Gender, Religion, and New Media:
Attitudes and Behaviors Related to the Internet Among
Ultra-Orthodox Women Employed in Computerized Environments

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We analyze patterns of rejection and adoption of new technology in a closed and conservative community through the study of ultra-Orthodox Jewish women working in computerized environments, and their perceptions and uses of the Internet. These women stand in the intersection between orthodoxy and modernity. Their workplaces are populated by ultra-Orthodox women and adjusted for their needs, but the companies that employ them are (mostly) owned by seculars, they work with computers, and (occasionally) the workplaces even have Internet access.

We study if and how the conceptions of new technologies among women in a conservative community serve to demarcate, construct and reassure the borders of the community. The research questions are: How do these ultra-Orthodox women perceive the place of the Internet within their community and personal lives? With whom do they create online ties? And are there correlations between socioeconomic and sociodemographic variables and women's perceptions of the place and functioning of the Internet in the ultra-Orthodox community and their lives?

Introduction

This article focuses on the interface between gender, religion, and new technology, and examines the attitudes and behaviors pertaining to the Internet among ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) women working in designated "technological hothouses."[1]

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The presentation of findings and discussion are integrated in a theoretical framework that emphasizes the gap between ideology and practice in religious communities, and the religious-social shaping of technology (see Campbell, 2010). When practice may threaten the boundaries of the community, and ideology attempts to protect and strengthen it, the "liminal spaces" (Turner, 1969) between ideology and practice constitute interesting areas for research. Thus, the research questions are: What are the attitudes and behavioral patterns of these women online? Is there a discrepancy between their attitudes and behavior and, if so, how do they justify and cope with it?

The study contributes to the knowledge about Haredi women in particular, women in religious and fundamentalist societies in general, and the unique role of new technologies in the processes of change that these societies experience.

Haredi Women in the Private and Public Domains

The Haredi society comprises 6.7% of the adult population in Israel (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2007). The Jewish religion and all its principles, instructions, and limitations strictly dictate the private and public life of community members. The all-encompassing religiosity and relentless study of the *Torah* differentiate the ultra-Orthodox from other religious sectors in Israeli society (Friedman, 1991). The ultra-Orthodox emphasize the significance of self-control and restrictiveness (Stadler, 2009), which are manifested, among other things, by keeping many commandments, as well as stern limitations on issues such as Jewish dietary laws (Kashrut), the Sabbath (Shabbat), and family purity.

The ultra-Orthodox community is not a unified whole, but rather a multifaceted entity. The various ultra-Orthodox groups are distinguished from each other by paring developments that occurred in Eastern Europe over the past two centuries. The split within ultra-Orthodoxy began in 18th century Poland with the rise of the Hasidic movement, and the contra-movement of those who opposed it (Mitnagdim), whose members are also called Lithuanians. Nowadays the differences between the Hasidim and the Lithuanians are manifest, among other things, in the emphasis (or lack thereof) on spirituality, perceptions of leadership, dress code, and even spoken language. In comparison with Hasidic communities, Lithuanian communities are considered more open and liberal (Friedman, 1991).

The Haredim reserve the key positions in the community for males, leaving women at the periphery, while idealizing women's place in the private sphere (El-Or, 1997), as described in the emblematic passage, "All the glory of the daughter of the king is within" (Psalms 45:14). The place of women is emphasized repeatedly in, for example, modesty classes in schools and texts published in Haredi newspapers. One of the main characteristics of the Haredi domestic sphere is the abundance of children; Haredi women in Israel have 7.7 children on average, compared to 2.6 children among non-Haredi Jewish women (Gurovich & Cohen-Kastro, 2004).

But contrary to the ideals, Haredi women are no longer found exclusively in the private sphere, and have a significant presence in the public domain; they go to work, study and support their families. Since the 1950s, the Haredi community in Israel has been transformed into a "society of learners" in which most men do not work, but devote themselves exclusively to study of the *Torah* (Friedman, 1991, 1995). Women are expected to work, the ideal being to be the wife of a religious scholar and the mother of children who live by the *Torah*; their husbands are expected to study the *Torah*, and the rewards for such study are to be shared by the partners (Friedman, 1995).

Thus, since the 1950s, a considerable number of Haredi women began working outside the home, mainly in education.[2] Since the 1970s, various channels of mobility directing women to "new" professions have been created. Tertiary educational institutions (such as teaching seminars for girls) provide technological education, in addition to training in teaching, within a Haredi environment. Also, since 2006, "Centers for the Development of Employment Opportunities for Haredim" have been established for guidance and placement. These centers are operated by a Haredi staff in Haredi environments. A survey conducted a few months after they began operating found that women comprised 71% of their clients (Schwartz, 2008). Also in recent years, "technological hothouses" functioning as protected environments adapted to the lifestyle of Haredi women have been established in various Haredi areas.

New Media, Conservative Communities

The admission of modern technologies into traditional communities is frequently accompanied by apprehension and suspicion, especially with regard to the Internet (Campbell, 2010). Studies show how the Internet facilitates new religious and spiritual experiences, creates novel religious-spiritual identities, and enables social support between believers (Campbell, 2010; Ess, Kawabata & Kurosaki, 2007). Larsen (2001), for example, shows that in many Christian communities, the Internet enhances the sense of belonging to the church and strengthens believers' faith and spiritual growth. The Internet also has created a public space for members of Muslim communities in which they connect and learn about religious practice, empower the "cyber Islamic environment," and strengthen the *ummah*––the Muslim community (Bunt, 2000).

