exemptions — was counter-balanced by constraint – limitations on free movement and reliance on often capricious public authorities for protection."[3]

Amersfoort describe Classical diasporas as part of a feudal political arrangement in which "outsiders" performed economic functions in trade and finance that were forbidden to the "insiders", whose often aristocratic status prohibited them from engaging in such low-ranking affairs as making money; the non-diasporic majority population was a peasantry tied to the land […].[4] Classical diaspora people are endogamous, residentially and socially segregated, and confined to specific occupations and professions. They are oriented to their fellow ethnics for trade and marriage relations and are, in that sense, part of a diaspora network. In contrast, modern immigrants may specialize in certain occupations (e.g. Chinese laundry workers in the United States, Italian ice-cream sellers in the Netherlands). Nevertheless, this similarity is superficial, as these professions by no means fulfil the strategic economic functions as the occupations of classical diasporas did in feudal societies. Moreover, most workers from these immigrant populations depend for a living not on ethnic niches but rather on the general labour market. If we want to apply the concept of

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[2] David Abulafia, *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean* (London: Penguin Books, 2011), 646.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Hans van Amersfoort, "Gabriel Sheffer and the Diaspora Experience," *Diaspora* 13, no. 3 (March 2004).

diaspora in the modern world, we must search for characteristics that are salient in modern economic situations and in the present-day political arrangements of nation-states.

In his seminal work on diasporas, Sheffer defines Modern Diasporas as follows:

> "Ethnic diasporas are created either by voluntary migration or as a result of expulsion from the homeland and settlement in one or more host countries…In their host countries diasporas preserve their ethnic or ethnic-religious identity and communal solidarity. This solidarity serves as the basis for maintaining and promoting constant contacts among the diasporas' activist elements. These contacts have political, economic, social and cultural significance for the diasporas, their host countries and homelands. This is also the basis for the organized actions of the diasporas. One of the purposes of these actions is to create and increase the readiness and ability of the diasporas to preserve a continuous interest in, and cultural, economic and political exchanges with their homelands. […] The capability of diasporas to mobilize in order or promote or defend their interests or the interests of their homelands within their host countries will result in the formation of either conflictual or cooperative triadic networks involving homeland, diaspora and host country. These triadic relations are now an integral part of international politics and influence the behavior of all parties involved." [5]

Sheffer points immediately to some difficulties presented by such definition:

> "First, in certain cases it is not entirely clear where or whether there are discrete homelands, or which are the homelands and which are the diasporas. […] For decades after Israel's independence it is still not clear which is the dominant component in world Jewry, and the debate continues about the centrality of Israel to world Jewry." […] "The second difficulty with this definition is connected to the issue of reciprocity in relations between diasporas and their homelands. While diasporas maintain ties with their homelands, the attitude of the homelands vis-à-vis their diasporas may be vague or ambivalent." [6]

Amersfoort argues that the popularity of "diaspora" tends to obscure the value the term might have when consistently conceptualized and seeks to provide a strict definition of diaspora.[7] He discusses the distinction between Classical and Modern Diasporas; Diaspora, Immigration, Ethnicity; Ethnicity and Nationalism; Diasporas and Transnationalism.

Maintaining cultural boundaries while at the same time participating successfully in such areas as the labour market and the educational system of the host society is the typical challenge for emerging diasporas. Amersfoort then provides the three properties that define an immigrant population as a modern diaspora:

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[5] Gabriel Sheffer, "A new field of study: modern diasporas in international politics" In *Modern Diasporas in International Politics* ed. Gabriel Sheffer (London: Croom Helm 1986).

[6] Ibid.

[7] Hans van Amersfoort, "Gabriel Sheffer and the Diaspora Experience," *Diaspora* 13, n°3 (March 2004).

"1. First, we distinguish between immigrants who develop boundary-maintaining institutions, thereby securing intergenerational continuity, from immigrant populations assimilating into the host society. The populations with boundary-maintaining institutions are ethnic groups; 2. Ethnic groups can be classified according to their participation in central institutions of the host society, such as the labour market and the educational system. Groups that successfully participate we call established. Groups that remain, for one reason or another, confined to the lowest rungs of the social ladder form ethnic minorities; 3. Established ethnic groups that are institutionally engaged in politics with regard to their home state or home territory are modern diasporas. Ethnic groups that miss this attribute form ethnic-cultural subdivisions of the state population."[8]

Amersfoort adds that Sheffer repeatedly brings the last two properties of his definition forward when he characterizes modern diasporas as *ethnonational groups* and its members as *at home abroad*. He deplores, however, the inclusion of too many periods, groups and situations in Sheffer's analysis so that his concept of diaspora becomes elusive.

Alonso and Oiarzabal carried out a comprehensive review of the relevant literature concerning diasporas and new media.[9] The variety of their sources and diversity of approaches, however, prevents them from providing a tight conceptualization of this emerging research area. Some of their comments are very illuminating. They indicate several authors (p.3) that assert the extreme importance in maintaining collective transnational ties between dispersed coethnic communities, their homeland, and their host societies. These attachments and relationships are the most distinguishing aspects that differentiate diasporas from other dispersed minority ethnic groups. They cite Vertocec who refers to diaspora as a social form, as "the emphasis remains on an identity group characterized by their relationship-despite-dispersal".[10] They point out to a number of scholars that have focused on how emigrant communities (e.g. Arab, Chinese, Croatian, Indian and Filipino) use online and mobile technologies to communicate, interact, maintain their identity, and enhance political mobilization while assessing their impact and implications on diasporic emigrants' daily lives. To a certain extent, they portray the Internet as an antidote for the assumed disjuncture or dislocation resulting from spatial and temporal distance between diasporas and their homelands:

"[…] the Internet as a post-geographically bounded global communication system has significantly provided the ability for dispersed groups such as diasporas to connect, maintain, create, and re-create social ties and networks with both their homeland and their co-dispersed communities. The Internet offers the ability for diasporas to exchange instant factual information regardless of geographical distance and time zones. Again time and space shift meanings; there are no constraints on

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[8] Ibid.

[9] A. Alonso, P.J. Oiarzabal, "The Immigrant Worlds' Digital Harbors –an introduction" In *Diasporas in the new media age: identity, politics and community*, edited by A. Alonso and P.J. Oiarzabal, (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2010).

[10] Steven Vertocec, "Three Meanings of 'Diaspora' Exemplified among South Asian Religions," *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies,* 6 no 3 (Winter 1997), 277-299.

synchronicity or locality. That is, the Internet offers the possibility to sustain and re-create diasporas as globally imagined communities."[11]

The e-Diasporas Atlas is a research program concerning diasporas and new media in the framework of the Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme ICT Migrations program. [12] Initiated and coordinated by Dana Diminescu the project introduced digital methods into research on diasporas providing documentation and analysis of thirty diasporas. [13] Their basic assumption is that migrant sites testify to a given e–diaspora's occupation of the Web. They call e-diaspora a migrant collective that organizes itself and is active primarily on the Web: its practices are those of a community whose interactions are 'enhanced' by digital exchange. They see e-diaspora also as a dispersed collective, a heterogeneous entity whose existence rests on the elaboration of a common direction, a direction not defined finally but which is constantly renegotiated as the collective evolves. An e-diaspora then is an unstable collective because every newcomer redraws it. It is self-defined, as it grows or diminishes not by inclusion or exclusion of members, but through a voluntary process of individuals joining or leaving the collective.

The Jewish People and Distance Shrinking Technologies

Michael Dahan points out to expectations that as direct result of globalization, regional unification and the emergence of cross-national and cross-state similarities, national and ethnic identities may be eroded and membership in social and political entities based on such identities would substantially, or even critically, decline.[14] Identity would cease to be defined by the members of such groups themselves within the context of their immediate environment, and rather by the local dominant social groups in the various countries, by other competing ethnic groups in these countries, regional and transnational cultural and ideological trends, or by global organizations. Contrary to such expectations, he asserts that these trends have not caused the disappearance of tribal groups, ethnic minorities and ethno-national diasporas. Quite the contrary, as can easily be discerned from data concerning minorities in most countries worldwide, not only have ethnicity and ethnic affiliations persisted, but rather socially and politically, ethnicity is still with us and growing.

One of the consequences of the transformation of society into a post-modern one characterized by a global flow of wealth, information, power and images, is that "the search for identity, collective or individual, ascribed or constructed, becomes the fundamental

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[11] A. Alonso, P.J. Oiarzabal, "The Immigrant Worlds' Digital Harbors –an introduction" In *Diasporas in the new media age: identity, politics and community*, edited by A. Alonso and P.J. Oiarzabal, (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2010).

[12] "e-Diasporas" accessed on September 15, 2019, http://www.e-diasporas.fr.

[13] D. Diminescu, W. Berthomière, E. Ma Mung, V. Petit, V. "Les traces de la dispersion"**,** *Revue européenne des migrations internationales*, 30, nᵒ 3-4 (2014).

[14] Michael Dahan, *The Jewish People as Pioneers of the New Global Civil Society* (Presentation at the Seminar of the eJewish.info initiative for Developing Jewish Networking Infrastructures, Jerusalem: The Jewish Agency of Israel, 2001). Presentation based on the article by Michael Dahan and Gabriel Sheffer, "Ethnic Groups and distance shrinking communication technologies," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 7, nᵒ 1 (2001).

source of social meaning".[15] Following Slevin, Dahan suggests that the Internet promotes "globalized diffusion and localized appropriation".[16]

> "In terms of the literature on ethnic groups, the Jews are essentially an ethno-national diaspora. Members of such groups are dispersed in various states not contingent on the borders of the homeland, remain minorities in their host countries, maintain an ethno-national identity that is connected to their homelands as well as continuous contacts with social and political groups and actors in these homelands. Yet, unlike some analysts who regard all diasporas as virtual entities, it is my view that because their identity is based on a combination of primordial, instrumental and symbolic-psychological factors, and because they show a substantive degree of solidarity, in fact, most ethno-national diasporas constitute actual trans-state communities. The Jewish people, lacking a physical homeland, have almost always constituted trans-state communities."[17]

Rheingold suggested that the cyberspace allows the creation of "virtual (on-line) communities" that are free of the constraints of place and based upon new forms of communication and social relationships.[18] However, critics[19] pointed out that, in "real space", communities members must and do live together and it is not simply a case of connecting and disconnecting when one feels like it. Dahan[20] argues, however, that Jewish groups in cyberspace overcome the limits expressed by such critics of the concept of virtual community. Jews share a common background and heritage, common sets of symbols, sometimes a common language, cultural values and a history of common struggles. They are rooted in a physical, albeit sometimes dispersed, community. By joining on-line communities, individuals are expressing their commitment to the overall group.

The remaining of this article will be concerned with events and services that provide instances of the role digital/online activities and resources have for the Jewish Diaspora communities. Jewish community activists were very early adopters of computer based technologies and computer mediated communications for a wide variety of purposes related to Jewish life.

Prevalence of direct contacts

The following description of a variety of Jewish online and Web based services is not necessarily an accurate description of Jewish networking. Direct contacts among individuals, groups and organizations are the most prevalent activity among those carried out online since the inception of the Internet. The vast expansion of social networking in the

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[15] Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture, Volume I* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996).

[16] James Slevin, *The Internet and Society* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2000).

[17] Dahan, *The Jewish People,*

[18] Howard Rheingold, *The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier,* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1993).

[19] Ian Goodwin, "Book Review: H. Rheingold, The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier 1993 (1st edition), 2000 (2nd edition)," *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture* 1, 1 103-109 (London, University of Westminster, 2004) accessed September 19, 2019 https://tinyurl.com/goodwin-rheingold .

[20] Dahan, *The Jewish People*

last years is beginning to partially substitute email exchanges, however email remains the prevalent activity. This is not reflected in the search engines, web sites and other online activities and services to which we have easy access. The number of worldwide email users will top 3.9 billion in 2019, and is expected to grow to over 4.3 billion by the end of 2023. Over half of the world population uses email in 2019. While other technologies such as social networking, instant messaging (IM), mobile IM, and others are also taking hold, email remains the ubiquitous form of communication. In addition, email is integral to the overall Internet experience as an email account (i.e. email address) is required to sign up to any online activity, including social networking sites, instant messaging and any other kind of account or presence on the Internet. [21]

Early events concerning the Jewish Diaspora and the Internet

The following early events manifest the interrelationship between the possibilities opened up by the Internet and the Jewish diaspora life.

