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Meme Insider

THE **BuzzFeed** EFFECT

*What happens when normies steal a meme?
What is the aftermath of the Prequel Memes War?
What is next for Dinoflask?
Why are we still making these?*

*The History
of Memes*

*Behind the Meme:
Hero or Villain?*

*Niche Memes:
A stable investment*

WELCOME BACK!

Good to see you again! We've got a great issue for you this month. We'd love to thank all of our patrons for supporting us once more. Our team has worked many hours to bring you this final project, and every bit of help means the world to us. Also! If you think you have what it takes to write for Meme Insider, you can! Just look for our posts on Reddit r/MemeEconomy and Twitter where you can submit your own articles, through a Google form, to have a chance for your work to appear right here. If you want physical copies of the magazine, check our Patreon!

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Thanks again,
The Meme Insider Team



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Fight on, Stefán!
-M.I. Team

Niche Memes & Their Longevity

GRAVY_FERRY

NICHE COMMUNITY MEMES' LIFESPANS ARE MUCH LONGER THAN THAT OF A REGULAR MEME

As I am sure many of us know, a meme that is inside a community will last much longer than a meme that is in the wild and used outside of a specific group of people. It doesn't end there though; many community memes often never die. They continuously go up and down in their popularity, and are often immune to normification. There are unique attributes to these memes which are not found in the common meme, and I'm going to tell you what those are.

I will start with a community that generates new memes nearly every day, yet always comes back to older memes. That community is /r/NLSScirclejerk, a reddit page dedicated to the Northlion Live Super Show on the streaming site Twitch. Despite an influx of new memes every day with each new stream bringing in at least one, they constantly return back to old ones, such as a picture

of a man named Dan Gheesling edited in different ways to fit the context of the post. This meme has been on and off on the subreddit for almost over a year, which is far beyond the normal lifespan of a meme. This meme's popularity just does not end inside the community, and is a prime example of all three properties of an inside meme: active for a longer time than the typical meme, waxed and waned in popularity, and has no signs of normification anywhere now, or in the far future. The second case in point is another subreddit, /r/ComedyCemetery. They have created numerous memes, each one seeming like it will not die. These memes often have common characteristics of the content that is usually posted on the subreddit, similar to how many meme pages on Instagram or facebook will often use recurring characters that they will add into a meme to make a "witty" comment about the meme, or even just use them to make the meme itself. Some of the more common characters are: Weed Bro, Sarcastic Bro, Sarcastic Auntie, and Weed Dude. These characters have become memes among the community due to their common appearances in post that are being mocked. Among these memes, they also have sub-memes associated with the characters, such as the way Buzzfeed's comic artist Adam

Ellis draws his lips, and how he is “vile”. They have made a strong base for these characters and have had to use a wiki to keep track of all of the memes.

“...EACH ONE SEEMING LIKE IT WILL NOT DIE”

I have a theory as to why these memes have such unique properties. It's because new content and sayings are added onto them, giving them more fuel to burn than the average meme, and allowing them to stay more original. Take the Dan Gheesling meme for example, he commonly stars on the twitch streams and has become a fan favorite for his charismatic and fun-loving personality which makes the meme continue to prosper as he shows up on more and more of the

shows. This has people create new memes which indirectly increase the lifespan of his old memes. The same can even be said for the memes on /r/ComedyCemetery, as the Instagram and Facebook pages these memes are often taken off of will reuse these characters in new comics and memes, which adds fuel to their life as a meme not just on their respective platforms, but also on the subreddit. This gives them the ability to continue going, and even if they start losing relevance, their descent to obscurity is slow enough that one major post, or one major event can reignite the meme as if it were new, allowing for them to rise and fall in popularity without dying off. The fact that these memes are obscure and require in-knowledge also makes these community memes almost invulnerable to normification as they would have to be a member of the community in order to get the joke, which means that they will stay unnormified as long as the property/community they are associated with is not normie. These effects make these memes strong and keep them alive and relevant for years and years. ■

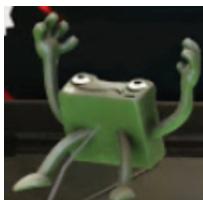


EXCITING INTERVIEW WITH: DINOFLASK!

TWO TO THE ONE TO THE ONE TO THE THREE.

June 2017.

If you are one of the 30 million people who have played OverWatch, or are familiar with it from playing other Blizzard games, this one's for you. On December 23, 2016, a man uploaded a video to Youtube on a channel with under a thousand subscribers. His video was taking the Overwatch developer updates (videos uploaded on the official blizzard Overwatch account featuring the lead game designer Jeff Kaplan talking directly to the audience) and mixing the words that Jeff was saying to create sentences with an entirely separate and hilarious message from what was originally intended. Since the first video, Dinoflask has uploaded 11 more Overwatch themed videos, 2 original remix songs using only Kaplan's voice and accompanying music, and was even invited by Blizzard staff to go to their Headquarters and meet with Jeff for his 15th anniversary of working at Blizzard. As of this article, he has around 165k subscribers and 11 Overwatch videos totaling just over 11.8 Million total views between them all.