But there are also numerous studies demonstrating opposition by leaders and members of religious and conservative communities to the Internet (Campbell, 2010; Dawson, 2004). Among other things, the leaders of these communities fear transformation of the hierarchical communal systems and erosion of their authority.

The Haredim in Israel are a minority who maintains a multifaceted relationship with the majority. The Haredim are interested in preserving the unique character of their community and are not keen on establishing relationships with the majority for fear of external influence. This isolation has turned the Haredi community into an "enclave culture" (Sivan, 1991). Scholars have observed two parallel processes among the Haredim in recent years: on the one hand, a process of "Haredization," i.e., enhanced stringency in response to the surrounding "temptations" of the secular Israeli lifestyle (Friedman, 1991); and on the other hand, a process of "Israelization" that involves lowering the walls of isolation and adopting novel patterns in a variety of spheres such as consumerism, leisure, and adoption of communication technologies (Caplan, 2007; Rashi, 2011).

The Internet, as a relatively new technology, is a cause of contention among the Haredim. Different approaches exist, ranging from reserved acceptance to rejection on principle. The approach favoring acceptance with reservations emphasizes that the Internet functions as a useful tool and provides information and services; it also performs a communal function of horizontal and vertical mediation, and enables communication between community members and the great sages of the generation by allowing

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[2] According to data from 2005, 55% of Haredi women go out to work, compared to only 44% of Haredi men. In comparison, among secular Israeli Jews, 83% of women go out to work, compared to 95% of men (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2006).

access to an enormous wealth of *Torah* studies, forums, questions and answers, joint learning, watching live events, and listening to *Torah* classes (Zarfati & Blais, 2002).

The approach that rejects the Internet regards it as a dangerous medium that contains and spreads harmful content. The Internet, with its unlimited content and anonymous communication, can easily expose the Haredi world to heresy, sexual, violent and other types of speech regarded as sacrilegious and threatening to traditional values (Livio & Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2007). The dominance of this view among the Haredi leadership has led to the establishment of a special rabbinical court to deal with "the matter of breaches[3] in computers" that on January 7, 2000 publicized a "*Torah* opinion" according to which "Every man of Israel should know, that connection to the Internet or television presents, God forbid, a grave danger to the continuation of the generations of Israel, and constitutes a terrible breach in the holiness of Israel″ (Zarfati & Blais, 2002, p. 50). As opposed to television, the Internet is represented as a device "a thousand times more dangerous, and prone to bring destruction, God forbid, on the nation of Israel" (ibid.). Consequently, Internet usage had been forbidden, even for assistance in providing a livelihood.

However, it was a prohibition that the public could not sustain. Several sects in the Haredi community ignored the "*Torah* opinion" and continued to use the Internet. The growing Haredi business sector also exerted pressure for access to computerized communications. Thus, a second "Rabbinical Committee for Matters of Communications" was established in 2006. In December 2007, the committee permitted usage of the Internet in the Haredi sector for the first time. Permission was granted only for supervised access to a small number of websites, and for business only (Pereg, 2007). At the time of this writing, the "Kosher Internet" project is still in its infancy.

Although opposition to the Internet seems to prevail in the Haredi rhetoric, a survey carried out by the Shiluv research center (2007) shows that 60% of the Haredim have computers at home, of which 57% (or approximately a third of the Haredi public) have Internet access.

Presentation of the findings and the discussion are incorporated in a theoretical framework that addresses the religious and social shaping of technology (RSST). According to Campbell (2010), to understand the complexities of the decisions made by members of religious groups about new technologies, a few themes should be considered: Religious tradition and history; contemporary community values and priorities; negotiation and innovation of technology by the community; and the communal discourses applied to justify its use.

The discussion below is also embedded in the analysis of the discrepancy between ideology and practice; i.e., between the social patterns dictated by values and social norms, and the actual behaviors of community members that sometimes only moderately approximate the dictates of ideology. This discrepancy is an especially interesting subject of study in religious communities, where the tension between "the desirable or the ideal and the requirements and challenges of life" is particularly viable and visible (Caplan, 2007, p. 18).

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[3] *Pirtza* is the common term in Haredi rabbinical speech for a breach of traditional values, rabbinical decrees, or exposure to improper content.

Douglas (1966) demonstrated how communities maintain boundaries to avoid undesired influence and "pollution," and delineated four circles of possible contamination:

> . . . first is danger pressing on external boundaries; the second, danger from transgressing the internal lines of the system; the third, danger in the margins of the lines. The fourth is danger from internal contradiction, when some of the basic postulates are denied by other basic postulates, so that at certain points the system seems to be at war with itself. (Douglas, 1966, p. 152)

We view the Internet as a tool capable of "polluting" the Haredi community in all the circles delineated by Douglas (1966). It is a threat to the external boundaries separating the Haredi community from Israeli society at large, and it blurs the internal boundaries differentiating various sects, men and women, young and old, leaders and followers.

This study examines the discrepancy between ideology and practice from the unique angle of gender and technology. Studies show that women in fundamentalist societies occupy a significant place in the social dialectic between ideology and practice, and in shaping the living religion—despite their marginality, or perhaps because of it (Gross, 1996). Working women are often perceived as a unique danger and possible agents of change in their communities (Friedle, 1997).

The disparity between ideology and practice is especially evident in the case of Haredi women employed in computerized environments, including those with Internet access. On the ideological level, the Haredim are suspicious of new technologies, women are channeled into the private domain, and it is thought they should be barred from access to new technologies; their work should help support their families and keep their scholar-husbands within the boundaries of Haredi society. On the practical level, however, the Haredim adopt (although partially and with reservations) new technologies, and women appear in public spheres outside the boundaries of Haredi society, where new technologies are accessible. This state of affairs can be regarded as an internal contradiction, existing in a so-called "liminal space" on the continuum between ideology and practice (Turner, 1969).