The Diffusion of the Internet to Israel

Nicholas John present a very detailed analysis of the diffusion of the Internet to Israel.[22,23] His core conceptual framework is that suggested by Saskia Sassen, in which globalization does not just happen, but that it must be made to happen.[24] What makes these processes part of globalization, even though localized in national, indeed subnational setting, is that they involve transboundary networks and formations connecting or articulating multiple local or 'national' processes and actors.

Israel has been one of the first countries after the United States to which the Internet was introduced. As early as 1982 there was an UUCP link from the Hebrew University to the United States. A year after the establishment of Bitnet through the connection of CUNY to Yale it was extended to Israel. In 1984 the Israel Inter University Computer Centre (IUCC) connected to EARN the European Academic Research Network. It was also the first overseas node of the American CSNET. The first two ccTLD (Country Code Top Level Domain) were allocated to the United States (.us) and the United Kingdom (.uk) in 1985. Israel ".il" suffix was the third (also allocated in 1985). The process continued in the late eighties with the connection with the NSFNET (academic research Internet) and later with the partial commercialization in 1992 (four ISP licenses) and full commercialization in 1994.

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[21] Email Statistics Report, 2019-2023, Editor: Sara Radicati, PhD, The Radicati Group, Inc. accessed September 15, 2019 https://www.radicati.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Email-Statistics-Report-2019-2023-Executive-Summary.pdf. For general Internet statistics see Internet World Stats accessed September 15, 2019 http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm.

[22] Nicholas John, N.A. (2008). "The Arrival of the Internet in Israel: The Local Diffusion of a Global Technology" (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, 2008) Accessed September 15, 2019, https://nicholasjohn.huji.ac.il/sites/default/files/nicholasjohn/files/nicholas_john_phd_dissertation.pdf

[23] Nicholas John, "The diffusion of the Internet to Israel: the first 10 years," *Israel Affairs*, 17, nº 3 (2011): 327-340.

[24] Saskia Sassen, "When national territory is home to the global: Old borders to novel borderings," New *Political Economy*, 10 nº 4 (2005): 523-541.

For our present discussion, the main point is that the actors who enabled this innovative process were members of relevant diasporas. Nicholas John writes:

"In the previous section, I identified a small number of people whose physical movement in space from one place to another had much to do with the diffusion of the Internet to Israel. These people […] are what Rogers—the seminal writer on processes of diffusion—would have called cosmopolitans. For him, 'cosmopoliteness is the degree to which an individual's orientation is external to a particular social system'[25]. This orientation to a system other than the Israeli one is latent in immigrants […], or may be acquired by nationals sojourning overseas for an extended period of time (such as for graduate studies […]."[26]

Planning of the Global Jewish Information Network

The establishment of an Internet based Global Jewish Information Network was proposed in 1989. Its establishment was approved and budgeted by the Finances Committee of the Israel Parliament (Knesset) chaired by Avraham (Beiga) Shochat. Rafael Pinhasi, the new incoming Ministry of Communication (June 1990) decided to allocate that budget for the planning of such network which was carried out in 1991/1992 but not immediately implemented. The process of planning itself was very effective in assembling relevant information on available computer based Jewish services and communications; it also raised the awareness of a wide array of actors in the Jewish Diaspora and Israel for the potential of the new communications that were increasingly becoming widely available. Some of such results were summarized by Dov Winer in the Global Jewish Networking Handbook indicating many Jewish services that were already available.[27] It pointed to (1) the diffusion of the personal computer in countries with large Jewish communities and its use by thousands of Jewish networking enthusiasts (2) the concepts and dynamics introduced by the planning of a Global Jewish Network (3) the extraordinary growth of the Internet and computer communications; the initiative for a Superhighway of Information in the USA as setting networking as one of the spearheads of the American economy. The following observation included in the Handbook concerns the distinction of this new kind of communication:

"The high degree of interactivity and high speeds of communication with remote places, allow for a minimal delay of communication with remote places, allows for a minimal delay in obtaining feedback. This result in a sense of participation and intimacy among the participants of such interactions; a feeling unknown in one-way communications like television, radio and cinema and difficult to achieve in large face-to-face groups. All over the Jewish world people are engaged in CMC [Computer Mediated Communication] concerning education, political activities, business development, long-range planning,

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[25] Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of innovations*. (New York: Free Press, 1962).

[26] Nicholas John, "The diffusion of the Internet to Israel: the first 10 years," *Israel Affairs*, 17, nº 3 (2011): 327-340.

[27] Dov Winer, *Global Jewish Networking Handbook* (Jerusalem: WZO, 1994).

observance, tourism and seeking friends, many report having a renewed sense of belonging to the Jewish people."[28]

Israel 2020 – Master Plan for Israel in the 21st Century: the Macro Scenarios Israel and the Jewish People

In the early nineties, the Israel government invited the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology to prepare alternative future scenarios for the development of the Master Plan for Israel in the 21st Century. Two of the scenarios developed by the Technion were entitled: *Israel in the path of developed countries*; and the *Peace Scenario*. Anat Gonen, from the Jewish Agency, took the initiative to introduce an additional scenario, *Macro Scenarios concerning Israel and the Jewish People*. Several experts were invited to prepare background papers for the development of such scenario. An innovative element in the process was added when additional experts from throughout the world were invited to participate in scenario elaboration through online email discussions of the background papers. This online panel was assembled in two rounds; the first one took place in 1994 and it dealt with the consequences of processes taking place in the Jewish people for the long-term future planning of Israel. About 100 participants participated in the first round - most of them academicians, Social Sciences experts, rabbis, community activists from Jewish communities around the world and from Israel. It dealt with three main subjects: (a) the changing roles in the relations between Israel and the Jewish diaspora; (b) a discussion on the capacity of the Jewish diaspora to develop a significant Jewish life and the role of Israel in this process; (c) the Jewish character of the State of Israel.

In 1995, following the summary of the first panel, it was decided to have a second round that took place between November 1995 and April 1996. Another 50 participants joined the discussion and towards the end, a substantial group of researchers from Israel joined. The second round focused on a critical appraisal of the planning alternatives proposed by the Israel 2020 team: (a) presentation of the alternatives for the Israel Master Plan; (b) discussion on the special attributes of Israel in the years 2000 that may characterize it as the State of the Jews; alternative strategies for the development of the relations between Israel and the diasporas, the values at the basis of such relations, potential sources of strength and resources that may enable the realization of such alternatives; (c) similarities and contrasts in the processes that influence different diasporas, their relationships with their host societies and their significance for their future relationships with Israel.[29]

The 33rd World Zionist Congress: decision on Jewish Peoplehood through communication technologies

The 33rd Zionist Congress took place in December 1997 commemorating the centenary of the Zionist movement. The Congress adopted the decision (No.86) concerning Jewish Electronic Citizenship: "*The Congress instructs the institutions of the World Zionist*

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[28] Ibid.

[29] Dov Winer, **"**Israel Diaspora Relations and the Strategic Planning of Israel for the Years 2000 – A CMC Seminar" In *The Macro Scenarios: Israel and the Jewish People Israel 2020: Master Plan for Israel in the 21st Century — In collaboration with the Jewish Agency* eds. Anat Gonen and Smadar Fogel (Haifa: The Technion, Israel Institute of Technology, 1996).

Organization to report to the 34th Congress the measures taken to implement the concept of Jewish Peoplehood through communication technologies." The decision detailed that such implementation should be carried out via CMC discussions through the Jewish world; CMC based opinion surveys; experiments with online discussions and collaborative decision-making; technologies of online joint group development. The purpose of such actions is to facilitate the wide and open participation of Jews in discussions and decisions concerning issues that are part of a contemporary Jewish agenda. The proposal for such decision was brought to the Congress following the activities of an educational initiative, the Virtual Zionist Congress, which anticipated the real-world Congress. The decision was an expression of the awareness that in the ten years preceding the Congress an "*Online Jewish People*" evolved through online networks and it may become a tool for civic mobilization[30].

Early applications of the digital and the Internet in Jewish Life

The Responsa project

Jews have traditionally asked their local rabbis for advice on almost every subject. Many of the resulting questions and answers were collected in books. These responsa accordingly contain numerous halachic (legal religious), historical, sociological and economic data which reflect approximately one thousand years of the Jewish life. This literature constitute the Responsa corpus (questions and answers – Shut, in Hebrew).[31] The Responsa project began in 1963 at the Weizmann Institute of Science by Aviezri Frankel and transferred in 1967 to the Bar Ilan University. Yaacov Choueka joined in 1966 and directed it since 1974.[32] Initially the system ran in batch mode on an IBM mainframe. Later, from 1979, it also became usable in a time-sharing mode from terminals on the Bar-Ilan campus, as well as from a growing number of terminals off-campus. In 1990, following the development of the CD-ROM, the immense database compressed into a single compact disk, and presently the system can be installed on almost any personal computer and new versions have been issued more-or-less annually. Today the Responsa Project Disk on Key (DOK) contains more than 120,000 Responsa and more than 600,000 hypertext links between the databases, totalling more than 560 million words.[33] Rabbis have an important role as religious authorities and advisers for observant Jews today. Their decisions are based on precedents so that access to such database is not only of scholarly research interest but is used routinely for religious studies and rabbis work.

Bulletin Board Systems

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[30] Dov Winer, "Towards Jewish Electronic Citizenship," *Maasse Hoshev: The Journal of the Israeli Association for Information Technologies* 25 no 1 (1998): 37-47. Hebrew, English translation accessed September 15, 2019 https://www.academia.edu/39796557/Towards_Jewish_Electronic_Citizenship.

[31] "History of Responsa in Judaism," Wikipedia, accessed September 15, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_responsa_in_Judaism.

[32] "The Bar Ilan Responsa Project (see About the project)," University Bar-Ilan, accessed on September 15, 2019, https://www.responsa.co.il/home.en-US.aspx

[33] "Responsa Project Release 27+ (2019)," accessed on September 15, 2019, http://responsa-forum.co.il/www/?page_id=329&lang=en.

A Bulletin Board System, or BBS, was a computer system running software that allows users to connect and log in to the system using a terminal program. Once logged in, a user can perform functions such as uploading and downloading software and data, reading news and bulletins, and exchanging messages with other users, either through electronic mail or in public message boards. Many BBSs also offered on-line games, in which users could compete with each other, and BBSs with multiple phone lines often provide chat rooms, allowing users to interact with each other. To access BBSs the user used a phone line through an analogue dial-up modem. In 1986, Rabbi Alan Rosenbaum, from Institute for Computers in Jewish Life, established Golem, an online BBS for Jewish information; he was one of the first to use BBSs for Jewish related purposes. Very soon, hundreds of such systems were available throughout the world; their interconnection into BBS networks enabled worldwide-based computer based communications before the advent of the Internet. One of the early activists employing such media was Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Kazen, Director of Chabad Lubavitch in Cyberspace who reached out to thousands of people on Fidonet, an online discussion network distributed on several thousand nodes around the world. The technology was at a primitive stage so that it would sometimes take three days for messages to travel from one part of the world to the next. In Israel, at the end of eighties, there were in operation almost 300 BBS despite the regulations of the Ministry of Communication requiring a license; the Ministry disregarded its regulations and did not interfere with such activities.[34]

Usenet newsgroups

Usenet is a collection of newsgroups where the users post messages that are distributed via Usenet servers.[35] Each server holds these posted messages for a certain period. A user posts a message in a certain channel (e.g. newsgroup) and then this message is distributed via the different newsgroup servers. In the early stages of development of the Internet protocols by DARPA this system was set and used as a means of communication between the university team participating in the effort. It soon became the most popular application and the communication rapidly extended to all kind of subject matters and did not remain restricted to technical issues. Ruedenberg in 1994 indicated that among the 4,000 newsgroups then available worldwide, there were seven concerned with Jewish matters.[36] One of the most active was *soc.culture.jewish* a discussion of Jewish culture and religion.

Historical reviews of Jewish Internet Services

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[34] "Bulletin Board Systems: BBS History," accessed on September 15, 2019 http://www.bbscorner.com/usersinfo/bbshistory.htm . "Institute for Computers in Jewish Life announces Golem an online computer bulletin board system for Jewish information (1986)" accessed on September 15, 2019 https://tinyurl.com/bbs-golem; Computerworld 17 May 1982 accessed on September 15, 2019 https://tinyurl.com/bbs-computerworld; Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Kazen director of Chabad Lubavitch in Cyberspace passes away (1998) accessed on September 15, 2019, https://tinyurl.com/bbs-kazen.