Coming back from his Tour of Blizzard, Dinoflask quickly set up a contest to win some Overwatch swag from the main office, with some of the stuff signed by Jeff Kaplan himself! The contest involves creating your own version

of Jeff Kaplan in any medium you want and emailing it to Dinoflask.giveaway@gmail.com. The giveaway ends on July 15th and it's not too late for one of you readers to win! Despite so much amazing stuff going on, there wasn't much known about him, which is why I set out to find out more about this star on the rise:

MI: What inspired you to make the first video?

D: Pure procrastination. I had been watching the developer updates instead of revising for an exam, and decided now was the perfect time to painstakingly splice Jeff together to say some dumb shit about Overwatch.

MI: Anything interesting or fun about yourself you'd like to talk about or get out in the open?

D: Rumors that I am actually Jeff Kaplan have no basis in reality.

MI: Do you have a background in video editing / what's your day job?

D: Not really. It's always just been a hobby. I'm a student, but not studying anything related to video editing.

MI: Do you have a "vision for how you see Jeff, then you try to make your art imitate this vision of Jeff you have?"



D: I wouldn't say so. I don't actively try and shape Jeff into any particular vision, but I guess my own sense of humor shapes the Jeff we see within the videos. I feel like parody Jeff is a lot more cynical, unconcerned with what the fan-base thinks about his changes, and really wants to get to diamond.

MI: I've been told you have all the words used in a development update written down for reference in videos, is that correct? Are there certain words you really want Jeff to say or even asked him in person if he could drop in a future update?

D: Yeah, I transcribed the videos myself. I know you can pull subtitles out of YouTube but they tend not to capture Jeff's more subtle mannerisms that are good for pacing, such as "uhms" and intakes of breath. But transcribing manually was also a good opportunity to re-watch all the developer updates and make a note of any good phrases.

Most people probably think it was a missed opportunity, but I didn't ask Jeff in person for any specific phrases. Didn't want to make him feel like some sort of performing chimp.

MI: Will Reaper and Torbjorn ever make up?

D: Things aren't looking good on that front. But

time heals all wounds.

"Rumors that I am actually Jeff Kaplan have no basis in reality."

MI: How did Blizzard initially contact you and what was the experience like flying out to Blizzard HQ?

D: Someone from Blizzard reached out via email. Definitely thought I was being trolled at first. But flying out to Blizzard HQ was an amazing, if slightly surreal, experience. They take real good care of their visitors.

MI: What at Blizzard HQ really made you go "wow"? What was your favorite part of it?

D: I'm not allowed to talk about that stuff...! Overall just chatting to people across the tour of the Overwatch office was great, it seems like a very cool place to work.

MI: Did you meet anyone else besides the Overwatch team?

D: Pretty sure everyone I met was on the Overwatch team, but I met a lot of people in a day (and have forgotten a lot of names). Some of them may have been from elsewhere?

MI: What abilities does Jeff from the Overwatch team have in game?

D: Read the patch notes.

MI: Did you Wrestle with Jeff to make him buff McCree's Ultimate and Nerf Roadhog? If so, thank you?

D: You're welcome.

MI: What's your current favorite character?

D: I will instalock Junkrat every game and I don't care what anyone says.

MI: Highest skill ranking achieved?

D: I nearly hit diamond last season playing almost exclusively Zarya. I don't think I'll ever break out of platinum.

MI: Do you like the PvE related content and think they should (or just could) expand on that a bit more?

D: The previous PvE events were pretty fun, a nice sort of break from the usual gamemodes. some more varied PvP gamemodes would be cool.

MI: Do you like other Blizzard games? And what's your favorite non-Blizzard game?

D: Overwatch is the only Blizzard game I have going at the moment, but I used to play Hearthstone quite a lot. My all-time favorite game is PSO (Phantasy Star Online), which no-one ever seems to have heard of... (Note: he later added Jet Set Radio, which EVERYONE should experience once in their life).

MI: Have you gotten any submissions for the giveaway that have really blown you away with creativity? Are you planning on releasing an album or gallery of the high-quality submissions you get?

D: A few entries have taken me by surprise. I always enjoy seeing an unusual medium, but there have also been a lot of amazing drawings. Picking winners is going to be hard! I'll try and put a gallery together and then have the entire collection available for download at some point, in case anyone feels like sifting through hundreds of MS paint pictures of Jeff.

MI: Where does your logo come from?

D: It's an antenna from Rocket League called Div. It features at the end of my pre-Jeff videos.

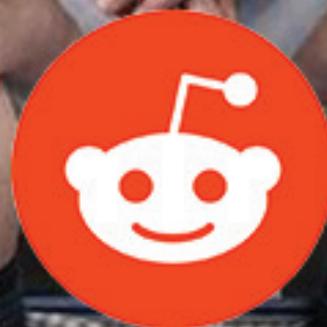
MI: Last Question: Terry Crews or Idris Elba for voicing Doomfist? Or is there a third choice you think could work better?

D: Terry Crews all the way.