A few empirical studies have analyzed the use of the Internet in the Haredi sector. Barzilai-Nahon and Barzilai (2005) analyzed usage patterns of some 14,000 users of Hevre (an Israeli social network with a nostalgic focus) who define themselves as Haredim. Katz (2007) interviewed members of five Haredi families from northern Israel and studied their attitudes towards the Internet. The Haredi respondents regarded the Internet as a tool that assisted them in studying and making a living, but also as a dangerous tool, because of the content they may be exposed to online, and because the time devoted to surfing could cause *bitul Torah* (neglecting the study of the *Torah*).

A small number of studies have looked at Haredi women online. Livio and Tenenboim-Weinblatt (2007) conducted in-depth interviews with five Haredi women who regularly use the Internet for work and leisure, focusing on the justification for the use of technology and the tension between usage and rabbinical prohibitions. Tydor-Baumel-Schwartz (2009) observed five English-language forums catering to Haredi women, and surveyed various events on these forums as signals of cultural changes occurring in Haredi communities. Using an online survey, Lev-On and Neriya Ben-Shahar (2011a) studied the attitudes of 53 members of closed online forums designed for Haredi women. Results again demonstrated that

members of these forums regard the Internet as a significant factor in their lives and a source of empowerment, but also as a danger to the Haredi lifestyle.

Thus, the present research looks at an interesting social phenomenon at the intersection of gender, fundamentalism, and the patterns of adoption/rejection of new technologies. The research questions are: How do Haredi women perceive the place of the Internet in Haredi society and in their personal lives? With whom do they create online ties? Is there a correlation between socioeconomic and sociodemographic variables and the perceptions of the role and functioning of the Internet in the lives of subjects and in the Haredi community?

Methodology

To study these questions, we used an author-generated questionnaire composed of three main parts: first, a list of statements that subjects were asked to rate on a scale of five options (1="strongly disagree", 2="disagree", 3="somewhat agree", 4="agree ", 5= "strongly agree"). "Agreement" with a certain statement was measured by the percentage of subjects who "strongly agreed," "agreed," or "somewhat agreed" with it. "Agreement level" was the average of the subjects' answers (from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree").[4]

The second part of the questionnaire contained statements and closed questions measuring actual behaviors, for example: "The Internet is a means for me to make new female friends." Here too, the rating was done on a scale of five options. This part of the questionnaire also included some yes-or-no questions, for instance: "Do you have Internet access from home?" The third part of the questionnaire addressed a number of socioeconomic and sociodemographic variables, such as work outside the home (of both the woman and her spouse), level of education, age, and level of income.

Questionnaire Validity and Credibility

The questionnaire was formulated on the basis of in-depth familiarity with the Haredi community in general, and Haredi women in particular. Special attention was given to fine-tune the text to correspond to the unique parlance used in the Haredi community (see below). Before the questionnaire was distributed, it was tested on a number of Haredi women, who filled it in and commented on it. The questionnaire was also sent to key scholars studying perceptions of media exposure, and to others studying the Haredi community. The questionnaire was revised in accordance with the comments received.

Population and Sampling

The study population was made up of Haredi women working in technological hothouses. A sample enabling us to make statistical generalizations pertaining to the total population must be probabilistic, and must be derived from a sampling framework: a list of all individuals from which the sample was selected. In the current study, such a sampling framework is unavailable, since there are no

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[4] We did not include indecisive options such as "no opinion" or "undecided," in order to place respondents in a position of acceptance or rejection.

lists of Haredi women working in technological hothouses. Instead, we used a non-probabilistic volunteer sample.

Questionnaires were distributed in several technological hothouses by research assistants who are religious observants. Respondents received general information about the study and were asked to fill in the questionnaires. Since the women employed in the hothouses also include a small percentage of non-Haredi religious women, the research assistants emphasized that the questionnaire was aimed exclusively at Haredi women; this was stated at the beginning of the questionnaire as well. Every woman who filled in the questionnaire (they did so on their lunch breaks) received 20 shekels as compensation. It was expressly stated that there were no correct or incorrect answers and that there was no connection between the answers and the payment. Filling in the questionnaires usually took 10–15 minutes. Overwhelmingly, those women approached chose to take part.

The sample included 156 women with the following characteristics: 20% (28) had an academic degree (or an equivalent thereof).[5] The average number of years of schooling was 14.01. The average age was 28.95 (range: 19–61), relatively young and therefore the average number of children––2.91––was comparatively low for the Haredi sector. Ninety-four percent (146) were married and the rest were single or divorced. The women belonged to all sects that comprise the Haredi community, with 52% Lithuanians (80), 11% (17) Hassidic, 20% (30) Sephardic. Sixty-three percent (99) were born in Israel, 23% (36) were born in the United States. The fathers of 33% (52) were born in Israel, while the fathers of 23% (36) were born in the United States.

Research Process

The research process involved three main stages: mapping the sites where data could be collected, namely technological hothouses designed for Haredi women; contacting the managements and obtaining their approval to distribute the questionnaires; and finally, collecting the data in five locations.[6]

Methodological Concerns

Studies of closed religious communities pose a unique challenge for researchers. Haredi society, and Haredi women in particular, are strongly influenced by codes of modesty in speech and behavior, and it is rather difficult to get subjects to participate in studies (Gurovich & Cohen-Kastro, 2004; Neriya-Ben Shahar, 2008). We anticipated that four factors would help overcome such obstacles:

A.   Anonymity: Respondents were promised complete anonymity. The emphasis on anonymity also appeared in two different places in the questionnaire.