[35] "Usenet: Usenet history," Wikipedia, accessed on September 15, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Usenet ; Soc "soc.mail.jewish", accessed on September 15, 2019, https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/mail-jewish and http://www.ottmall.com/mj_ht_arch/.

[36] Lucia Ruedenberg, **"**Jewish Resources in Computer Networking" In *Global Jewish Networking Handbook* ed. Dov Winer (Jerusalem: WZO, 1994).

Avrum Goodblatt, Ari Davidow, and Chaim Dworkin established Shamash, one of the oldest services, in 1991.[37] The site, active up to 2018, documents the kind of Jewish portals that were established through the nineties like JewishNet, Virtual Jerusalem and others. It covered a wide variety of services of interest mainly for observant (religious) Jews.

Reviews of Jewish Internet services available since the end of the eighties up to the year 2000 are available in the following publications:

Lucia Ruedenberg (1994) provides an early review of Jewish Resources in Computer Networking; Winer (1994) reports on services that preceded the establishment of the Web — services like FTP (file transfer protocol); Gopher; and other services in which servers providing access to catalogues and databases were accessed using the Telnet protocol. It includes Electronic Conferences of Jewish Interest (email distribution lists) and describes 135 such lists. They span a wide variety of subjects including: politics; academy/scholarship; dating and match-making; observance and religious studies; Yiddish; music; genealogy; Israel affairs; intermarriage; Holocaust; k12 education; librarianship; Women interest feminist groups (both of general and by observant women); and many more.

CJI (Computer Jobs in Israel) mailing list, for example, was an initiative of Jacob Richman who sought and found employment in Computer Science. He then decided, on a voluntary basis, to continue and scan the various sources of information on available jobs; prepare digests and distribute them electronically to help other colleagues, in Israel and abroad, to find employment in preparation to their immigration to Israel. Later this became an institutionalized service of the Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel and was turned into a commercial service.

Avi Hyman provides a short history of the early Jewish networks with special attention to those provided through USENET, Listserv(s) and the establishment of Shamash, an early Jewish portal.[38] Shamash followed the establishment of the first NSFnet regional network, Nysernet, and had an Israel counterpart — ITEX (The Israel Technology eXchange) both established by Avrum Goodblatt. His main concern however is H-Judaic: The Jewish Studies Network. He points out that the field of Jewish studies and the use of communication technology in academia had both matured to the point where, in the late 1980s, a viable, Internet-based Jewish studies professional organization could exist. This is an Internet-based professional organization primarily for those involved in post-secondary Jewish Studies, including professors and instructors, graduate students, librarians, researchers, rabbis involved with post-secondary institutions and independent scholars. In the year 2019 it has about 3,000 members worldwide, the vast majority of them were located in the United States, every continent is represented, with significant cohorts from Israel, Canada and Australia.[39]

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[37] "Shamash at the Internet Archive Wayback Machine," accessed on September 15, 2019, https://web.archive.org/web/20180101000000*/shamash.org.

[38] Avi Jacob Hyman, "The History of H-Judaic an Internet-based network for post-secondary Jewish Studies" (Ed.D. diss., Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, 2000).

[39] "H-Judaic Jewish Studies Network (JSN)," accessed on September 15, 2019, https://networks.h-net.org/h-judaic .

Jacob Shulman published a review of the variety of Jewish Internet services for the observant community.[40] It is an annotated list of selected World Wide Web sites in English that are relevant to understanding the more traditionally religious Jewish community. The sites include resource indexes and information about kosher food, Jewish calendars, music, communities, and Torah learning. The sites are classified into the following categories: Resource Indexes; Community Overview; Higher Education; Kosher Food and other Mitzvot (religious commandments); Food Recipes; Calendars; Torah Study; Texts; Publishers; Newspapers and Magazines; Music; News from Israel; Towards a Wedding.

Jewish Population

The estimated worldwide Jewish Population at the beginning of 2019 was at 14.7 million. This change derives from the rise in the number of Jews in Israel, from 6.55 million at the start of 2018 to 6.66 million at the start of 2019 (an increase of 110,000 or 1,7%), which was partially offset by the slight decline in the number of Jews in the Diaspora.[41]

Sergio Pergola analyses Jewish demography in 2018 attending to very fine details and methodological issues.[42] He makes a key distinction the core Jewish population (CJP); those who have Jewish parents regardless of their current identity (JPP); the enlarged Jewish population inclusive of non-Jewish household members (EJP); and the population eligible for the Law of Return (LRP).[43] In 2018, the largest core Jewish populations were (in thousands): Israel (6,558); United States (5,700); France (453); Canada (390.5); United Kingdom (290); Argentina (180.3); Russia (172); Germany (116); Australia (113.4); Brazil (93.2); South Africa (69).

Jewish Web based activities today

Online-based services span all aspects of Jewish life and all Jewish communities in the world and are a close knitted mesh. Thousands of small and large sites providing access to news, higher education, educational services, servicing small and large communities, serving as banners for institutions worldwide, for observance, religious studies, cultural tourism, dating and match making and much more.

The ubiquity of search engines like Google and Bing makes much of this information easily accessible. They superseded early Jewish Portals, which sought to identify, aggregate, classify and provide access to the available services.[44] Almost every Jewish institution site

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[40] Jacob Shulman, "Strongly Traditional Judaism: A Selective Guide to World Wide Web Resources in English," *Judaica Librarianship*, 10 no 1-2 (Spring 1999-Winter 2000).

[41] Barry Geltman, Rami Tal, eds., *Executive Summary: 2019 Annual Assessment of the Situation and Dynamics of the Jewish People. Presented to the Israeli Cabinet on June 30, 2019*, (Jerusalem: The Jewish People Policy Institute, 2019), accessed on September 15, 2019, http://jppi.org.il/new/wp-content/uploads/2019/2019AA_Gov_E.pdf, p.18.

[42] Sergio Della Pergola, Chapter 8 World Jewish Population, 2018. In Arnold—Dashefsky Ira M. Sheskin (Editors), American Jewish Year Book 2018, The Annual Record of the North American Jewish Communities Since 1899, Springer.

[43] "Law of Return (Amendment No. 2) 5730-1970," accessed on September 15, 2019, https://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/return.htm.

[44] Examples of useful lists of Jewish web resources include: "Diane Romm's 'The Jewish Guide to the Internet," accessed on September 15, 2019, https://www.jewishinternetguide.com/; "MavenSearch," accessed on September

provides access to other, context relevant, Web resources. The following sections survey the kind of Jewish online services presently available through the Internet and the Web.

The Internet impact on the Jewish Institutional Landscape

Jack Wertheimer points out that whereas the "Jewish community" used to be shorthand for the organizations that claimed to represent the concerns and needs of Jews, the map of the Jewish Internet landscape today captures a much more variegated and diverse community, sustained across social divisions.[45] He points out that the Internet make it possibly for Jews to announce programs and organize gatherings at no cost, thus facilitating the growth of local start-ups, even as the Internet also creates the option for Jews to engage in a global Jewish conversation. He points out that those organizations that in previous generations had claimed to be the "central address" or represent the "voice" of American Jews no longer do so with the same power and dominance they once did. The Internet has redefined the Jewish public and private sectors. It is a relatively independent sphere for Jewish communal engagement and involvement, in which traditional organizations vie for positions of leadership with younger ones, where newer voices occupy central positions within the overall landscape of Jewish websites. A different structure of Jewish life become possible — decentralized, multidimensional, diverse, and offering a different sensibility about what constitutes community. Through in some important ways subversive of established organization, the Internet also offers those institutions a new set of platforms to promote their messages and recruit followers. Websites and Internet communications strategies are integral to every organization's ability to reach out to members and effect change in their communities.

Almost all the institutional expressions of Jewish life have a place in the Web. Jewish communities, synagogues, federations, professional organizations, philanthropies, clubs, schools, universities, movements, political parties, international organizations — all became accessible online. These sites provide basic information on the mission of the institution, its activities, the staff and board of directors, contact information. Services that are more sophisticated actively seek to engage their target audiences through making available their services through the Web like guidance, instruction, support, counselling, education, networking and more. A few examples of such institutional sites include: The World Jewish Congress; The Jewish Federations of North America; European Day of Jewish Culture; Executive Council of Australian Jewry; AMIA Argentine Jewish Community; Russian Federation; The Jewish Confederation of Brazil.[46]

15, 2019, http://www.mavensearch.com/ ; "Jacob Richman's lists of resources," accessed on September 15, 2019, https://jr.co.il/t/index.html.

[45] Jack Wertheimer, *Generation of Change: How Leaders in Their Twenties and Thirties are Reshaping American Jewish Life,* (New York: Avi Chai Foundation, 2010), https://avichai.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Generation-of-Change-FINAL.pdf.

[46] "The World Jewish Congress," https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/; "The Jewish Federations of North America," https://www.jewishfederations.org/; "European Day of Jewish Culture," https://www.jewishheritage.org/web/edjc; "Executive Council of Australian," Jewry http://www.ecaj.org.au/; "AMIA Argentine Jewish Community," http://www.amia.org.ar/index.php/site/index; "Russian Federation," https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/about/communities/RU; "Jewish Confederation of Brazil," http://www.conib.org.br/conib/english accessed on September 19, 2019.

Jewish Media: Press, Radio, Video… and Blogs

Henry Bial provides a quite nuanced analysis of the complex relations of Jews and media. He introduces the phrase "Jew Media" to "[…] offer the Jewish media consumer an opportunity to assert that 'Jewish' is a meaningful category of cultural experience, while keeping a certain critical distance from the impulse to generalize (or moralize) across that category" [47]. "Mass culture, after all, has been a critical site for negotiation of Jewish identity in the United States since the 5680s [48]. The explosive growth of new media has accelerated, but not fundamentally changed the dynamics of that negotiation." [49] He cites Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblet, who remind us that "new technologies are not only tools, but also social practices. They are also models for reimagining ways to be Jewish and to form Jewish connections". [50]

The impact of the Internet on Jewish Media may best be characterized by the concept of Creative Destruction "[…] incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one […]". [51] Rabbi Jason Miller tells about his experiences as an avid Jewish newspaper reader while reporting on leadership changes at the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. [52] He mentions that "over the past two decades, United States Jewish media and print journalism in general have been in steady decline due to dwindling readership and loss of ad revenue to the Web". Jonathan S. Tobin, head of JNS Jewish News Syndicate, points out that

> "[…] local papers must also compete with all sorts of digital formats in an era where many, if not most, people get most of their news from their social-media feeds—usually on their smartphones or other mobile devices—and not by individual publications in print or otherwise. Moreover, the cost of maintaining hard-copy editions has caused other papers to switch, as The Forward has done, to an all-digital and Internet model." [53]

Vast sources of Jewish press, news, radio stations and television/video are readily available for all Jewish Diaspora in the Web and mobile applications. Ira M. Sheskin and Arnold Dashefsky cover North America well by providing lists of Jewish Media organizations, National Television/Internet/Radio Stations; National Jewish Periodicals and Broadcast Media, United States and Canada; Local Jewish Periodicals, United States and

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[47] Henry Bial, "Jew Media – Performance and Technology for the 58th Century," *TDR: The Drama Review* 55 nᵒ3 (T211 Fall 2011).

[48] In Jewish's calendar.

[49] Bial, "Jew Media,"

[50] Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblet, "The 'New Jews': Reflections on Emerging Cultural Practices," paper presented at the conference Re-thinking Jewish Communities and Networks in an Age of Looser Connections Wurzweiler School of Social Work, Yeshiva University and Institute for Advanced Studies, Hebrew University. December 6-7, 2005. New York City, http://www.nyu.edu/classes/bkg/web/yeshiva.pdf.

[51] "Creative Destruction," Wikipedia, accessed on September 15, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creative_destruction.

[52] Rabbi Jason Miller, "The Internet's Effect on Jewish Newspapers," The New York Jewish Week, August 3, 2010, https://jewishweek.timesofisrael.com/the-internets-effect-on-jewish-newspapers/.

[53] Jonathan S. Tobin, "Jewish journalism isn't dead. It's just changing," JNS, January 24, 2019, https://www.jns.org/opinion/jewish-journalism-isnt-dead-its-just-changing/.

Canada.[54] Almost without exception, their lists provide web sites addresses in addition to regular contact information.