Thank you so much to Dinoflask to sitting down with us. Keep making those spicy memes and our best wishes go to you and your contestants.



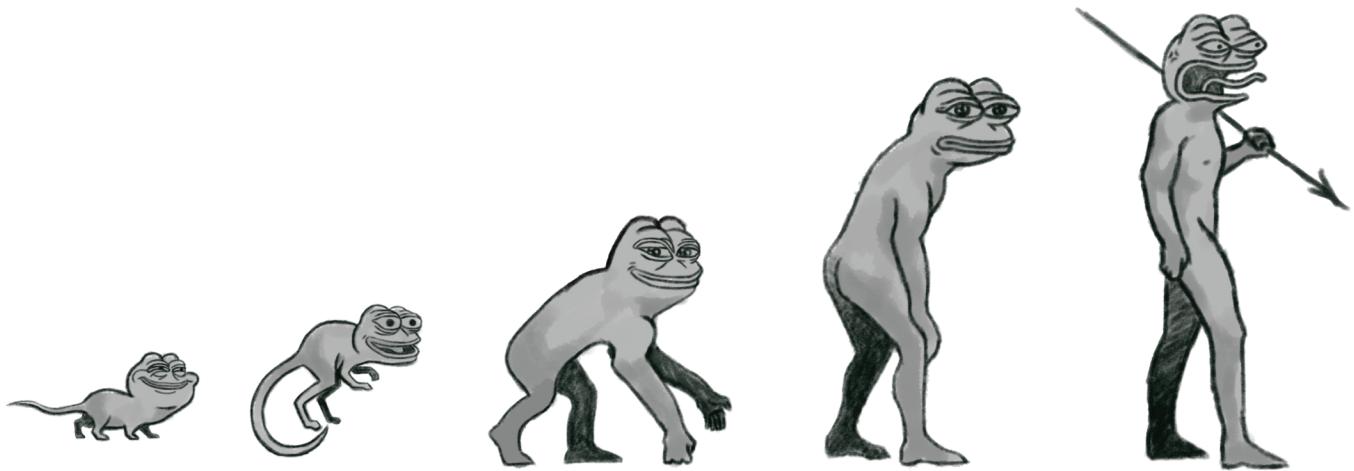
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THE HISTORY



OF
MEMES

HISTORY OF INTERNET MEMES

A BRIEF COMPENDIUM ON THE INTERNET'S INSIDE JOKES.

/u/thepenaltytick June 2017.

Memes, in one form or another, have existed since ancient times. In ancient times, it was very popular to graffiti the Sator Square, a two-dimensional five-by-five square of letters that is read exactly the same way top-to-bottom, bottom-to-top, left-to-right, right-to-left, and can be rotated 180 degrees and still be read in all those ways. In more recent times, “Kilroy was here” was a popular meme during World War II, and Alfred E. Newman, the mascot of Mad Magazine, was a popular caricature for decades before the magazine adopted it. But we’re here to talk about internet memes. Where did they begin? How have they evolved? And how much influence can they have over society?



~The First Meme Era: Trendy Memes (1996-2005)~

Richard Dawkins coined the term “meme” in 1976 to mean “an idea, behavior, or style that spreads from person to person within a culture.” But the first internet meme didn’t appear until twenty years later. The first widely successful and shared internet meme ever was the Dancing Baby. It was a gif of a baby dancing, and was impressive in that it was spread throughout the internet almost exclusively through email. The fact that many memes had to be shared either through email or obscure chat rooms somewhat limited the number that could become popular. This era was marked by memes that could better be described as “trends.” The memes from this era are few and far in-between, but the ones that did appear are still famous to this day. Examples include The Hamster Dance, “All Your Base Are Belong to Us”, It’s Peanut Butter Jelly Time!, the Star Wars kid, demotivational posters, and O RLY? During this period, the 2004 Presidential Election became the first such election with contemporary memes about it, though they were insignificant enough not to even deserve a footnote in an entire textbook about that election. Perhaps reflecting the general attitude of that country, those memes did overwhelmingly favor George W. Bush over John Kerry. By the end of this period, websites such as Myspace had become popular enough for people to create memes on their own and share it with their friends without email. More modern websites that are currently popular such as 4chan did come about in this era, but were not yet the cesspools of human debauchery and depravity while simultaneously being the primordial soup for new meme trends we know them for today.