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[5] Ultra-Orthodox rabbis instruct their followers not to learn in universities or colleges. There is an agreement between the Ministry of Education and the ultra-Orthodox sector by which women can instead participate in "degree equivalent" programs, composed of classes in ultra-Orthodox institutions and in groups of women only.

[6] Citibook offers outsourcing services to companies abroad, especially in real estate. A total of 110 women work in the Modiin Ilit branch and 30 in the Beitar Ilit branch. Malam issues pay slips. The branch in Beitar Ilit employs 25 women. Geoda creates digital archives and scans documents for the Israeli Ministry of Justice. The Elad branch employs 70 women. Visa CAL issues credit cards. The branch in Modiin employs 56 women.

B.   Sensitivity to the unique characteristics of the Haredi community: The questionnaire used a high register, without any slang or expressions that might be considered immodest.

C.   Data collection sites: The questionnaires were distributed in the workplaces after informing managers in advance about the date. Thus, subjects filled in the questionnaires in a familiar and "protected" environment. In a few other workplaces to which we applied, the managers agreed that we could distribute the questionnaires and return the following day to collect them in order to avoid commotion and prevent any encroachment on working hours. It was decided to give up this possibility, as we were concerned that taking the questionnaires home might involve conformity pressures leading to dishonest answers.

D.   Choosing the interviewers: Research assistants who distributed and collected the questionnaires were observant female students, dressed modestly.

Findings and Discussion

The presentation of findings is divided into three parts: (1) Ideology: Women's ideological conceptions and attitudes regarding the Internet; (2) Practice: Computers and the Internet in everyday life; (3) The meeting between ideology and practice: Conflict, tension, and integration.

1.   Ideology: Women's Ideological Conceptions and Attitudes Regarding the Internet

1A.   Women's perceptions of rabbis' positions regarding the Internet

A key aspect of Haredi ideology is the centrality of the rabbinical leaders, some of whom are called "great men" (in the study of the *Torah*). The sages' interpretation of sacred texts determines the forms of observance of the religious precepts, as well as believers' decisions on personal, economic, and political matters (Caplan, 1992).

When studying the penetration of a new technology into a religious group, one should determine who is entitled to provide the legitimate translation of sacred texts, and analyze the spiritual and moral codes that administer the practices of and negotiation with the technology (Campbell, 2010). Due to their unique role, the "great men" determine the acceptance/rejection of new technologies. Hence, it is important to study how women perceive their positions about the Internet.

Respondents were asked how they perceived the rabbis' attitude toward the Internet. Three statements on a continuum from strict to permissive were formulated. Forty-eight percent (73) of respondents agreed with the moderate statement: "To the best of my knowledge, the rabbis in my social milieu permit the use of the Internet when needed" (average agreement=2.61, SD=1.28). Seventy-eight percent (120) of the respondents agreed with the intermediate statement (average agreement=3.49, SD=1.13), "From what I understand, the rabbis in my social milieu permit the use of the Internet for work purposes only." Thirty percent (46) of respondents agreed with the strictest statement: "To the best of my knowledge, the rabbis in my social milieu do not permit the use of the Internet for any purpose whatsoever" (average agreement=2.37, SD=1.27). No correlation was found between the sect to which the women belong and their interpretation of rabbis` position toward the Internet.

Nearly one-third of respondents (46) agreed with the strictest statement according to which the rabbis "do not permit the use of the Internet for any purpose whatsoever." Apparently women's

interpretation of the rabbis' position toward the Internet as stringent and restrictive is based on one of the central ideological values of Haredi society: strict and punctilious religious observance. Still, 27% (12) of the women who agreed with the strictest statement have Internet access at home.

IB.   The Internet endangers the Haredi community

Next, we examined the ideological attitudes of the women toward the threat that the Internet poses to the ultra-Orthodox community. The majority of women regarded the Internet as a danger to the Haredi society. Ninety percent (137) of the women agreed with the statement: "I think the Internet constitutes a danger to the Haredi lifestyle" (average agreement: 4.18, SD=1.08). Seventy-five percent (116) agreed with the statement: "I think the Internet is as dangerous as the cell phone because it enables to contact other people" (average agreement=3.74, SD=1.41). Ninety-five percent (149) agreed with the statement: "I think the Internet is as dangerous as television because it enables people to view and hear prohibited content" (average agreement=4.52, SD=0.89). No correlation was found between the religious sect of respondents and the perception of the Internet as dangerous.

The fact that a large majority of women agreed with the statements declaring the Internet, the cell phone, and television as dangers to the Haredi lifestyle bears witness to an ideology characterized by fear and segregation. But the fact that almost all the respondents approved of use of the Internet to work and support their families also corresponds to the attitude of some rabbis as expressed in the decree of the "rabbinical committee on matters of communication." All of the above demonstrates a pragmatic outlook, distinguishing the Internet as a tool for employment from its uses as a means of communication.

2.   Practice: Computers and the Internet in everyday life

2A.   Computers at home

Sixty-one percent (95) of respondents have a computer at home, 57% (53) of whom have Internet access. Twenty-six percent (22) of the women possessing a computer have an academic degree, compared to 11% (6) of the women who do not possess a computer; the majority, 76% (70) were born outside Israel. Having a computer at home is correlated with the husband's occupation ($\chi^2(1) = 8.22$, P< .01); husbands of 55% (41) of the women with a computer at home are Yeshiva students, compared to 79% (42) of the husbands of women who do not have a computer. No correlation was found between the sect to which the women belong and having a computer at home.