Jack Wertheimer writes:

"Blogs add yet another dimension, offering a very inexpensive, easy-to-update platform for posting information. Group blogs like Jewschool, Jewcy, and Jewlicious are among several platforms offering voice to a stable of writers, while some individuals, such as the blogger who calls himself Frumsatire, post their own blogs to an attentive audience of readers. On top of this, various organizations offer commentary through their own blogs, and many traditional news outlets, such as the Jerusalem Post and the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, embed blogs in their websites. All of these sites contribute to a lively conversation taking place within the American Jewish community, largely outside of the establishment organizations, illustrating just one way in which the Internet has opened up a whole new arena for communal engagement, debate, and organizing."[55]

No updated directory of Jewish Media is presently available for other diasporas. However, they are ubiquitous in all countries with Jewish communities and can readily be found through Google and/or Bing. Mostly expressing the hold of the "Jewish imaginary" for non-Jews Google searches for "Jew" in YouTube for different languages gave 162,000,000 results in English; 12,800,000 in French; 39,100,000 in Russian; 10,500,000 in Spanish; 2,140,000 in Portuguese. Internet based Jewish radio stations can be readily found through Google searches.[56]

The impact of ICT on Jewish Observance

Most of the research concerning the Internet and Jewish life have a narrow focus on religion. A good example is Heidi Campbell work on digital media as related to religious experience.[57] She spotlights different religious Jewish groups perceptions of digital media and the implications technology use may raise related to the outreach goals and moral or religious patterns of life.

Here, we describe the impact of the Internet (ICT) on Jewish observance along the following aspects: how it facilitates access to the religious literature and innovate the sphere of religious learning, an essential element in Jewish religious observance; as enabler of diversity and creativity stimulating alternative forms of observing Judaism; how it may act as a subversive element concerning traditional religious authority, in particular among ultra-orthodox circles.

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[54] Ira M. Sheskin and Arnold Dashefsky, "Chapter 13, Jewish Press" in *American Jewish Year Book 2018*, ed. Arnold Dashefsky and Ira M. Sheskin, (New York: Springer, 2019), https://tinyurl.com/academia-ajyb-2018.

[55] Ibid, 30.

[56] "Jewish Radio," https://tinyurl.com/jewish-radio.

[57] Heidi A. Campbell, ed., *Digital Judaism – Jewish Negotiations with Digital Media and Culture*, (New York: Routledge, 2015).

The Jewish Canon and observance learning Innovation

Sefaria is assembling a free, living, library of Jewish texts and their interconnections, in Hebrew and in translation.[58] The Jewish canon is a giant corpus of interconnected texts that speak to each other. Sefaria is making it easier for ancient conversations to continue in new ways, with new participants, new questions, and new layers of dialogue. It invites everyone to reuse their code and data to build apps, conduct research or make visualizations.

929 is the number of chapters in the Tanakh, the Hebrew Bible. Every day, at midnight, the daily chapter on the 929 website changes, and the next chapter appears, along with creative readings, pluralistic interpretations and short commentaries, audio and video clips, graphic art, and even narration of the text, for those who prefer just to listen.[59] The lively discourse surrounding the chapter of the day takes place both on social networks and in study groups, encounters and events in the real world. Taking part are leading academics, cultural icons, public figures, artists, and writers, both men and women.

Daf Yomi, "page of the day" or "daily folio" is a daily regimen of learning the Oral Torah and its commentaries (also known as the Gemara), in which each of the 2,711 pages of the Babylonian Talmud is covered in sequence in a cycle of seven and a half years.[60] Tens of thousands of Jews worldwide study in the Daf Yomi program, and over 300,000 participate in the Siyum HaShas, an event celebrating the culmination of the cycle of learning. The Daf Yomi program makes Talmud study accessible to Jews who are not Torah scholars. It can be anchored on readily available ICT based support with several sites listed in the above references.[61]

Enabler of diversity and creativity

Michael Berger argues that Computer Mediated Communication furthered the spread of "alternative" expressions of Jewishness, from social activism and pro/anti-Israel advocacy to arts and crafts and special-interest sub-groups.[62] Religious Jewish life became both more participatory and syncretistic as Computer Mediated Communication lowered the bar on both access and production, enabling people to avoid traditional authority structures and create their own rituals, ceremonies, liturgy and artefacts for religious use. Examples of resources supporting such trends are the Open Siddur project and Piyut.

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[58] "Sefaria," https://www.sefaria.org/about.

[59] "929 Site," English accessed September 15, 2019, https://www.929.org.il/lang/en/today Hebrew accessed on September 15, 2019, https://www.929.org.il/p/home.

[60] "Daf Yomi," Wikipedia: English accessed on September 15, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daf_Yomi Hebrew accessed September 15, 2019, https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/הדף_היומי.

[61] "OU Daf Yomi Initiative example," accessed on September 15, 2019, https://www.ou.org/blog/torah-blog/ou-daf-yomi-initiative-presents-new-jewish-history-series/.

[62] Michael Berger, *Technology and the Religious Self: Trends in American Judaism in Modern Judaism, Technology and Authority: Historical, Social, Scientific and Theological Perspectives*, (Oxford: Summer Institute on Modern and Contemporary Judaism, Report of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies 2016-2017), p. 44, https://www.ochjs.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/AR-2016-17-compact.pdf.

The Piyut initiative concerns the vast majority of the poetic and musical creativity of the Jews that emerged in various Diaspora communities during the past two millennia.[63] Large sections of the great tradition of Piyut have been lost or forgotten. Finding access to the remnants that remain is not easy. The project address this need for people to connect with the voices calling from the depths of time, absorbed in emotion and wisdom of the many generations that sang these piyutim.

The Open Siddur is a community project growing a gratis Open Access archive of Jewish prayer, liturgy, and related works (historic and contemporary, familiar and obscure), composed in every era, region, and language Jews have ever prayed.[64] Its goal is to provide a platform for sharing open-source resources, tools, and content for individuals and communities designing their own prayer book (siddur). This group hopes to empower personal autonomy, to preserve customs, and to foster openness and vitality in Jewish religious culture.

Gabrielle Pieck points to a new freedom from the restraints of the denominations that is supported by Web 2.0.[65] It allows for an emergent post-denominational Judaism with new and revived functions that closely mirror those of a post-rabbinic Jewish theology. She refer to her case studies, as five digital Judaisms: three synagogues, the Open Siddur project and Jewrotica, a Jewish erotic site.[66] They are predominantly non-Orthodox though Jewrotica has a partial Orthodox basis.

Challenge to traditional authority

Ayala Fader has documented different ways by which the new communication technologies subvert traditional hierarchies in Jewish religious life.[67] Over the past fifteen years, ultra-Orthodox Jews have been increasingly concerned with religious doubt. Many communal leaders have called the current moment "a crisis of faith," with the perception that there are new challenges to ultra-Orthodoxy, especially from the Internet. In response, leaders have turned to explicit communal talk about interiority in their attempts to strengthen faith and therapeutically treat those with religious doubts. The Jewish blogosphere created an anonymous public online space available to all readers with access, which ultimately made those with questions feel part of a larger community rather than, as so many told Ayala Fader they feared, "crazy". Many eventually meet in person and create mixed-gendered networks for support and socializing. Such networks became threatening to ultra-Orthodox authorities and led many to blame religious doubt on the Internet. She describes Occupy Judaism, an explicitly religious expression of Jewish protest, which occurred simultaneously with Occupy Wall Street, the direct-democracy movement of 2011

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[63] "The Site (Hebrew) of Piyut and Tefila (Poetry and Prayer)," accessed on September, 15, 2019, https://web.nli.org.il/sites/nlis/he/song/pages/default.aspx; "An Invitation to Piyut (English) old site," accessed on September, 15, 2019, http://old.piyut.org.il/english/.

[64] "Open Siddur," accessed on September, 15, 2019, https://opensiddur.org/.

[65] Gabrielle Pieck, "Jewish Theology after Google: Post-Rabbinic and Post-Denominational Judaisms in a Digitized World" (MA diss., University of Basel, 2014) https://tinyurl.com/Gabrielle-Pieck-Thesis.

[66] "Jewrotica," accessed on September, 15, 2019, http://jewrotica.org/.

[67] "Ayala Fader," accessed on September, 15, 2019, https://www.fordham.edu/info/20855/faculty/5003/ayala_fader.

that created the potential for Jewish leftist religion to occupy a new space in the public sphere for a short time. Heidi Campbell in the Israeli orthodox context notes that while many Orthodox groups readily utilize the Internet, it is still viewed by some with suspicion.[68] She writes about fears expressed, primarily by ultra-Orthodox groups, showing religious leaders attempt to constrain Internet use to minimize its potential threat to religious social norms and the structure of authority.

Jewish Genealogy

Jewish genealogy is a most popular area of online engagement. It is marked by Jews' interest in their own families' heritages, driven by a need to know and a hope to remember. The goal, as Rachel Leah Jablon points out, is to reveal as much about a family's biological and social lineage, and thus legacy, as possible by tracing the lineage as far back as possible.[69] It brings Jewish historical experience to life by naming the people who affected, and were affected by, the events of Jewish history that inform Jewish collective memory. Jewish genealogy offers a concrete, sometimes-tangible way of relating to Jewish history: ship manifests, birth and death records, municipal registries, photographs, and even travel routes demonstrate the real-life impact of historical circumstances. She shows how the narratives on Jewish genealogical research Web sites, cyber shtetls, and personal genealogy Web sites and blogs reveal constructions of Jewish identity that have never before been articulated as viable options for forming Jewish communities.

The dispersion that followed immigration resulted for an extended Jewish family in a typical pattern of having members in several continents. Jewish genealogical societies are active in many countries and the extent of such activity is gauged from the program of the International Conference on Jewish Genealogy.[70]

JewishGen is a non-profit organization affiliated with the Museum of Jewish Heritage whose mission is to facilitate access to records, information and tools that will be valuable for Jewish ancestral research; and maintaining an online community for family researchers to connect with relatives and like-minded individuals.[71] Its free, easy-to-use genealogy website features thousands of databases, research tools, and other resources to help those with Jewish ancestry research and find family members.

General interest genealogy commercial services include http://geni.com and http://MyHeritage.com boasting of having 80 million users.

Online Jewish Dating

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[68] Heidi Campbell, "Religion and the Internet in the Israeli Orthodox context," *Israel Affairs,* 17 nᵒ 3 (July 2011): 364-383.

[69] Rachel Leah Jablon, "Virtual Legacies: Genealogy, the Internet, and Jewish Identity," (PhD diss., University of Maryland College Park, 2012), https://umd.academia.edu/RachelLeahJablon.

[70] "39th International Conference on Jewish Genealogy," accessed on September, 15, 2019, https://www.iajgs2019.org/program_schedule.cfm.

[71] "JewishGen," accessed on September 15, 2019, http://www.jewishgen.org.

Rosa Lemel traces the evolution of online dating sites. Newer sites increasingly target niche markets.[72] By segmenting, and then targeting specific niches, these site can offer extremely specialized services not available on mainstream online sites. The three most popularly used categories for online dating have been for religious dating, ethnic dating, and senior dating. Religious dating is the most popular of the three and offers a differentiated dating site geared specifically to a religion and its various denominations. The religious dating sites will ask more religious specific questions and ask within a religion which sect or denomination the user belongs to. Specifying "Jewish" is not enough for a Jewish site, it asks for deeper classification within the religion, whether the user is Chassidic, Modern Orthodox, Yeshivish, Reform, Conservative, Conservadox, and about 10 or more other categories of just where within Judaism the user identifies. That is just the beginning of categorizing the "Jewishness" of the user's profile allowing for better matchmaking.

JDate is one of the oldest and most popular dating sites. JDate has an innovative strategy that includes a variety of ways to connect online including a "Kibitz Corner", instant messaging, message boards, and chat rooms. There is an increasing trend for online daters to want organized offline activities as well, and JDate provides these opportunities with real world travel adventures, speed dating parties, and other activities to encourage real world interaction. Jessica Herman tells that a common complaint found on reviews of the site is that many of the matches are to non-Jewish users.[73] A review of JDate by August 2019 indicate that it has 240,000 members from the US with 180,000 active weekly; 43% of its members are female and 57% male and the majority of active members are female aged 35 to 49 years old.[74] Also a review of the top 10 Jewish Dating sites is available.[75]

Social Networks

Social networking sites invite users to create a profile, connect with other users while sharing content and engaging in conversation. This became a routine activity for a large share of the Jewish population for which every day is permeated by short exchanges of "small talk" in intimate groups with ongoing exchanges of family, professional and business information in a variety of media: SMS, WhatsApp, photography, movies etc. The rate of such interactions has increased manifold in the last few years.