~The Second Meme Era: *Viral Memes (2005-2009)*~

With the introduction of new content-sharing websites still in use today, the First Meme Era came to an end in 2005. That was the year that YouTube was launched, which became the premier medium for viral videos to become popular at a much faster rate than ever before. Reddit was also launched that year, followed by Twitter in 2006 and Tumblr in 2007. These five websites, 4chan, Reddit, Tumblr, Twitter, and YouTube would become the premiere websites for meme creation (although Tumblr has declined in relevance in recent years). 2005 was the year that Chuck Norris memes start, quite possibly the oldest meme that people still use today (these people who still use them are Amish). In 2005, LOL cats also became popular, which was the first major meme to originate from 4chan. Throughout the next few years, however, YouTube dominated the meme economy. YouTube poops, popular scenes from certain media remixed for humorous effect, became popular. In 2007, the first successful SpongeBob memes were created. In whatever format or era, SpongeBob has been overwhelming used in memes almost continuously to the present day. Perhaps no form of media has been more referenced and alluded to in such a variety of formats and time era as SpongeBob. The Simpsons comes close, but not quite. Such 2007 memes included clips showing SpongeBob singing Crank that Soulja Boy, SpongeBush SquarePrez, a scathing satire of the Bush administration, SpongeBob SquarePants in China, which currently has over 87 million views, and SpongeBong HempPants, which is about weed. Various scenes were also popular in YouTube poops, and Moar Krabs became popular in 2008. These viral videos helped propel certain YouTubers into fame, such as Smosh and NigaHiga, as well as producing a bunch of one-hit wonders. Examples of such videos with tens of millions of views include David Goes to the Dentist, Sneezing Panda, Dramatic Chipmunk, Chocolate Rain, Charlie Bit My Finger, and Evolution of Dance. In the background of these viral memes, people in the shadows of the internet on image boards formed their own memes. Also in 2007, Rick Rolling was done for the first time, where you mislead people with a clickbait title into watching the music video for Never Gonna Give You Up. In 2006, the first Pepe was drawn, perhaps the oldest meme that hasn't died. Memes about the 2008 Presidential Election were also very popular, with viral videos about Obama Girl, the girl with a crush on Obama, and some train memes comparing Barack Obama, Joe Biden, John McCain, and Sarah Palin all to trains. Obama was a high-speed railway and Biden a regular train. McCain was an old steam locomotive and Sarah Palin was a toy model of Thomas the Tank Engine that had fallen off the track. Reflecting the fact that, in the closing days of the Bush administration, Americans had turned overwhelmingly against Bush, memes from every single major meme-sharing website were almost exclusively in favor of Obama. Likewise, Obama won the most lopsided Presidential Election victory in the history of the internet. This meme era ended gradually, but was over in 2009.



~The Third Meme Era: Le Memes (2009-2013)~

This meme era was dominated by two meme formats: rage comics and image macros. Rage comics are those comics you see with the familiar drawings used over and over again, and a huge chunk of the memes from the period were simply different drawings used in this format. Examples include the troll face, Y U NO face, me gusta face, and another face for just about every human emotion. These comics often began with the phrase “*Le me, ...” The word “derp” was also popular to use in these memes. These memes became popular as one of the first times Reddit and Tumblr flexed its creative muscles. But it soon became apparent that these memes were pretty dumb, and the internet moved on. Some websites still like to use these though, and these websites are generally known for stealing memes from one of the five major meme creators (9gag, iFunny, Memecenter, Facebook meme pages, etc.). These websites became known for stealing memes, and the idea of normies coming to take your memes and ruin the joke became popular throughout 4chan, an attitude that soon spread to Reddit. After this came this era of image macros, also known as Advice Animals. These memes, having evolved from demotivational poster would feature a single image reused over and over again, with text on the top providing the setup for a joke and the text on the bottom providing the punch line. In almost all cases, the text was in the Impact font. Examples include Bad Luck Bryan, Good Guy Greg, Scumbag Steve, etc. Occasionally, image macros that were in the same format as any other familiar Advice Animal meme would become popular with an image that would only ever be used for a meme once. These one-off memes continue to this day, but image macros are now almost completely dead. One version of the Advice Animal meme, with Kermit the Frog drinking tea and saying “But that’s none of my business...” continued into the fourth meme era, but that meme is now dead too. By 2012, the five websites of meme creation had established themselves as such. Vine joined the list as a sixth website by the end of the Third Meme Era, but it has now fallen off the face of the Earth. Vine and Twitter became the platform for developing black culture memes. With no other name to describe them, black culture memes are memes that are typically created by black people. They’re the types of memes started by black people that most white people end up trying to copy. They started out just showing someone making a funny face with the caption “When you...” These memes would continue to evolve in the Fourth Meme Era and are currently the premier driving force behind new memes. Viral videos were also popular in this era, but not nearly as dominate in the meme market as they were during the Second Meme Era. Viral videos from this era include Gangnam Style, which, with upwards of 2 billion views, is still the most-viewed video on YouTube to this day, and a 2010 rendition of What’s Up by 4 Non-Blondes by He Man now also has more than 100 million views. In the wake of the 2012 Presidential Election, the meme economy was generally in favor of Obama. Image macros of Mitt Romney appeared depicting him as the wealthy personification of affluence with no sympathy or understanding for the common folk. There were some pro-Obama memes, but most were anti-Mitt Romney. Examples include College Humor’s Mitt Romney Style (a parody of Gangnam Style) and one image macro featuring a confused

look on Romney's face with the caption "Why don't poor people just buy more money?" There were some anti-Obama and pro-Romney memes, but they were generally created by older people who had no idea how memes are supposed to work, and the vast majority of memes were in favor of Obama. Likewise, Obama won the election. 2013 was a transitional year between the Third and Fourth Meme Eras. There was no single point where one ended and one began, but in the beginning of 2013, we were in the Third Meme Era. By 2014, we were in the Fourth Meme Era. The Harlem Shake was among the last memes of the Third Meme Era, and boy did it go off with a bang. The Harlem Shake became the number one song on the top of the Billboard's Top 40, the first time a meme had been able to do this.