2B.   Internet access at home

Thirty-five percent (53) of respondents answered affirmatively to the question: "Do you have Internet access at home?" No correlation was found between the sect to which the women belong and their having Internet access at home.

To create a profile of women with Internet access at home, we used the χ^2 test to examine correlations between Internet access at home and certain sociodemographic variables. Correlations were found between Internet access at home and the following variables:

- The main occupation of the husband ($\chi^2 (1) =16.1$, P <.001). Among women with Internet access at home, 41% (17) of the husbands were Yeshiva students, compared to 78% (66) of the husbands of women who do not have Internet access.

- Academic degree (χ^2 (1) = 13.98, P<.01). Thirty-one percent (15) of the women with Internet access at home have an academic degree, compared to 15% (13) of those without Internet access at home.

- Country of birth (χ^2 (2) = 13.98, P<.001). Fifty-seven percent (30) of the women with Internet access at home were born outside Israel, compared to 26% (26) of those without Internet access at home.

- Father's country of birth (χ^2(2) = 9.72, P<.01). Eighty-three percent (43) of the fathers of women with Internet access at home were born abroad, compared to 57% (55) of the fathers of women without Internet access at home.

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations of participants' levels of agreement with the statements. The middle columns refer to the levels of agreement of women with a computer at home, without a computer at home, with Internet access from home, and without Internet access from home. T-tests for independent samples were used to compare the levels of agreement with the various statements between (a) women with a computer at home, and women without a computer at home; as well as between (b) women with Internet access at home, and women without Internet access at home.

Table 1. Differences Between Women With and Without Internet and Computers at Home.

			With Computer		Without Computer			With Internet			
		T	M	SD	M	SD	T	M	SD	M	SD
A. Statements about dangers related to the Internet	In my opinion, the Internet can weaken people religiously	4.8*** (df=151)	4.11 (N=92)	1.12	4.74 (N=61)	.68	3.87*** (df =148)	3.92 (N=51)	1.18	4.58 (N=99)	.85
	I feel that the Internet weakens me religiously	2.28* (df=149)	2.82 (N=93)	1.39	3.34 (N=58)	1.34	3.47** (df=147)	2.52 (N=52)	1.29	3.31 (N=97)	1
	In my opinion, Kosher Internet that utilizes approved filtering technologies is not dangerous	3.16** (df=152)	3.21 (N=94)	1.16	2.58 (N=60)	1.26	3.87*** (df=149)	3.47 (N=53)	1.1	2.71 (N=98)	1.22
	I think the Internet constitutes a danger to the Haredi lifestyle	5.29*** (df=150)	3.87 (N=93)	1.2	4.66 (N=59)	.63	3.98*** (df=148)	3.66 (N=53)	1.31	4.45 (N=97)	.89
	I think the Internet is as dangerous as television because it enables people to view and hear prohibited content	3.96*** (df=154)	4.33 (N=95)	1.01	4.82 (N=61)	.53	2.32* (df=151)	4.26 (N=53)	1.07	4.65 (N=100)	.75

	In my opinion, the Internet is as dangerous as the cellular phone because it enables people to contact other people	3.97*** (df=152)	3.41 (N=95)	1.44	4.27 (N=59)	1.21	3.21** (df=149)	3.23 (N=53)	1.48	4.01 (N=98)	1.32
B. Statements about restrictions on Internet usage	In my opinion, the Internet should be used only at the workplace	2.45* (df=150)	3.12 (N=93)	1.16	3.59 (N=59)	1.16	2.56* (df=148)	2.98 (N=53)	1.13	3.48 (N=97)	1.17
	I think there is no room for the Internet in the Haredi household	2.31* (df=151)	3.12 (N=93)	1.35	4.43 (N=60)	1.11	3.49** (df=148)	3.33 (N=51)	1.32	4.12 (N=99)	1.28
	To the best of my knowledge, the rabbis in my social milieu permit the use of the Internet when needed	2.31* (df=150)	2.8 (N=92)	1.26	2.32 (N=60)	1.26	2.71** (df=147)	3.02 (N=51)	1.3	2.42 (N=98)	1.24
C. Positive statements about the Internet	I feel that the Internet enables me to achieve things I was unable to achieve before	2.57* (df=150)	3.83 (N=94)	1.18	3.29 (N=58)	1.33	3.02** (df=147)	4.04 (N=53)	1.1	3.43 (N=96)	1.29
	I think that I am capable of controlling the content to which I am exposed online	2.73** (df=148)	3.34 (N=93)	1.26	2.75 (N=57)	1.31	5.84*** (df=145)	3.87 (N=52)	1.08	2.72 (N=95)	1.23
	I feel that the Internet enables me to rest and relax	3.65*** (df=146)	2.51 (N=94)	1.78	1.78 (N=54)	1.07	4.22*** (df=143)	2.85 (N=53)	1.37	1.91 (N=92)	1.1
D. Statements about online social ties	I am in contact with other women online	2.6* (df=144)	2.54 (N=92)	1.98	1.98 (N=54)	1.1	2.48* (df=141)	2.7 (N=53)	1.52	2.09 (N=90)	1.2
	I am in contact with other people online	2.36* (df=141)	2.31 (N=90)	1.41	1.79 (N=53)	1.16	2.27* (df=138)	2.46 (N=52)	1.47	1.91 (N=88)	1.23

*p<.05, **p<0.01, ***p<.001

The literature review and the analysis of the groups of statements suggest the following patterns (according to the framework proposed by Campbell, 2010):

- *Religious tradition and history*, with regard to new types of media (such as television and mobile phones, which allow dangerous content into the home) demonstrate resistance and principled rejection (Deutsche, 2009). This tradition corresponds to the relative agreement with the statements regarding the dangers of the Internet, particularly statements that compare it to television and mobile phones.