J. Clement writes that the lovechild of the World Wide Web is social media, which comes in many forms, including blogs, forums, business networks, photo-sharing platforms, social gaming, microblogs, chat apps, and last but not least social networks.[76] In 2019, the global social penetration rate reached 45%, with East Asia and North America both having the highest penetration rate at 70%, followed by Northern Europe at 67%. The worldwide number of users of Social Media in 2017 was 2.48 billion with the US in 2018 having 243.6

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[72] Rosa Lemel, "From Mass Marketing to a Niche Strategy: the Evolution of Online Dating Sites," *Allied Academies International Internet Conference*, 18, n⁰ 2, (2016).

[73] Jessica Herman, (2013). "JDate: Not Just for Tribe Members," *Cosmopolitan*, March 8, 2013
https://www.cosmopolitan.com/sex-love/news/a11976/non-jews-on-jdate/ .

[74] "JDate Review," accessed on September 16, 2019, https://www.datingscout.com/jdate/review.

[75] "Review of top 10 Jewish dating sites," http://jewish-dating-websites.no1reviews.com/.

[76] "Statista Social media — Statistics & Facts Published by J. Clement, Sep 4, 2019," accessed on September 16, 2019, https://www.statista.com/topics/1164/social-networks/.

million users. The most popular as for February 2019 were Facebook (64%); WhatsApp (45%); FB Messenger (37%); Instagram (32%); Twitter (21%); and Snapchat (12%). The use by Jews of Social Networks can reasonably be expected to be at the same rate of the general population or even more.[77] However, as Nathan Abrams observes it is surprising the paucity of academic research on this topic apart of a few publications.[78]

Abrams carried out a case study of an independent minyan (Jewish prayer group) called "Grassroots Jews" in which research has shown how Facebook has facilitated bottom up, and "pop up" congregational formation among young post-denominational Jews in the UK allowing them to experiment with offline forms of worship and participation.[79,80] This work was intended to examine how the construction of Jewish identity is accomplished in a social media environment, Facebook, which has played a key role in enabling users to explore and define notions of meaning and being amongst young people in this area.

Anna Manchin presents two case studies focussed on Hungarian Jewry.[81] They are grounded both on the particularities of Jewish history in Hungary and theories conceptualizing networked publics. Her analysis deploys three central dynamics of networked publics as collapsed, contexts, the blurring of public and private and invisible audiences. The lack of spatial, social and temporal boundaries [for public acts in networked publics] makes it difficult [for participants] to maintain distinct social contexts like Erving Goffman distinction between front and back stage. The discourse on Jewishness in Hungary has relied on the distinction between public and private, and the separation of different contexts and audiences. Judapest was a blog about "Jewish popular culture". Bruno Bitter the editor the blog had two explicit related goals: to disrupt Hungarian public discourse on Jewishness and offer Jewish culture an identity for the twenty-first century. He hoped to lift talk about Jews/Jewishness out of the context of antisemitism by "waging a semantic guerrilla-war". This war would be waged by popularizing and supporting "progressive, alternative Jewish self-expression in culture, politics and religion". Manchin describes how such project went against the grain of the official way of talking about Jewishness in Hungary. It designated Jews as ethnically Hungarians, and Jewishness a private, religious matter while coexisting with an unofficial discourse. Outside official discourse Jewishness not only mattered a great deal but was seen as permeating all aspects of culture, and when it

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[77] "Statista: Global active usage penetration of leading social networks as of February 2019," accessed on September 16, 2019, https://www.statista.com/statistics/274773/global-penetration-of-selected-social-media-sites/.
[78] Nathan Abrams, "Film, Television, and New Media Studies," In *The Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Jewish Cultures*, ed. Lawrence Roth and Nadia Valdman (New York: Routledge, 2015).
[79] Nathan Abrams, "Appropriation and Innovation — Facebook, Grassroots Jews and Offline Post-Denominational Judaism," Chapter 3 In *Digital Judaism Jewish Negotiations with Digital Media and Culture*, ed. Heidi A. Campbell (New York: Routledge, 2015).
[80] Nathan Abrams, Sally Baker and B.J. Brown, "Grassroots Religion: Facebook and Offline Post-Denominational Judaism," Chapter 8 In *Social Media Religion and Spirituality*, eds. Marie Gillespie, David Herbert, and Anita Greenhill (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018), 143-63.
[81] Anna Manchin, "Rethinking Jewishness in Networked Publics: The Case of Post-Communist Hungary," Chapter 10 In *Connected Jews: Expressions of Community in Analogue and Digital Culture* eds. Simon Bronner and Caspar J. Battegay (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2018) https://www.academia.edu/38447522/Rethinking_Jewishness_in_NetworkedPublics_The_Case_of_Post-Communist_Hungary.

came to individuals, it was an immutable, implicit ethnic or racial category that no amount of assimilation — not even religious conversion — could change.

Julian Voloj and Anthony Bak Buccitelli analyse Jewish Second Life.[82] Although in decline, for a short period Second Life was seen as the next big Internet phenomenon Jewish Second Life: Second Life (SL) is an online community in which people interact with each other through self-created virtual alter egos, so called "avatars" who communicate with each other via "instant messaging"; its 3-D animations give virtual worlds a realistic feeling. As the platform grew in popularity, dozens of Jewish sites across the grid emerged, created both by individual users and by offline institutions that established SL presences. It included a successful Second Life Synagogue; a replica of Jerusalem's Western Wall where visitors could download the weekly Parasha and get information on Chabad; a Jewish Historic Museum and Synagogue; a first SL Holocaust Memorial; a virtual Seder of Pessach (Passover) was commemorated. Although the kinds of clearly constructed virtual experiences available to people in worlds like SL have often been taken as merely representational at best, or ersatz at worst, scholars have slowly begun to shed light on the creative ways in which humans construct their social and cultural worlds, not just online but offline as well.

Sager reviews some Jewish Social Networks.[83] However Jewish social networking activities takes place mostly through general social networking services.

Jewish organizations seem to be succeeding in deploying social networking for their outreach purposes. We got the following results for a search for "Jewish" in Facebook: Jewish Voice for Peace (563K likes); World Jewish Congress (408K likes); Jewish Food (392K likes); The Jewish Agency for Israel (239K likes); Jewish Projects (169K likes); MyJewishLearning.com (151K likes); Jewish People around the World (120K likes). Some large Jewish Facebook groups include: The World's Largest Jewish Singles Group (11K members); Jewish Genealogy Surname Project (9.6K members); Jewish Music (7.6K members); Judaism for non-Jews and Jewish converts (5K members).

Jewish Education

The diffusion of the Internet and ICT resulted in a civilization shift in the last decades with a clear impact in education. Reviews of ICT in Jewish Education pay much attention to technologies and devices but focus of the present paradigm shift in the wider educational realm is at the level of pedagogies. Curricula, traditionally focused on the acquisition of disciplinary content. The new civilization in which we live is characterized by the readily availability of contents at the click of a mouse that compete for our span of attention. Participation in this new environment requires that education change its focus to the

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[82] Julian Voloj and Anthony Bak Buccitelli, "The Second Life of Judaism: A History of Religious Community and Practice in Virtual Spaces," Chapter 9 In *Connected Jews: Expressions of Community in Analogue and Digital Culture* eds. Simon Bronner and Caspar J. Battegay (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2018).

[83] "Jewish Social Networks: Flops, Successes, and the Future," accessed on September 16, 2019, http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/jewish-social-networks-flops-successes-and-the-future/ https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/author/jacob-sager/.

development of higher order skills like analytic reasoning, complex problem solving, and teamwork.[84]

Israel is a country that was an early adopter of ICT for education through the Tomorrow '98 program in the early nineties.[85] It keeps a leading place in this area as this is of critical importance for its economy, security and scientific development.[86] In contrast, the wider adoption of ICT in Jewish Education has been slow; only the last few years' testimony substantial efforts in this area. Jewish Education has a complementary role and it depends on developments in the wider educational systems in which it is embedded. Being part of the Humanities cluster of disciplines it also suffers the burden of a slower adoption of new pedagogies.

Jonathan Woocher and Meredith Woocher provide a comprehensive review of Jewish Education in North America including a detailed description of the incorporation of ICT.[87] They start by providing a broad panoramic view writing that American Jewry has gone from being an "assimilating" community to a fully assimilated one — but without the disappearance of a distinctive Jewish identity that some predicted. Jews have followed societal trends in becoming more diverse as a group and more fluid in their identities; embracing "prosumerism" and seeking an active voice in choosing and shaping their own experiences; comfortably moving among multiple communities; viewing institutions with diminished deference and without long-term loyalties; and in voraciously adopting new communications technologies that change how we work, connect, recreate, and learn.

They see the central story of American Jewish education as one of swirling forces pushing and pulling at what is inherently a "conservative" institutional system in society and culture, and of efforts by those responsible for that system to keep it vibrant and relevant amid these changes. It is a vast enterprise involving thousands of institutions, millions of participants, and billions of dollars of annual expenditures (roughly between US$4–5 billion). They identify the following three challenges to the system:

The **first** is institutional. The **demands** on these institutions, both financial and educational, have **escalated**. Strengthening, transforming, reorganizing, or replacing these institutions has become a preoccupation across the Jewish educational landscape and has generated waves of activity and investment. Second, **Jewish education has been challenged pedagogically**. In Jewish education a growing sentiment exists that conventional methods are not having the impact that any of the stakeholders — educators, communal leaders, funders, parents, or learners — seek. Various remedies have been proposed — **different**

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[84] "21st Century Skills," accessed on September 16, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/21st_century_skills.

[85] Niv Strauss (Editor), *Insights from Past Initiatives to Promote Science Education in Israel Learning from Selected Issues, Project Report — Summary* (Jerusalem, The Initiative for Applied Education Research The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2017) http://education.academy.ac.il/SystemFiles/23191.pdf. See also: "About MAKASH," accessed on September 16, 2019, http://makash.org.il/dev/about-en.

[86] Dov Winer, *Israel: Country Report on ICT in Education*, 2018, (Brussels: European Schoolnet — European Ministries of Education Consortium for ICT, 2018) https://tinyurl.com/2018-doh-IL . The full set of national reports is available at http://www.eun.org/resources/country-reports.

[87] Jonathan Woocher and Meredith Woocher, "Jewish Education in a New Century: An Ecosystem in Transition," In *American Jewish Year Book 2013,* eds. Arnold Dashefsky and Ira M. Sheskin (New York: Springer, 2014) https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9783319016573.

content, better training for educators, greater parental involvement, more use of technology — with the current favourite being a turn to more experiential education.

Third, and perhaps most critically, Jewish education is being **challenged today with regard to its fundamental purpose**. It was taken for granted that the purpose of Jewish education on the individual level is to instil a strong, positive Jewish identity. On the collective level, Jewish education has been seen as the critical factor in ensuring Jewish continuity — a strong and enduring Jewish community and people. But these fail today to resonate for many younger Jews. What, they ask, is the purpose of my Jewish identity and of Jewish continuity? Jewish education is being challenged to provide answers to a different set of questions - not how to be Jewish or even why to be Jewish, but **how Jewishness makes a difference in individuals' lives and for the world.** Education for meaning has replaced education for continuity as the framework within which both institutions and pedagogies must function.

The Jewish Funders Network (JFN) dedicated its annual meeting in 2017 to consider the questions: How are new technological developments affecting learning — and Jewish learning in particular? How might funders develop the expertise to invest strategically in new tools, and in the people developing those tools, to advance our Jewish educational missions?[88] As background the JFN commissioned from Lewis J. Bernstein & Associates, a report sponsored by the Jim Joseph Foundation and the William Davidson Foundation: Smart Money: Recommendations for an Educational Technology and Digital Engagement Investment Strategy.[89] The report includes a landscape analysis of educational technology and digital engagement tools and trends — both secular and Jewish. They detail and provide examples of applications of educational technologies in five categories: (1) New Models for Learning: Personalized/Adaptive Learning and Big Data and Analytics; Distance Learning and Virtual Classrooms; (2) Interactive Instructional Tools: Creative Tools; Game-Based Learning; Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality; Coding & Tech-Related Skills; (3) Digital Content and Portals: Curricular Databases and Websites; General Educational Websites and Resources; Subscription Services; (4) Relationship and Community-Building Resources: Social Media and Community and Lifestyle Websites; Video Conferencing and Video "Meet-Ups"; (5) Support for Organizations and Educators: Support for Technology Infrastructure; Professional Development.

The JFN announced their intent to release a series of white papers that probe deeper into different topics raised in the report.