~The Fourth Meme Era: Dank Memes (2013)~

If there was to be one defining turning point between the Third and Fourth Meme Era, it would be Monday, January 14th, 2013, when an anonymous user posted the "Shrek is Love, Shrek is Life" copypasta on 4chan's /b/ board. It remained in obscurity for a while, but Shrek soon emerged from this meme as the first of many memes that are ironically considered "dank." Other memes that developed in this category included Snoop Dogg memes, memes about the song The Next Episode, blunts, fedoras, Obey Hats, the Supreme Logos, 8-bit sunglasses, Doritos, Mountain Dew, and 360-no scopes. From these dank memes emerged montage parodies, and later deep-fried memes, memes that are so immersed in their own levels of irony they've become a form of art, and surreal memes. Another one of the first memes from this era was Doge. Viral videos became popular again, as YouTube memes formed their own remixes and managed to make their own type of memes. This all eventually culminated in Bee Movie memes, which typically began with the title "The Bee Movie but..." and then it bluntly describes what exactly the creator did to remix the video. Throughout 2016, such memes were also made about Biggie Cheese, the theme for The Nutshack, the song All Star by Smash Mouth, and most famously, scenes from the show Lazy Town, especially the song We Are Number One. Features of this Fourth Era of Memes is that new memes are made more frequently than ever, and there has been a near-continuous stream of new meme formats at least once per week. Of course, plenty of memes were produced per day in the Third Meme Era, but they all generally followed the same formats. In our current Meme Era, meme formats are spawning faster than ever. There have been enough memes that you can find a meme of the month for every month dating back to 2013. But as quickly as memes are created, memes die. There is an established lifecycle for memes. If you get your memes from a source different from the five websites mentioned above, you're likely a normie. These people are the ones who make memes that don't even make sense in the context of the original meme and aren't funny in the slightest; they're just cringeworthy. Websites that make meme compilations such as Buzzfeed can speed up this process. To combat this, many meme-creating sites have resorted to making memes as edgy as possible to deter normies from stealing their memes. Necrophilia, incest, pedophilia, Nazism, blatant racism, school shootings; nothing is off the table and everything is fair game. This meme era is

also known to, occasionally, produce memes that last for months on end before dying. A single meme that can dominate the meme market for weeks on end and even linger around all year. This only usually happens once per year. In 2015, that meme was unexpected John Cena. In 2016, that meme was Harambe. A few memes have been able to last for up to or more than a year without dying by never truly dominating the meme market when it can be used for multiple different memes as they emerge, such as Shrek, any meme about Trump, the “Sir, you’ve been in a coma...” meme, the top 10 anime memes, and the fake history memes. An interesting result of this era was Dat Boi. Dat Boi was a meme that had no references to anything and wasn’t even relatable. Maybe people loved it because of this, this lack of a real reason for being a meme other than its very existence has led to it defying a traditional meme’s lifecycle and resurging every once in a while without ever truly dying. This era is also notable for the awakening of the alt-right. The alt-right was a sleeping giant that grew in the recesses of 4chan and /pol/. They mostly ignored Mitt Romney’s presidential campaign because he was a traditional conservative. For a while, the only things they did was make fun of left-wing feminists on Tumblr, which contributed to the decline of Tumblr as a meme-creating website and the fact that many people, even on the left, no longer take third-wave feminism seriously, and involve themselves in Gamergate. But that all changed on Tuesday, June 16th, 2015, when Donald Trump announced his candidacy for the presidency. Suddenly, the alt-right threw its full might behind his presidential campaign. The alt-right turned out to be an absolutely massive juggernaut within the meme economy. Throughout the 2016 Presidential Election, memes no longer reflected general political trends. They didn’t even influence the political trends, they were the political trends. Memes weren’t being made about the candidates, the candidates themselves were turned into memes. Donald Trump was essentially memed into an upset victory by the alt-right. You can talk about the reasons why Hillary Clinton lost all you want, but the reason Trump won the primaries was the memes. During the general election, there was very little enthusiasm behind liberals for Hillary Clinton, as many on Reddit had supported Bernie Sanders. The memes liberals did create were overwhelmingly anti-Trump, while the alt-right was able to single-handedly combat this with both pro-Trump and anti-Hillary memes. But as part of the backlash against Trump’s presidency, liberals have been getting better at making memes and are hoping to combat against him and the alt-right in 2018 and 2020. Politics has devolved into a meme war it seems, as we advance further into the era of dank memes.

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THE FONTS OF MEMES

AN ANALYSIS OF TYPEFACE.

Etcetera™ June 2017.

Memes have been around for quite a while, they come in all sorts and sizes, from long copypastas to reaction gifs. Out of all of these, the most dominant species of memes have always been the ‘pictures with captions’ or ‘Image Macros’ in earlier days (See more in the History of Internet Memes article). One thing almost all memes have in common however, is the inclusion of a font.