- *Contemporary community values and priorities:* Along with external supervision, the ultra-Orthodox emphasize the significance of self-control and restrictiveness. To help ensure self-control, introducing television into an ultra-Orthodox home is forbidden, and many orthodox people use a "kosher" mobile phone or content-restricted Internet services. These values are manifest in the statements about the dangers of the Internet and its comparison to TV and the mobile phone, three technologies that the ultra-Orthodox use in limited fashion.

- *The negotiation and innovation of technology by the community, and the communal discourse applied to justify its use,* are manifested in the last two groups of statements that point to the positive traits of the Internet and the social connections provided by its use. The relative agreement with these statements demonstrates that, despite being an enclave culture, the ultra-Orthodox community undergoes a process of "Israelization" and conditionally adapts to various cultural and technological changes (Caplan, 2007).

A key finding from Table 1 is that women owners of a computer and/or an Internet connection are less fearful of their dangers and less supportive of the restrictions on Internet access. They are more disposed to perceive the Internet as a positive tool, and use it to create more social connections.

When analyzing the first group of statements, dealing with dangers related to the Internet, it is evident that the women who do not own a computer and/or an Internet connection perceive the Internet as having a religiously undermining effect (on themselves as well as others), compared to women who do own a computer and/or an Internet connection. In contrast, women owners of a computer/Internet connection agree more with the statement that filtering technologies make the Internet "kosher" and harmless, and suggest that the new technology can be adapted to be congruous with the values of the community.

Statements pointing to danger to the ultra-Orthodox lifestyle, equating the Internet with television and mobile phones, are also significantly different among women who own a computer and/or an Internet connection, and women who do not. Here also, women with a computer/Internet connection perceive the Internet as less threatening to the ultra-Orthodox lifestyle.

The danger discourse is typical in the ultra-Orthodox community. It is related to its historical experiences in general, and to apprehension of novel technologies in particular (Campbell, 2010). It seems that the presence of a computer and/or an Internet connection in the home mitigates the feeling of danger, and women who use the Internet are aware of its advantages.

The statements regarding imposing restrictions on the Internet are derived from the stringent and rigid religious discourse that characterizes the ultra-Orthodox community. It is not surprising that the women who do not own a computer and/or an Internet connection agreed with the statements that there is no place for the Internet in the ultra-Orthodox home and that the Internet should be open only in the workplace, more than the women who do own a computer and/or have an Internet connection. In addition, the owners of a computer/Internet connection agree with the relatively liberal statement that perceives the rabbis as permitting use of the Internet according to needs, more than the women who do not own a computer and/or an Internet connection.

In the group of positive statements toward the Internet, the same pattern is repeated; i.e., owners of a computer and/or Internet access agree with the statements that the Internet makes it possible for them to achieve things that they could not have achieved previously, and that it provides them with rest and relaxation, more than those without a computer/Internet connection. It may be that because of the benefits that the Internet introduces to subjects' lives, they develop a positive attitude toward it over time that reduces the feeling of apprehension.

The last group of statements refers to attitudes regarding Internet social connections. The level of agreement among women who own a computer/Internet connection with the statements pointing to relations with various men and women is higher than among women who do not own a computer or have Internet access. Obviously, the presence of the technology in the home makes it possible for subjects to develop new connections. But one can also assume that the perception of the degree of legitimacy of creating and maintaining relationships with various men and women also increases with Internet access. This hypothesis, however, requires further support.

Table 1 also demonstrates an interesting gap between statements regarding the perception of the Internet as weakening "people" in terms of religion, and weakening the respondent personally. This gap can be explained by the "third-person effect" (Davison, 1983, see later; see also Lev-On & Neriya-Ben Shahar, 2011b).

The differences between women with/without the Internet *and* with/without a computer at home were significant across almost all statements in the questionnaire. But in three cases, significant differences were found between women with/without the Internet at home, *but not between women with/without computers at home*. This was the case in reference to the following three statements: "My female friends know that I use the Internet." "In my opinion, most Haredi people have Internet access at home," and "I think the Internet enables Haredi women to work and support their families" (see Table 2). These statements legitimize the Internet as a work tool as well as a part of the household, and demonstrate that Internet access may be, in places, more consequential than computer access alone for expressing social legitimacy, and for bridging the gap between ideology and practice.

Table 2. Statements in Reference to Which Significant Differences Were Found Only Between Women With and Without Internet at Home.

	T	Without Internet		With Internet	
		SD	*M*	*SD*	*M*
My female friends know that I use the Internet	3.91*** (*df*=133)	1.51	2.99 (*N*=82)	1.29	3.94 (*N*=52)
In my opinion, most Haredi people have Internet access at home	2.83** (*df*=150)	.73	1.88 (*N*=99)	1.11	2.36 (*N*=53)
I think the Internet enables Haredi women to work and support their families	5.12*** (*df*=148)	1.07	2.76 (*N*=98)	.94	3.62 (*N*=53)

*p<.05, **p<0.01, ***p<.001

2C.   Connections online

Respondents were asked about the partners of their online interactions. Below are the levels of agreement with the following statements:

- 34% (49): I am in contact with other women online (average agreement=2.34, SD=1.37).

- 23% (33): I am in contact only with Haredi women online (average agreement=2.05, SD=1.21).

- 18% (26): The Internet enables me to make new female friends (average agreement=1.87, SD=1.1).