The Avi Chai Foundation maintains an observatory of developments concerning Jewish Day School Educational Technology / Online Learning.[90] The foundation reported in 2018 a report on the results of a four-year study of day schools that are introducing and

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[88] "Jewish Funders Network: Continuing Conversations on Leveraging Educational Technology to Advance Jewish Learning," accessed on September 16, 2019, https://www.jfunders.org/ed-tech-blog-series, 2017.

[89] Lewis J. Bernstein & Associates, *Smart Money: Recommendations for an Educational Technology and Digital Engagement Investment Strategy,* (JFN the Jim Joseph Foundation and the William Davidson Foundation, 2017), https://www.jfunders.org/smart_money_educational_technology.

[90] "The Avi Chai Foundation: Day School Educational Technology/Online Learning," accessed on September 16, 2019, https://avichai.org/category/day-school-educational-technology/.

implementing blended learning practices.[91] They conclude that the schools' leaders and educators readily acknowledge that they still have a long way to go. But overall, their direction and commitment to keep moving are clear. Blended learning, this study concludes, has much to offer day schools, and day schools have much to teach the wider field of general education about implementing blended learning.

They understand blended learning as existing on a continuum that extends from (1) the stereotypical image of a traditional text-based and teacher-led classrooms through (2) technology enhanced (adding new tools to existing practice) to (3) truly blended, and on to (4) fully online education. Across schools, subjects, and grade levels, educators in the day schools agreed that their goal is not to move all the way to the fully online end of the continuum but rather to move to, and sustain, the stage they describe as "truly blended".

Educational programs directly related to Diaspora issues seek to promote research on roots and awareness of the interdependence of the Jewish communities. In the Israel educational system.[92] An Inquire Based Learning program is entitled "I and my family" (The multigenerational bond). It is part of the preparations to the Bat/Bar Mitzva the ritual passage to adulthood at age 12/13.

Targeting the Diaspora educational system, a parallel program was developed by the Diaspora Museum. Called "My Story — our Story" it includes topics like: Reflections on Identity; My Family Journey; Looking Closely at Objects to uncover our Past; Appreciating Roots; Building My Family Tree; What's my Name?; Listening to Family Stories by Learning How to Interview; A Family Personality; The Community; Finding Each Family's Part in Collective Jewish History.[93]

Both programs make full use of online Learning Management Systems and resources available in the Web.

The Jewish Agency runs a program of twinning between schools in the Diaspora and in Israel.[94] They state the success of the program stems from its ability to engage the school community as a whole (students, educators, parents) in promoting Jewish Peoplehood.

MOFET JTEC (Jewish Teacher Education Community) is an initiative with the aim of developing a community of Jewish education teacher educators around the world.[95] MOFET is the research institute of the Academic Education Colleges in Israel. JTEC maintain a portal, which provides access to relevant resources.

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[91] Leslie Santee Siskin, *Implementing Blended Learning: Moving Toward the Eight Elements of a "Truly Blended" School*, (New York: The Avi Chai Foundation, May 2018), https://avichai.org/knowledge_base/implementing-blended-learning-moving-toward-the-eight-elements-of-a-truly-blended-school-abridged/.

[92] "Multigenerational Links Project," Ministry of Education, http://cms.education.gov.il/EducationCMS/Units/Mazkirut_Pedagogit/moreshet/KesherRavDori/MadricHeker/Mavo.htm.

[93] "My Family Story," accessed on September 16, 2019, http://www.bh.org.il/education/family-story-program/.

[94] "School Twinning Network," accessed on September 16, 2019, http://archive.jewishagency.org/school-twinning/content/39631.

[95] "Jewish Portal of Teacher Education," accessed on September 16, 2019, http://jtec.macam.ac.il/portal/About.aspx.

Online Jewish Learning

There is an increasingly large offer of opportunities for learning online Jewish related subjects. Above we described some of the sites supporting learning as related to religious observance – learning of the Talmud or the Tanakh (Jewish Bible). However, many more online courses are available concerning a wide variety of Jewish related subject. One popular trend is the offer of MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses).[96] IsraelX is a national consortium of higher education institutions in Israel.[97] They have joined to provide excellent academic education to all citizens of the world deploying advanced online learning technologies.

The "Jewish" tag in the site MOOC List include courses like Coexistence in Medieval Spain: Jews, Christians, and Muslims (Coursera) and Jewish Diaspora in Modern China (Coursera), among others. Leading universities and Jewish organizations provide their own offerings: YIVO and YIVO101 Discovering Ashkenaz — Jewish Life in Eastern Europe[98]; Yeshiva University: Arch of Titus: Rome and the Menorah[99]; Yad VaShem has online courses on Anti-Semitism and on the Holocaust[100]; Among the courses offered by Tel Aviv University: The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem[101]; The History of Modern Israel — Part I: From an Idea to a State; The Holocaust — An Introduction (I): Nazi Germany: Ideology, The Jews and the World (II): The Final Solution. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem[102]: Moses' Face: Moses' images as reflected in Jewish literature; The Wonders and Challenges of Bible Education. Bar-Ilan University: Biblical Archaeology[103]: The archaeology of ancient Israel and Judah, Prof. Aren M. Maeir, Bar-Ilan University.

Full online degree programs are also available: Jewish Theological Seminary online MA in Jewish Education[104]; Hebrew College[105] Master's Degrees in Jewish Studies[106]; Rutgers University[107] non-credit online course with the Jewish Studies faculty; Jewish Interactive Studies Online[108] adult Jewish learning; — Lookstein Virtual Jewish Academy[109] ; Akadem[110],

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[96] "MOOC List," accessed on September 16, 2019, https://www.mooc-list.com/tags/jewish.

[97] "IsraelX," accessed on September 16, 2019, https://www.edx.org/school/israelx.

[98] "YIVO MOOC: YIVO101 Discovering Ashkenaz," accessed on September 16, 2019, https://tinyurl.com/yivo-ashkenaz.

[99] "Yeshiva University MOOC," accessed on September 16, 2019, https://tinyurl.com/yeshiva-titus.

[100] "Yad VaShem (Holocaust Remembrance Authority) online courses," accessed on September 16, 2019, https://www.yadvashem.org/education/online-courses.html.

[101] "Tel Aviv University MOOCs," accessed on September 16, 2019, https://www.coursera.org/telaviv.

[102] "The Hebrew University of Jerusalem MOOCs," accessed on September 16, 2019, https://www.coursera.org/huji.

[103] "Biblical Archaeology," accessed on September 16, 2019, https://www.edx.org/course/biblical-archaeology-the-archaeology-of-ancient-israel-and-judah-2.

[104] "JTSU Online Learning for Rabbis and Cantors," accessed on September 16, 2019, http://www.jtsa.edu/online-learning-for-rabbis-and-cantors.

[105] "Hebrew College's Shoolman Graduate School of Jewish Education," accessed on September 16, 2019, https://hebrewcollege.edu/community-learning/professional-development/for-educational-leaders/.

[106] "Online Schools for Jewish Studies," accessed on September 16, 2019, http://www.onlinecollege.org/masters/jewish-studies/.

[107] "Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life," accessed on September 16, 2019, http://bildnercenter.rutgers.edu/online-studies .

[108] "Jewish Interactive Studies," accessed on September 16, 2019, http://jewishstudies.org/courses/foundations/index.htm.

the Jewish ICT campus (Le campus numérique Juif) offers courses in the Online Jewish University (Université juive en ligne) concerning a variety of Jewish matters (courses are taught through filmed frontal lectures available online).

Jewish Studies and Digital Humanities

The editors of the "New Companion to Digital Humanities" point out that in decade or two from now, the modifier "digital" will have become pleonastic when applied to the humanities.[111] As greater portions of our cultural heritage are digitized or born digital, it will become unremarkable that digital methods are used to study human creations, and we will simply think of the work described in that volume as "the humanities.".

The potential of digital methods for Jewish Studies is well expressed among the contributions to the second volume of the essays dedicated to Yaacov Choueka on the occasion of his 75th birthday.[112] They include essays dealing with the Responsa, the Geniza project, Jewish Semantics in the Linked Data Semantic Web. Choueka is best known for his primary role, together with Aviezri Fraenkel, in the development of the Responsa Project, one of the earliest full text retrieval systems in the world. More recently, he has headed the Friedberg Genizah Project, which is bringing the treasures of the Cairo Genizah into the Digital Age.[113]

Conferences that took place in the last years document the increased application of digital humanities methods to Jewish Studies. The EVA/Minerva Jerusalem Conference on Advanced Technologies for Culture up to 2016 pioneered this issue[114]; the 17th Congress of the World Union of Jewish Studies in 2017 included a substantial number of digital humanities related presentations[115]; the same trend can be observed in last conferences of the Association of Jewish Studies[116] and the European Association of Jewish Studies.[117]

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[109] "Lookstein Virtual," accessed on September 16, 2019, http://www.virtualjewishacademy.org/.

[110] "Akadem, the Jewish ICT Campus," accessed on September 16, 2019, http://www.akadem.org/.

[111] Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, John Unsworth, eds. *A New Companion to Digital Humanities,* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2016).

[112] Nachum Dershowitz and Ephraim Nissan, eds., *Language, Culture, Computation: Computing for the Humanities, Law, and Narratives — Essays Dedicated to Yaacov Choueka on the Occasion of His 75 Birthday, Part II* (New York: Springer, 2014) https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9783642453236.

[113] "Friedberg Jewish Manuscript Society," https://fjms.genizah.org/.

[114] "Presentations: EVA/Minerva Jerusalem International Conference on Advanced Technologies for Culture," Minerva Israel, accessed September 17, 2019 http://www.minervaisrael.org.il/jerusalem-conferences/.

[115] "Seventeenth World Congress of Jewish Studies," World Union of Jewish Studies, accessed September 17, 2019, http://www.jewish-studies.org/wcjsprogram_en.

[116] "Upcoming and Past AJS Conferences," Association of Jewish Studies, accessed on September 17, 2019, https://www.associationforjewishstudies.org/annual-conference/past-conferences. See also: "Digital Jewish Studies," Association of Jewish Studies, accessed September 17, 2019, https://www.associationforjewishstudies.org/what-is-jewish-studies/digital-jewish-studies.

[117] "EAJS Digital Forum at the EAJS Congress 2018," accessed September 17, 2019, https://www.eurojewishstudies.org/digital-forum/eajs-conference-2018/.

From the large pool of Jewish studies digital scholarship available a very few specific examples: Oren Mishali[118] from the Technion is applying Artificial Intelligence and Natural Language Processing in his work on Linked Data Of Bible Quotations In Jewish Texts together with the visualization program of Sefaria[119]; The University of Pennsylvania Libraries Penn Cairo Genizah initiative[120] [121] initiated a Zoouniverse crowdsourced project, Scribes of the Cairo Geniza[122]. The Israel Antiquities Authority deploys cutting-edge technologies to decipher the most ancient Hebrew scroll[123] and follow up on its world achievements of the Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls digital library[124]; it is also employing 3D documentation in field archaeology[125].

Heidi Lerner, Hebraica/Judaica cataloguer at Stanford University Libraries, wrote several surveys on technology-based resources related to teaching and research in Jewish Studies.[126]

Advanced digital infrastructures supporting Jewish scholarship became available very early, well before a substantial number of scholars in this area deployed adequate digital methodologies able to make good use of them. This gap is now being gradually closed. The following paragraphs provide, as examples, short descriptions of a small subset of available infrastructures.

Prof. Charles Berlin[127], Head, Judaica Division Widener Library, pioneered the digitization of its holdings. The stated mission of the Judaica Division is "the documentation of the Jewish people throughout history in order to support teaching and research at Harvard and to serve as a resource for the global scholarly community". Judaica digital resources include some 11,400 books and pamphlets[128]; Ephemera — some 250,000 items —

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[118] Oren Mishali and Benny Kimelfeld, "Towards Linked Data of Bible Quotations in Jewish Texts," in Proceedings of the Conference Digital Humanities 2018, Mexico City 2018 https://dh2018.adho.org/towards-linked-data-of-bible-quotations-in-jewish-texts/.

[119] "Sefaria: Graphics Diagrams," Sefaria, accessed on September 17, 2019, https://www.sefaria.org.il/visualizations

[120] "OPENN Primary digital resources available to everyone: Cairo Genizah", University of Pennsylvania Libraries, accessed on September 17, 2019 http://openn.library.upenn.edu/html/genizah_contents.html.