These memes have been using the Impact font since the very first picture the web classifies as a ‘meme’, the Cat with the ‘I can has burger?’ caption from 2003. It was a very logical choice: easy readability and it could blend in with practically anything. The most important reason however was probably because of the limited amount of fonts you could choose from (only 11), of which the **Impact** font was the best choice. Since then, the general public expected memes to look a certain way and meme makers always used this format. Image macros with Arial or Verdana were frowned upon: there was no room for experimentation on the meme market. It just looked a tad weird and unusual.

Through the years Times New Roman has found its place in memes with the caption located in a black border, and Courier New was heavily used in Rage Comics. Nothing could really replace the Image Macros, though.

‘Dank’ memes made their entrance in late 2015, and here is where things started to change drastically. People got more experimental with fonts. One of the first non-Impact fonts to rise was **Comic Sans**, which was considered an insult to design to the point where Comic Sans was a meme itself. Comic Sans gained its reputation due to being a rather badly designed font that when used correctly added a whole lot to the meme it was used in.

From this point on, things got a little messy with meme fonts. Impact died out amongst ‘dank memers’ and was passed on to the normies, who still have a huge Impact meme market nowadays. Now you could just use every font you felt like using as long as you were able to read it. This was a great development for memes, because extremely diverse memes came to life even more with just a

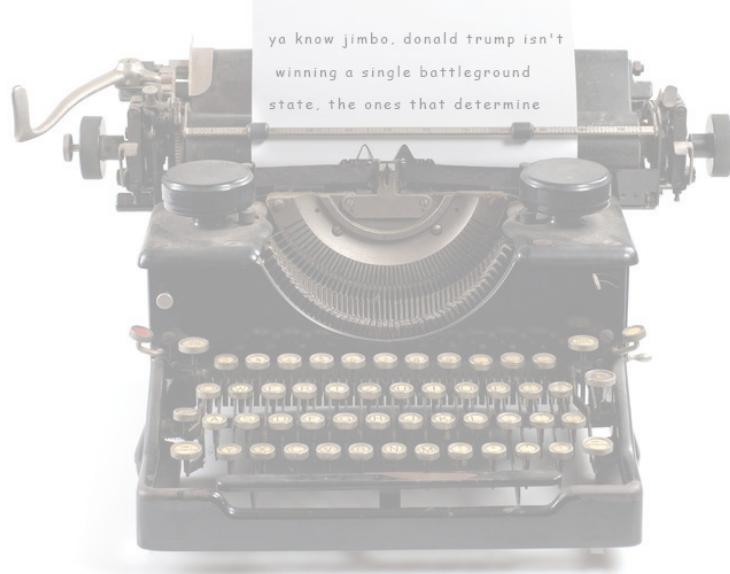
You would not believe your eyes
If ten million fireflies Lit up the
world as I fell asleep 'Cause
they fill the open air ✌ ■ ♫ ● ™ ☽ ♦ ℮

little personal touch that was added with the font. **Roboto**, **Gill Sans**, **Futura**; all have found their own place in the meme world, how small it might be. And if they haven't already, it's still easy to bring a new font on the meme market. The trick of course is to use the font right. But that can be difficult, since we didn't have an 'official meme font' since Impact. Right?

Actually that's not the case. Over the past years Helvetica Neue slowly rose to the top and became the new Impact. Helvetica Neue is extremely popular due to memes that gain their momentum on Twitter, which currently make up a huge portion of the total amount of memes being made. The different fonts aspect also comes into play with these memes, because lots of these memes have one or two words a meme creator can replace by something different. This is the reason why so many memes with a few words in, Times New Roman for example, show up.

But the interesting thing is that Helvetica Neue isn't getting the attention like Impact. Access to it is somewhat limited for the average meme creator. Helvetica Neue can be downloaded from some shady websites, however not everyone is willing to go as far as that and many people aren't even familiar with the font. The only source for 'Helvetica Neue memes' seems to be Twitter (except for some dedicated meme creators). Helvetica Neue is always there, but it doesn't get the recognition it deserves.

So, what is the most universal meme font right now? Well, it is Helvetica Neue if you go by Twitter numbers. It certainly isn't as recognizable as Impact with the modern style it shares with most of the Sans Serif fonts, but it is there. We still have to wait for the font that takes the internet by storm, but what I know is that the person who comes up with it certainly has gold in hands.

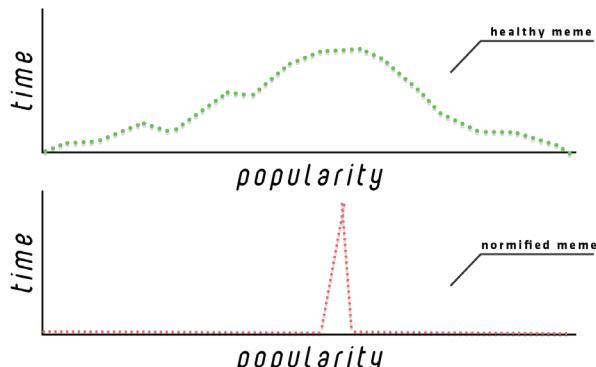


THE BuzzFeed EFFECT

WHAT REALLY HAPPENS WHEN NORMIES STEAL A MEME?