- 29% (41): I am in contact with other people online (average agreement=2.12, SD=1.35).

Apparently women establish contacts with other women online, but most of them limit their contacts exclusively to Haredi women. The expression "other women" was chosen to enable the respondents to refer to non-Haredi women without expressly stating "religious (non-Haredi) or secular women."

For one-third of respondents, the Internet is used for contact with other people. This expression was chosen to include (with due caution) the possibility of contacts with Haredi and secular men. Here, too, no correlation was found between the sect to which the women belong and the patterns of establishing online contacts.

These results demonstrate that a significant group adopts the Internet in their daily practices. They use the computer and Internet not only for work and at the workplace, but introduce them into the home. These actions are carried out despite the perceived danger and in contradiction to rabbinical instructions. The data on online contacts demonstrate that for some, the Internet does not function strictly as a tool for obtaining information, but also for establishing contacts of various kinds.

3.　　　　When ideology and practice meet: Conflict, tension, and integration

　　　　How do subjects handle the discrepancy between ideological opposition and practical adoption?

　　　　The Haredim, like other fundamentalist communities, treat most new technologies with a conscious and sometimes open duality (Caplan, 2007; Blondheim & Caplan, 1993). The introduction of the Internet into Haredi communities illustrates a normative shift. In the past, the attitude toward communication technologies was marked by clear-cut boundaries: legitimization of the use of the tool, accompanied by total rejection of secular contents and adoption of "kosher" contents. Accordingly, the Haredim were opposed to television but adopted audio cassettes (Blondheim & Caplan, 1993); were opposed to reading secular newspapers but permitted to read Haredi newspapers; adopted landline telephones but opposed advanced-generation cellular phones, which are not strictly tools of communication, but also transmit content (Deutsche, 2009). The Internet blurs the boundaries, and it is almost impossible to use the technology and reject the content.

3A.　　　Dealing with the discrepancy by means of technological change

　　　　Sixty percent (92) of the women agreed with the statement: "In my opinion, Kosher Internet that utilizes approved filtering technologies is not dangerous" (average agreement=2.97, SD=1.23). Arguably, this statement captures many Haredim's perception of technology: If it is possible to make the technological tool "kosher," its use should be permitted (with certain reservations) and it would no longer be considered dangerous. The patterns of use and consumption of the "Kosher Internet," and the attitudes and perceptions pertaining to it, require further quantitative and qualitative research.

3B.　　　Dealing with the discrepancy by minimizing exposure to dangerous content

　　　　The dangerous content which exists online, such as words of heresy, violence, and pornography, present a significant threat to Haredi ideology, and is commonly presented as an enemy; it is seen as a seducer of the "evil instinct," the control of which is part and parcel of religious observance. Haredi women observing the precepts of religious law (Halacha) and refraining from eating food that is not strictly kosher, should also be careful not to consume spiritual food that is not "kosher," such as communication messages and Internet sites. It is therefore expected that they would refrain from accessing sites containing forbidden content.

　　　　Sixty-five percent (97) of the women agreed with the statement: "I think that I am capable of controlling the content to which I am exposed online" (average agreement=3.12, SD=1.31). Still, 73% (108) agreed with the practical statement: "It happens that I am exposed to inappropriate contents online (unintentionally)" (average agreement=3.5, SD=1.35). No significant differences were found in terms of the sects to which respondents belong.

　　　　The Internet and the dangerous content that can be found (even unintentionally) online are perceived as a threat to the unique texture of Haredi society. This, perhaps, is the reason for the high level of agreement, 92% (141), with the statement: "I think that the Internet can weaken people religiously" (average agreement=4.36, SD=1.01). On the other hand, only 56% (85) agreed with the statement: "I feel that the Internet weakens me religiously" (average agreement=3.02, SD=1.39).

　　　　Although the majority of respondents agree with both statements, the large and significant difference between the levels of agreement points to the existence of a "third-person effect" (Davison,

1983), according to which individuals perceive communication messages as affecting others much more than themselves. This is particularly relevant for messages with a negative connotation, such as pornography and violence (for a meta-analysis of research into the third-person effect, see Paul, Salwen & Dupagne, 2000). Recent research shows that the effect also occurs with regard to the perception of the influence of pornographic content on the Internet (Lee & Tamborini, 2005; Lo & Wei, 2002). Our findings seem to conform to such earlier findings: The influence of the Internet is perceived as a threat in general, but more so to other members of the community than to the respondents.

In spite of the threat and the need to control it, a considerable number of respondents acknowledged the advantages of the medium. Sixty-seven percent (103) agreed with the statement: "I think the Internet enables Haredi women to work and support their families" (average agreement=3.06, SD=1.12); 78% (118) agreed with the statement: "I feel that the Internet enables me to achieve things I was unable to achieve before" (average agreement=3.63, SD=1.27). And 34% (51) agreed with the statement: "I feel that the Internet enables me to rest and relax" (average agreement=2.24, SD=1.28). No correlation was found between the perception of the Internet as a tool with positive attributes and the sect that respondents belong to.

Significant positive correlations were found between the levels of agreement with the statement: "I think the Internet enables Haredi women to work and support their families," and the statement: "In my opinion, most Haredi people have Internet access at home" (rp=.26, P<.01), as well as with the statement: "To the best of my knowledge, the rabbis in my social milieu permit the use of the Internet when needed" (rp=.28, P<.01). Significant negative correlations were found between the level of agreement with the same statement ("I think that the Internet enables Haredi women to work and support their families") and the statements: "I think there is no room for the Internet in a Haredi household" (rp=-.22, P<.01), and "I think the Internet can weaken people religiously" (rp=-.32, P<.01).