[121] "Reclaiming a fragmented history," PennToday, accessed on September 17, 2019, https://penntoday.upenn.edu/news/reclaiming-fragmented-history.

[122] "Scribes of the Cairo Geniza", Zoouniverse, accessed on September 17, 2019, https://www.zooniverse.org/projects/judaicadh/scribes-of-the-cairo-geniza.

[123] "The Most Ancient Hebrew Scroll since the Dead Sea Scrolls has been Deciphered", Israel Antiquities Authority, accessed September 17, 2019, http://www.antiquities.org.il/article_eng.aspx?sec_id=25&subj_id=240&id=4134.

[124] "Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls digital library," Israel Antiquities Authority, accessed on September 17, 2019, https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/.

[125] David Gurevich, "3D Documentation in Field Archaeology: Methods, Workflow and Software Solutions," presented at the EVA/Minerva Jerusalem International Conference, 2016 accessed September 17, 2019, https://www.slideshare.net/evaminerva/b3-gurevich-archaeology2016abstract.

[126] "Perspectives on Technology," Heidi Lerner, Association of Jewish Studies, accessed September 17, 2019, https://www.associationforjewishstudies.org/what-is-jewish-studies/digital-jewish-studies/perspectives-on-technology.

[127] "Charles Berlin," Harvard Library, accessed September 17, 2019, https://library.harvard.edu/staff/charles-berlin

[128] "Judaica Digital Collection," Harvard Library, accessed on September 17, 2019, https://library.harvard.edu/collections/judaica-digital-collection.

posters and broadsides published in Israel over the past 100 years documenting politics, theatre, music, dance, art, religion, and commerce. In addition, there are large collections of ephemera from the United States, Latin America, and Europe. Maps — a collection of 117,000 digital maps of Israel. Sound Recordings — 2,000 hours of Israeli radio news broadcasts from Kol Yisra'el (Israel Broadcasting Authority) available online. Photographs — some 5.5 million photographs available. In 2018/2019 the online Judaica digital collection grew to over 8 million images.[129]

The vision of Ktiv, the International Collection of Digitized Hebrew Manuscripts is to allow readers across the globe to access the complete corpus of existing Hebrew manuscripts. It will enable readers and scholars to use the most innovative research and discovery tools. The digitization is 78% complete and comprises 531 collections; 77.8 thousand manuscripts with 8.99 million images. Among the feature themes: Jewish Calendar, Kabbalah, Bible, Eschatology, Medicine, Astronomy, Philosophy, Sciences, Samaritans.

The National Library of Israel and Tel Aviv University run the Historical Jewish Press initiative.[130] This is a collection of Jewish newspapers published in various countries, languages, and time periods. It displays digital versions of each paper, making it possible to view the papers in their original layout.

The Historical Dictionary Project[131] of the Academy of Hebrew Language provides online access to the dictionary through the site "Maagarim"[132] opened in 2016.

The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe[133] provides the most complete picture of the history and culture of Jews in Eastern Europe from the beginnings of their settlement in the region to the present. This website makes accurate, reliable, scholarly information about East European Jewish life accessible to everyone.

The European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI) mission is to support the Holocaust research community by building a digital infrastructure and facilitating human networks.[134] EHRI provides online access to information about dispersed sources relating to the Holocaust through its Online Portal, and tools and methods that enable researchers and archivists to work collaboratively with such sources.

Jewish Memory, Digital

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[129] "Harvard Judaica by the Numbers," *Harvard Judaica,* 8 Fall 2019.

[130] "Historical Jewish Press," Tel Aviv University and National Library of Israel, accessed on September 17, 2019, https://web.nli.org.il/sites/jpress/english/pages/default.aspx.

[131] "Historical Dictionary Project," Academy of Hebrew Language, accessed on September 17, 2019, https://en.hebrew-academy.org.il/historical-dictionary-project/.

[132] "Maagarim," Academy of Hebrew Language, accessed on September 17, 2019, https://maagarim.hebrew-academy.org.il/Pages/PMain.aspx.

[133] "YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe," YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, accessed September 17, 2019, https://yivoencyclopedia.org/.

[134] "European Holocaust Research Infrastructure," accessed on September 18, 2019, https://www.ehri-project.eu/about-ehri.

The outstanding theme in Jewish memory in the last decades is the Shoah (Holocaust). Alvin H. Rosenfeld writes about the imperative to remember; a passionate determination to record the Nazi crimes and transmit knowledge of them to others.[135] Know what has happened to us in these infernal places, and keep the memory of our fate alive. However, as he points out, the inscription, transmission, and reception of historical memory are not simple matters. Like all traumatic memories, the memory of the Holocaust has long evoked ambivalence and even antithetical reactions. These have often been intense, compounded, as they frequently are, by complex issues of national identity, political ideology, economic interests, religious passions, cultural loyalties, and more.

Study, access and re-use of cultural objects documenting the creativity of Jewish civilization, through the ages and generations, is so more pressing in view of the dominance of the memory of the Shoah. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblet writes that the location of POLIN the Museum of the History of Polish Jews faces the Monument to the Warsaw Ghetto Heroes.[136] The monument honours those who perished by remembering how they died. She adds "[…] Today, we can honour them and those who came before and after, by remembering how they lived — at the museum."

There is a large number of Shoah (Holocaust) memorials and museums through the world. [137] There are also outstanding initiatives providing online digital content. Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Remembrance Authority Digital Collections[138] includes the Shoah Names Database; the Photo Archive; the Righteous Database; the Documents Archive; Deportations Database and Online Film Catalog. Online exhibitions[139] are also available.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum provide many digital resources. These includes the Encyclopedia of the Holocaust; an Introduction to the Holocaust; a timeline of major events; film resources; the Database of Holocaust Survivor and Victim Names. It offers also Resources for Educators[140] and Resources for academics and research.[141]

The National Library of Israel (NLI) in the last years become a leading institution in the Jewish memory landscape. It strives to offer online worldwide and free access to many of its resources in digital form. Coping with copyright issues to facilitate such access and the re-use of the digital resources is of special importance in the work of the library.

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[135] Rosenfeld, Alvin H. "The Assault on Holocaust Memory," In *The American Jewish Year Book* 101 (2001): 3-20, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23604504.

[136] "A Theater of History: 12 Principles," Association of the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland Museum of the History of Polish Jews, 2014 accessed on September 17, 2019, https://tinyurl.com/Kirsheblatt-12.

[137]"List of Holocaust Memorials and Museums," Wikipedia, accessed on September 17, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Holocaust_memorials_and_museums.

"List of Holocaust memorials and museums in the United States," Wikipedia, accessed on September 17, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Holocaust_memorials_and_museums_in_the_United_States.

[138] "Digital Collections," Yad Vashem, accessed on September 17, 2019, https://www.yadvashem.org/collections.html.

[139] "Online Exhibitions," Yad Vashem, accessed on September 17, 2019, https://www.yadvashem.org/exhibitions.html.

[140] "Resources for educators," United States Holocaust Museum, accessed on September 18, 2019, https://www.ushmm.org/educators.

[141] "Resources for academics and research," United States Holocaust Museum, accessed on September 18, 2019, https://www.ushmm.org/research.

The NLI manages several bibliographic services of national importance; we single here RAMBI[142], the index of articles on Jewish Studies that is of utmost importance for Jewish memory. Digitized collections of photographs are available in the Visual Memory[143] section; Ephemera[144] at the Time Travel pages; the Cartographic Collection[145]. The Digital Library Gallery provides access to other digital resources including the Ketubbot (Marriage contracts) collection and other gems of the NLI.

The National Sound Archives[146], part of the Music Department of the NLI, has the world's largest collection of ethnographic and commercial recordings of Israeli and Jewish music. A selection of recordings is available on the website (Passover, Hanukkah, Sukkot, Holy Days, Lag BaOmer, Judeo-Spanish and more)

Jewish archives have a central role in preserving Jewish memory. A best practice in the process of digitization and providing access to the public are the archives of the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)[147]. It comprises the organizational records of JDC, the overseas rescue, relief, and rehabilitation arm of the American Jewish community, they house one of the most significant collections in the world for the study of modern Jewish history. They include 3 miles of documents; 100,000 photographs; 6,000 books; 3,600 audio and video recordings.

Among the members of the Center of Jewish History[148] (CJI) in New York there are some outstanding archives. The Leo Baeck Institute[149] is an archive and research library devoted to the history and culture of German-speaking Jews. Through DigiBaeck[150] it provides online access to archival material, memoirs and manuscripts, art and objects, books and periodicals, photographs and audio recordings.

Another member of the CJI is the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research[151] whose focus is on Eastern Europe Jewry. Its archives include more than 23 million documents, photographs, recordings, posters, and films. While most of the materials have not yet been digitized and put online, there are a number of online resources already available to assist in research: Online Catalogs of What's Available; Digitized Books and Periodicals; Digital

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[142] "RAMBI, the index of articles on Jewish Studies," National Library of Israel, accessed on September 18, 2019, https://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/English/infochannels/Catalogs/bibliographic-databases/rambi/Pages/rambi.aspx.

[143] "Visual Memory," National Library of Israel, accessed on September 18, https://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/English/digitallibrary/photos/Pages/photo_portal.aspx.

[144] "Time Travel," National Library of Israel, accessed on September 18, https://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/English/digitallibrary/time_journey/Pages/default.aspx.

[145] "Cartographic Collection," National Library of Israel, accessed September 18, https://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLIS/en/Maps.

[146] "Compilations, Music Department," National Library of Israel, accessed on September 18, 2019, https://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/English/music/Compilations/Pages/default.aspx.

[147] "JDC Archives," Joint Distribution Committee, accessed on September 19, 2019, https://archives.jdc.org/about-us/.

[148] "Center of Jewish History," accessed on September 19, 2019,https://www.cjh.org/about/our-partners.

[149] "Leo Baeck Institute," accessed on September 19, 2019, https://www.lbi.org.

[150] "Digibaeck," Leo Baeck Institute, accessed on September 19, 2019, https://www.lbi.org/collections/digibaeck/.

[151] "Do research online," YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, accessed on September 19, 2019, https://www.yivo.org/Do-Research-Online#Other%20Online%20Research%20Resources.

Images; Online Film Footage and Sound Recordings and other online resources[152]. In 2015, YIVO began the Edward Blank YIVO Vilna Online Collections[153] project, an international initiative to digitize over 11,000 books and over 1.5 million pages of documents from its original, pre-war Vilna collections.

Yerusha[154] is an initiative of the Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv) Europe to virtually unite Jewish documentary heritage from across Europe. It operates in close collaboration with the Israel Archives Network Project (IAN)[155] that seeks to create an infrastructure and unified standards to ensure that the unique material preserved by the various heritage archives in the State of Israel will be properly preserved and broadly accessible to the Israeli public at large in a convenient and uniform format in the near future and for generations to come. Jewish Heritage Europe is another project of the Hanadiv: a web portal to news, information and resources concerning Jewish monuments and heritage sites all over Europe. It fosters communication and information exchange regarding restoration, funding, best-practices, advisory services.[156]

The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People holds 60 million pages of documentation; 1,600 archives of communities, organizations and individuals; 18 million frames of microfilmed documents; 2000 lists and inventories of documents and files concerning Jews, held in other archives; 15,000 photographs; 8,000 printed statutes, reports, leaflets, posters and handbills; 1,2 million newspaper clippings; 15,000 books and publications on Jewish history. It has now announced that an online catalog[157] with over 200,000 entries and 300,000 digital images, is available through the web site of the National Library of Israel.

The Central Zionist Archives[158] pioneered with the digitization of some of its collections, in particular some photos archives, maps and immigrants' registers between the years 191-1974 that are of particular interest for genealogical research.

A leading center for documentation and resources about Jewish Music in Europe, the Institut Européen des Musiques Juives (IEMJ)[159] was established in 2006 by the Fondation du Judaïsme Français, l'association Yuval et la Fondation Henriette Halphen. Since January

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[152] "Our websites," YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, accessed on September 19, 2019, https://www.yivo.org/Online-Resources.

[153] "YIVO Vilna Online Collections," YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, accessed on September 19, 2019, https://vilnacollections.yivo.org/.

[154] "Yerusha," Rothschild Foundation Hanadiv Europe, accessed on September 19, 2019, https://yerusha.eu/who-we-are/.

[155] "Israel Archives Network Project (IAN)," https://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/English/library/aboutus/now/projects/IAN/Pages/default.aspx.

[156] Jewish Heritage Europe accessed on September 19, 2019 https://jewish-heritage-europe.eu .