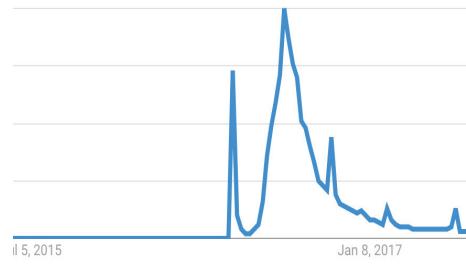
/u/CartoonWarp June 2017.

Memes, what are they good for? The Meme Economy, like any economy, functions on one basis, “buy low, sell high”. So why, then, do so many prude economists fear the day BuzzFeed and other mainstream groups discover their memes? One may ask, “isn’t the point of a meme to make it big? To reap mountains of karma, likes, and good-boy points? Won’t normies blow up your investment high?” That’s only seeing a part of the picture, my fellow investor. To understand this we are going to need to look at two different kinds of memes: Memes that are quickly normified, and those that slowly build into the mainstream. The premise essentially boils down to this:

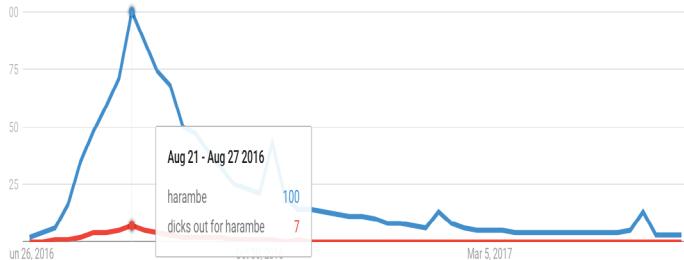


A meme with a healthy and reliable lifespan slowly rises out of obscurity into the mainstream, then slowly decreases back into obscurity again, making it a safe and profitable investment. A normified meme quickly bubbles into the mainstream, and is almost instantly killed off, making it volatile and risky, which can reap great rewards if timed right, but also carries consequences.

Let's take a look at two real-world examples to get a solid footing in this topic. First, we will look at Harambe, which was one of the longest-lasting memes in the last year or so. Taking a look at Google trend's page, we can see three distinct events. The first spike is the initial shooting,



and the outpouring of outrage about the death of an innocent gorilla. The peak of the outrage is on May 29, 2016. Then shortly after, on July 10, 2016, we see something new, a second slight trend upwards. This is the birth of the meme. The faux outrage and idolization of Harambe that began on dark corners of the web to spur and mock those who had become worked up about the passing of the giant. At first this offensive and seemingly tasteless joke drives away the normie crowd, allowing a dank base to take hold. Now here is when things get interesting, for the same idolatry of Harambe that made normies turn away is also what led to his downfall. During the 2016 presidential election, those that idolized Harambe started to prop him up as a third, better choice for president, even going as far as having Harambe political memes and physical Tshirts printed with slogans for him. These steps did help extend his meme lifespan, as it kept the joke going, but it also made the joke more obvious to normies, a double-edged sword. There is another article in this issue on memes that stay inside one community being able to keep going, and Harambe certainly could've been one, but he was pushed into the normie spotlight and died out shortly after. In summary: despite the eventual normification, the meme was able to last a long time due to the dank base and slow growth in the beginning.

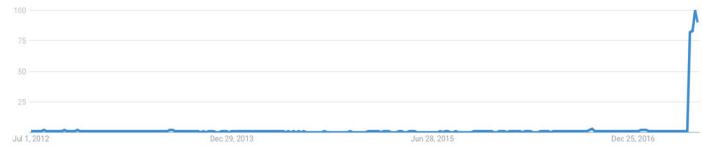


You can see the normie variants of the meme “Dicks out for Harambe”, spike in popularity, eventually bring down the meme as a whole.

So, despite the eventual normie invasion, the

meme was able to last a long time due to the dank base and slow growth in the beginning.

Now, let's look at a quickly normified meme. “The floor is (lava)_____”



As is apparent in the graph above, the meme spikes insanely fast into the mainstream, and what goes up must therefore come down. Because this meme, while initially dank, has no base to stand on, and inside reports from the NASDAQ team can confirm using their algorithms that the rate of decline is just as steep as the incline. While, this meme can still be profitable, it brings up an important problem. Meme drought. If memes constantly spike up and down, new quality memes must take their place or a meme drought occurs. Memes without longevity can begin to wear down the meme economy. So, my fellow economists, take risks, but remember to protect reliable sources of growth, a meme that is going strong for a few weeks is fine to start investing, but pushing memes too quick leaves us ALL in an awkward position (remember lego star wars memes?).



SUBREDDIT SMALLTALK

TAKING A LOOK AT THE STAR WARS CIVIL WAR AND THE CONTINUED RISE OF WHOLESOME MEMES.

