

FROM “WELCOME NEW GABBERS” TO THE PITTSBURGH SYNAGOGUE SHOOTING: THE EVOLUTION OF GAB



Reid McIlroy-Young and Ashton Anderson

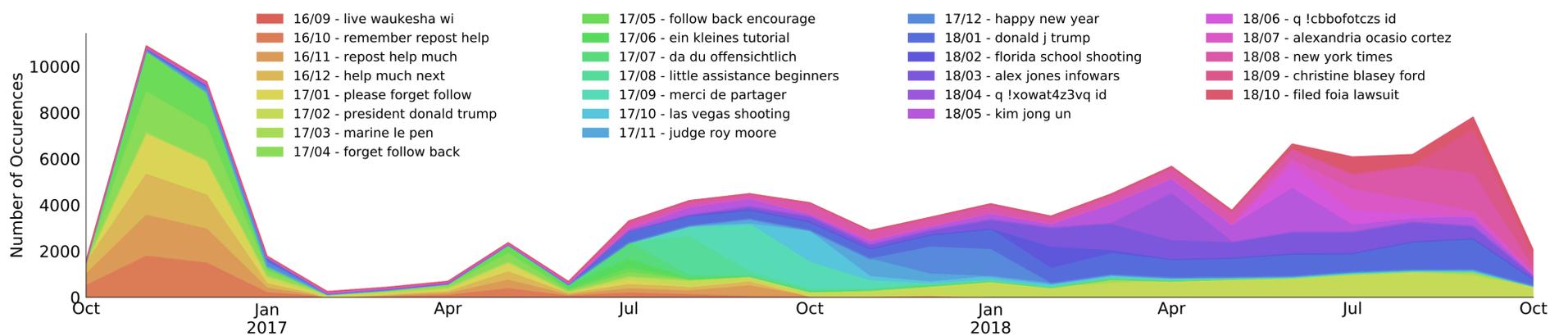
RQ1: How did the topics Gab users talk about change over time?

RQ2: How is the language different from the rest of the Internet?

RQ3: Given the shooter’s active presence on Gab could we have detected him on Gab beforehand?

- Gab is a social media platform with low moderation
- It is mostly used by members of the alt-right and has high amounts of hate-speech
- On October 27, 2018 one of the users attacked the Tree of Life synagogue after posting his intentions on Gab
- We collected 748K users and 30.5M posts between August 10, 2016 and October 28, 2018

Evolution of Topics over Time on Gab



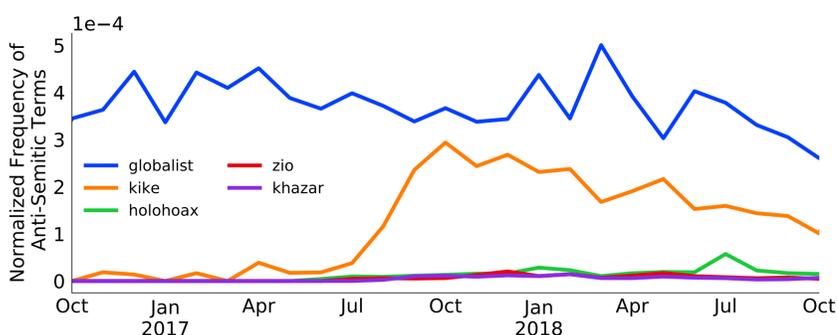
The top topics evolve from community-building, to contemporary events, to alt-right politics

Word Frequencies and Semantics

- Political language is much more frequent vs other online texts
- Words with conservative political association have significantly different meaning vs mainstream sources

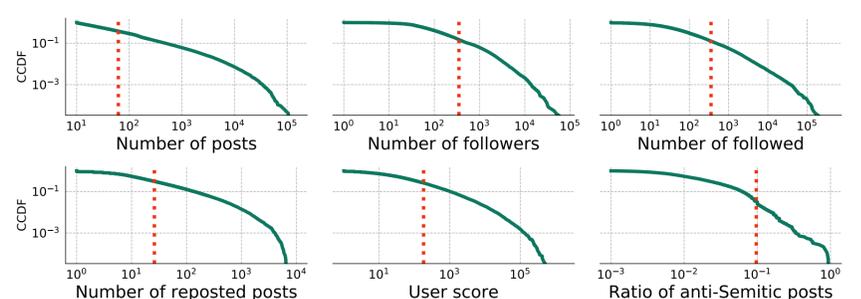
Word frequencies vs online text				Semantics vs Google News			
Word	Log odds	Word	Log odds	Word	Overlap	Word	Overlap
twitter	9.9	hotels	-4.3	rt	0	smartest	68
assange	7.5	poker	-3.6	donald	0	harder	66
globalists	7.5	shipping	-3.5	q	0	hardest	65
youtube	7.4	reviews	-3.3	isis	0	bigger	62
candidato	7.2	rating	-3.2	dem	0	several	61

Usage of Anti-Semitic Terms



Gab had an increase in anti-Semitic language in July 2017

Shooter Compared to Other Users



We found that the shooter was among the most consistently anti-Semitic users, but there were hundreds of more extreme users