[157] "Online catalog of the CAHJP," Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, accessed on September 19, 2019, https://tinyurl.com/central-archives.

[158] "Central Zionist Archives," accessed on September 20, 2019, http://www.zionistarchives.org.il/en/about-us/Pages/history-of-the-CZA.aspx.

[159] "Institut Européen des Musiques Juives (IEMJ)," accessed on September 19, 2019, https://www.cfmj.fr/fr/l-institut/.

2019 most of the Médiathèque Henriette Halphen has been put online with more than 73,000 sound files, about 380,000 pages of scores, thousands of photos, videos and various archives.

The Bodleian Library and the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana through the Polonsky Foundation Digitization Project [160] are making 1.5 million digitized pages from their collections of Hebrew manuscripts, Greek manuscripts, and incunabula freely available.

The Bibliothèque numérique de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle[161] (Online Library) provides access to several digital exhibitions; 7,000 digitized photographs; and to search aids including the RACHEL[162] network of Jewish Libraries in Europe.

Edward Rothstein[163] reviews Jewish Museums with a fiery critical eye finding only a few exceptions celebrating the once-vibrant identity of their communities. Brigitte Sion[164] has carried a survey of 30 European Jewish Museums for the Rothschild Foundation Hanadiv Europe. New museums are being established and older expanded while changing from repositories of historical artefacts to a new role as public services and social agents. She points the difficulties for small and medium museums coping with new technologies, as they are complex and constantly upgraded, modified. Few museums have the personnel able to assess what is worth digitizing and cataloguing, and even fewer who can use the technology properly.

Jewish Museums as other museums have been struggling seeking a policy that suit their interest to increase the number of in site visitors with the potential of the ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) for expanding their reach and fulfil their mission. Now it is becoming clear that at the minimum they need a Web presence and to deploy of digital — social and mobile — marketing tools. Other museums have been developing and implementing substantial digital collections to advance their purposes.

POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews developed the Shtetl site[165]. Shtetl (Village) became a symbol of Jewish life before the Holocaust. The clusters of wooden houses marked by mezuzahs, shops, schools and synagogues for a busy week resounded with Yiddish so that on Friday evening the inhabitants could celebrate the Sabbath, engulfing in the smell of kugel and cholent and in the sounds of niguns. By writing down their history in the Virtual Shtetl POLIN pays homage to the constellations of Jewish towns in the lands of the former Polish Commonwealth. The site provides access to 93775 articles; 1951 towns, 76780 photos, 3373 biographies and 1802 vocabulary entries.

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[160] "Polonsky Foundation Digitization Project," Bodleian Library, accessed on September 17, 2019, http://bav.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/about-the-project.

[161] "Bibliothèque numérique de l'Alliance israélite Universelle," accessed on September 19, 2019,https://www.bibliotheque-numerique-aiu.org/.

[162] "Le Réseau européen des bibliothèques judaica et Hebraica," accessed on September 19, 2019, http://www.rachelnet.net/rachelnet/index.htm.

[163] Edward Rothstein, "The Problem with Jewish Museums," *Mosaic Magazine*, February 1, 2016, https://mosaicmagazine.com/essay/history-ideas/2016/02/the-problem-with-jewish-museums/.

[164] Brigitte Sion, *A Survey of Jewish Museums in Europe* (London: The Rothschild Foundation Hanadiv Europe, 2016), https://archive.jpr.org.uk/download?id=3041.

[165] "Virtual Shtetl," POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, accessed on September 19, 2019, https://sztetl.org.pl/en/.

The Museum of the Jewish People at Beit Hatfutsot[166] is designing and constructing a new core exhibition, slated to open in 2020. Advanced digital technologies are expected to be widely implemented at the renewed museum, which was already a worldwide pioneer in using multimedia devices when first inaugurated in 1978. Presently it offers access to a variety of digital resources encompassing Jewish Genealogy, Jewish Communities, Visual Documentation, Jewish Music, Family Names and additional thematic digital galleries.

The Israel Museum Jerusalem web site provides access also to digital resources. The outstanding digital exhibition is that of the Dead Sea Scrolls[167] - ancient manuscripts, biblical, apocryphal, and sectarian approximately two thousand years old, dating from the third century BCE to the first century CE. The Photographic Archive[168] of the Isidore and Anne Falk Information Center for Jewish Art and Life is also available online as well as a highlight[169] selection of the IMJ Art collection.

Philadelphia's National Museum of American Jewish History has launched an interactive digital platform for Jewish families to explore their heritage. Called "Re:collection,"[170] it invites Jews to upload and curate media that helps to tell the stories of themselves and their ancestors, exchanging familial narratives with other participants.

Judaica Europeana and the Jewish Heritage Network aggregation of digital Jewish Cultural Heritage

The first Judaica Europeana[171] project was funded in 2010 to aggregate European Jewish heritage into Europeana – the digital platform and gateway for Europe's cultural heritage. It since remained a 30-member strong network[172] of archives, libraries and museums working together to integrate access to their most important collections related to Jewish history and culture. The partners are located in Europe, the USA and Israel including the holders of the largest Jewish digital resources collections.

The process that led to Judaica Europeana included: (1) A Jewish Agency initiative for Jewish networking infrastructures (2001-2006)[173]; (2) The Prague international conference on the Future of Jewish Heritage in Europe[174]; (3) The consultation[175] on the digitisation of Jewish Heritage in Europe held in Brussels with the participation of leading European

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[166] "Databases," Museum of the Jewish People at Beit Hatfutsot, https://www.bh.org.il/databases/jewish-genealogy/.

[167] "The Dead Sea Scrolls," Israel Museum Jerusalem, https://www.imj.org.il/en/wings/shrine-book/dead-sea-scrolls.

[168] "Photographic Archive Center for Jewish Art and Life," Israel Museum Jerusalem, https://www.imj.org.il/en/collections?departmente=986391.

[169] "Highlights," Israel Museum Jerusalem, https://www.imj.org.il/en/collections.

[170] "re-collection," National Museum of American Jewish History, https://www.enwoven.com/recollection#about.

[171] "Judaica Europeana," http://www.jhn.ngo/judaica-europeana-archive/.

[172] "Judaica Europeana Network," Jewish Heritage Network, https://www.jhn.ngo/#network.

[173] "eJewish.info JAFI :Developing Jewish Networking Infrastructures," accessed on September 19, 2019, http://www1.jafi.org.il/spot/40.htm.

[174] "International Conference on the Future of Jewish Heritage in Europe, Prague, 2000," accessed on September 19, 2019, http://tinyurl.com/prague04.

[175]"Consultation on Digitisation of the Jewish Cultural Heritage, accessed on September 19, 2019, http://filelibrary.unitedapps.com/0/file763.pdf .

projects, the Ministry of Culture of Italy and the UK MLA — Museums, Libraries and Archives Council; (4) The MOSAIC: Semantically Enhanced Multifaceted Collaborative Access to Cultural Heritage[176].

These events were milestones in a step-by-step following and participation in the initiatives of the European Commission concerning the digitization of Cultural Heritage. The projects supporting the coordination of digitization avoiding duplications and establishing common standards that went under the MINERVA umbrella were of particular importance.[177] These led to the establishment of Europeana a digital library offering access to more than 57 million digitized Cultural Objects.[178] More than being the leading cultural digital library in the world, Europeana is an eco-system for GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums).[179] Professionals, scholars and computer science researchers, start-up entrepreneurs, educators, legal experts coping with intellectual property issues, public administrators and politicians — all these participate and benefit from the Europeana eco-system as is the case with the Jewish cultural heritage institutions.

The theme of "Cities" was chosen initially among the different topics suggested by the European Commission in its call for Europeana related proposals. The rational for such choice was the role Jews have played in the evolution of the modern city; their presence and stake in urban culture have been so great as to make them the symbolic equivalent of the city itself as Yuri Slezkine writes:

> "Modernization is about everyone becoming urban, mobile, literate, articulate, intellectually intricate, physically fastidious, and occupationally flexible. It is about learning how to cultivate people and symbols, not fields and herds. It is about pursuing wealth for the sake of learning, learning for the sake of wealth, and both wealth and learning for their own sake. It is about transforming peasants and princes into merchants and priests, replacing inherited privilege with acquired prestige, and dismantling social estates for the benefit of individuals, nuclear families, and book-reading tribes (nations). Modernization, in other words, is about everyone becoming Jewish."[180]

Steven Zipperstein identified a significant transition in Jewish historiography from a tendentious anti-urban Jewish historiography to a more balanced one.[181] Jewish urban expressions may be outlined graphically from a community core to exclusively individual expressions: the way Jewish communities managed their internal affairs (mutual help, education, politics, theatre, music, newspapers); through the Jewish expression in the urban landscape, occupations and enterprises seen by their neighbours as characteristic of Jews; and finally, in their fully individual expression as celebrities.

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[176] "MOSAICA Project," accessed on September 19, 2019, http://tinyurl.com/mosaicaproject.

[177] "MINERVA, digitizing content together," accessed on September 20, 2019, http://www.minervaeurope.org/.

[178] "Europeana Collections," accessed on September 20, 2019, https://www.europeana.eu/portal/en.

[179] "Europeana Pro — transforming the world with culture," accessed on September 20, 2019, https://pro.europeana.eu/.

[180] Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

[181] Steven Zipperstein, "Jewish Historiography and the Modern City," *Jewish History* 2 (1987): 77-88.

These plentiful expressions of cultural creations are well documented. As they are digitised the present challenge is to provide integrated access to them in their proper context of creation and use, that of the wider European civilization — Europeana.

Initiated in 2015, the Jewish Heritage Network[182] (JHN) restarted this effort with the vision to offer dedicated solutions and services for the promotion of Jewish cultural heritage, strengthening the network of content partners and building its own digital infrastructure. In 2018 a consortium led by JHN, in partnership with the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam, was awarded grants of the European Commission to continue aggregation under the project Judaica Europeana 2.0,[183] and to build a conversational interface (chatbot) for cultural heritage institutions named Culture Chatbot.[184]

Conclusion

This survey suggests that the Jewish Diaspora has become a Network Society with network organisations replacing vertically integrated hierarchies as a dominant form of social organization. In this context persons seek to reaffirm their social identity and acquire meaning in a continually changing cultural landscape (following Castells[185]) We provided examples how the Jewish diaspora has engaged the new communication technologies in ways that enhanced the relations of its different nodes while developing its culture in a wide sense. These technologies seem to contribute to the maintenance of cultural boundaries while at the same time being an essential tool for successful participation in the labour market and the educational system of the host society, as suggested by Amersfoort.[186]

In the second half of the twenty century, Jews were occupationally relatively concentrated in the professions, in relatively advanced technological industries and in the academy. Eric Hobsbawm reviews Jewish impact since their emancipation in the 19th and 20th centuries.[187] He indicates that without the opening of US academia to Jews after 1948 and its vast expansion many of the achievements he reviews would have been impossible. American Jews today are very well schooled with two-thirds having college degrees and half of these earning an advanced degree.[188] Such occupations provided early opportunities to access and use advanced communication technologies. These were almost immediately put to use for purposes that transcended their utilitarian professional applications and served to promote cultural, educational, communitarian and religious purposes.

The globalizing nature of such technologies enabled an increased interaction between these different nodes and a sense of interdependence. Such interaction takes place today at all levels — between individuals with a wide variety of interest, families, political and

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[182] "Judaica Europeana Network," Jewish Heritage Network, https://www.jhn.ngo/#network.

[183] "Judaica European 2.0," Jewish Heritage Network, https://www.jhn.ngo/judaica-europeana-20/.

[184] "Culture Chatbot," Jewish Heritage Network, https://www.jhn.ngo/culture-chatbot/.

[185] Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture, Volume I* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996).

[186] Hans van Amersfoort, "Gabriel Sheffer and the Diaspora Experience," *Diaspora* 13, no. 3 (March 2004).

[187] Eric Hobsbawm, "Benefits of Diaspora," *London Review of Books*, 27, no20 (2005). Accessed on September 15, 2019, http://www.lrb.co.uk/v27/n20/eric-hobsbawm/benefits-of-diaspora.

[188] "A Portrait of Jewish Americans," Pew Research Center — Religion and Public Life, https://www.pewforum.org/2013/10/01/jewish-american-beliefs-attitudes-culture-survey/.

ideological groups, groups with different religious observance orientation and by any other criteria by which Jews may group. These interactions provide opportunities for establish a Jewish social identity and acquire meaning.