Although these correlations are of moderate strength, they express a pragmatic attitude: Haredi women perceive the Internet as a tool enabling them to work, tend to think that most households have Internet access, and that rabbis permit use of this tool according to necessity. They tend to agree less with the statement that there is no room for the Internet in a Haredi household and that it is a tool prone to weaken people religiously.

3C.   Dealing with the discrepancy by means of spatial separation

Another possibility of dealing with the discrepancy between ideology and practice is by means of a spatial division between home and the outside world. The findings demonstrate that in contrast to the home, which must be defended, the workplace is perceived differently. Seventy-two percent (110) of the respondents agreed with the statement: "In my opinion, the Internet should be used only at the workplace" (average agreement=3.3, SD=1.13). Apparently, creating a total separation between home and workplace requires different levels of protection. In the private domain, the Internet is dangerous for two main reasons: the threat of exposing the children to dangerous contents, and the danger of personal exposure to dangerous content behind closed doors. The workplace is protected against these threats. The children are not there, and one cannot access prohibited content in a public and controlled environment. In this context, we found a significant correlation between the level of agreement with the statement: "In my opinion, the Internet can only be open in the workplace," and the level of agreement with the

statement: "To the best of my knowledge, the rabbis in my social milieu permit the use of the Internet for work purposes only" (rp=.32, P<.01).

The common thread between the three strategies of dealing with the discrepancy between ideology and practice is that control can minimize the threat: control of the medium by making it "kosher"; control of the content by self-filtering prohibited content; and control of space by maintaining a "wall" between home and workplace. It appears that such control enables the respondents to move along with the "living religion" in the liminal space between strict ideological principles and the realities of everyday life.

Conclusions

We examined the attitudes and behaviors of women in a fundamentalist community with regard to new technology, and the implications of these attitudes and behaviors on processes of signaling and restructuring the boundaries of their community.

Examining women's attitudes regarding the Internet reveals fundamentalist perceptions, which correspond to the "institutionalized religion" manifest in statements of rabbinical leaders. The respondents perceive the Internet as a danger to the Haredi community, and a threat to its boundaries. However, on the practical level, we found that almost two-thirds of respondents possess a computer at home, half of whom have Internet access. About one-third of the women establish contacts through the Internet, mostly with other women.

Various discrepancies are manifest in our findings: between ideology and practice, for instance, between perceiving the Internet as dangerous but accessing it from home; between perceiving the Internet as a danger to people in general, but as a lesser danger to self; between the perceived ability to control undesirable content and the actual exposure to such content. Correlations were found between variables such as women's education and husbands' occupations, and ideological and behavioral openness towards the Internet.

We looked for correlations between the sect to which women belong (Chassidic, Lithuanian, Sephardi and others) and the levels of agreement to various statements regarding the Internet. But despite considerable differences between various sects found in earlier studies (Friedman, 1991; Neriya-Ben Shahar, 2008), the findings in the current study are weak and insignificant. The explanation may lie in the characteristics of the research population, namely women who choose to work in a novel and unique environment. Possibly their common denominators are more significant than the differences in the Haredi world outside the workplace.

An interesting aspect of the study regards the ways of coping with the discrepancies between ideology and practice (Caplan, 2007). Women are aware of the fact that real life requires them to get an education, to work and to possess a computer and possibly even have Internet access at home. The ideological narrative keeps them within the protective boundaries of their community and they regard their behavior as adjusting to the demands of reality.

When combining the two theoretical narratives of the present study––dealing with the gap between ideology and practicality, and Campbell's RSST approach (2010)––the following picture emerges: The historical and moral background of the ultra-Orthodox community is manifested through ideology.

The community is fearful of the permeation of secular and Western content, and emphasizes the need to obey the judgment of the rabbis. Nevertheless, a spirited negotiation or dialogue takes place regarding the use of technology, which in fact enters into many ultra-Orthodox homes. This is expressed by ownership of a computer and/or an Internet connection, creating online relationships, acquiring education, and working in secular workplaces.

Like women in other fundamentalist communities, the participants personify the fact that mostly there is insufficient congruence between women's religious ideals and the reality of life in the modern world. Their place in the liminal space, as working women who are agents of change, causes them to be perceived as a danger to society (Friedle, 1997).

Like Campbell (2010), we regard ultra-Orthodox women as a user community that adapts the technology in ways that would enable them to integrate it into their life routines without harming their core values and ideology. It is evident that the women who appropriated the technology submitted it to a process of personal and moral modification—they are less apprehensive of it, they perceive it as legitimate and permissible, they are aware of its advantages, and they feel they have the ability to control its content. In contrast, women who did not introduce the technology into their homes are more afraid of its dangers, perceive the Internet more as harmful to the values and existence of the community, and feel they are less able to control its content.

On a wider plane, the patterns of dealing with the discrepancy between ideology and practice employed by respondents are not confined to working women but demonstrate processes to which Haredi society, and fundamentalist societies in general, are subjected. The participants live in an "enclave culture" (Sivan, 1991), but its walls are not as high as they were in the past, nor are they perceived as such. Haredi society in general and the respondents in particular maintain daily contact with the surrounding Israeli culture.

Moreover, the respondents, moving back and forth between the Haredi community and Israeli society, cross the gates of their "enclave culture" on a daily basis. The passage between these gates proves on the one hand that walls exist: The women wear distinct clothes, their behavior is different, and they are assigned to separate technological hothouses out of bounds for men and secular people. On the other hand, the gates enable entry and exit, they are not resistant to external influences, and they seem to obscure threats, fears, and dangers.

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