/u/LuckyCosmos. June 2017.



While many other subreddits have been busy going about their usual lives, a battle was taking place in the stars. R/PrequelMemes, a subreddit devoted for memes featuring scenes from Star Wars episodes I-III, was in a heated meme battle with r/SequelMemes, a subreddit devoted to Star Wars episodes VII-IV. This meme war ended



up drawing in r/AnthologyMemes and r/OTmemes, which are repre-

sentatives of the rest of the Star Wars universe.

Now, I know what you're thinking: war is bad and will irreparably harm meme-kind, and under normal circumstances this would be correct, but meme warfare is actually very beneficial to a savvy trader.

In the real world, a time of war means that production suddenly spikes in industry, which



means that those who own steel mills and other industrial goods suddenly find themselves a nice profit. During a meme war however, both sides are quickly creating so much original content, that the subreddits and even older memes from them start to rise in popularity as well. This was definitely one of those cases, as people on both sides of the conflict show the upmost respect for the efforts of their enemies Original Content. Long, logistical story short: when subreddits fight, smart traders win, as long as they are able to identify key things to invest in.

As of this writing, the meme war has ended in a stalemate. Both main contenders have agreed to an armistice, and a discord group was made for all the subreddits involved in the fighting to come together and get along. This is some unexpected phenomena, and the impact it will have on the production of memes and original content from all sources remains to be seen. Regardless, many view this peaceful resolution

as something wholesome, which brings us to the next part of this column: Wholesome Memes.

r/WholesomeMemes, a place that is the antithesis to “everything on the internet is dark, scary, and hateful.” Since January, Wholesome Memes have been growing in subscribers, influence around the net, and just overall good vibes. WholesomeMemes on Reddit is a large, connected family of subreddits whose entire shtick is to create and post memes that have a good feeling

or punchline to them. The common misconception is, however, that WholesomeMemes are just for kids or are too PG and Disney-like, but only the most foolish trader would believe that.

R/WholesomeMemes is a way of life, a worldview that things can actually be sunny and bright, even when the skies around you are cloudy. It's about having joy in a moment and wanting to share it online in hopes of helping someone else have that same moment of joy, and that can be done through some very dank memes. Yes, you read that right, DankMemes is not the opposite of WholesomeMemes, and there are multitudes of WholesomeMemes that are Dank, alternative, deep fried, and even obscure. If you have ever been wondering if there's more to life than Edgy or Depression memes, or maybe you just want to explore another world view and a community that will always accept you, I'd consider giving WholesomeMemes a try. I'd also highly suggest investing in their stock figures, as they are very likely to shoot up in value in the coming months.

Sending virtual hug...



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In/Lucky Cosmos

My dear explorer, if you are still in possession of the Meme Compass and map from last chapter, and you feel confident in your ability to discern some memes and their intent, then it is time for a quick expedition. If you were to look at the Internet and cyberspace as a map of the world, then the three places we are going to quickly visit today would be continents, though this guide will not be trying to bridge real-world connection to these places. The sites we are going to briefly trek through are Reddit, Tumblr, and those brave enough to go with the advanced group will take a pit stop in 4Chan. These websites were chosen on a inclining scale of “easy to get through and understand” to “dangerous to surf alone” and as such it is strongly recommended that you start slow with browsing, primarily do it through external links from other websites, and then slowly work your way around once comfortable.

Reddit

The first site we're going to be covering and heading into is Reddit, a site we've talked about before and the

birthplace of this magazine. Despite that, this journal entry will be very subjective and focus on information over potential bias. Reddit as a site is at the safest end of the spectrum, it is relatively easy for a new person to figure out the features, and it has the lowest chance of stumbling upon something unsettling. You will find many different tabs and subreddits (groups that have a specific function) that seem rather redundant, and there can be a lot of information to process at once, but if you were to start your meme analysis, here is where you would do it. The front page is a amalgamation of top posts from various subreddits, meaning that if a particular headline jumps out at you, say news about the newest Basketball trade, then the subreddit where that post came from is likely to interest you as well. This is what makes it very fast and easy to find “your group of people,” which on one hand can be nice and safe, but on the other is no different from a site like ESPN or sportscenter blogs. There are plenty of subreddits devoted to different types of memes, and if you were to directly search the terms on your meme compass and

map, you will find hundreds of thousands of people who will post dank memes, wholesome memes, and all others in between. It is here that your meme exploration truly begins, as even though a subreddit is named “dank memes” or “wholesome memes” doesn’t mean you will see only those types of memes there, and it’s a good start to practicing your identification while building up your tolerance to more... interesting, memes.

Tumblr

The next place on this quick expedition around three sites is Tumblr. Tumblr has a certain reputation attached to it as a result of its community bond. Tumblr as a site can be very safe or dangerous to travel depending on each individual person's viewpoints. Think of Tumblr as if it was just a VERY patriotic group of people who stand fast to defend and talk about their ideals and have a sense of pride in their community. The biggest demographic of Tumblr is female (although there are many on there who tend to follow a non-binary definition of their self) and

the main factions are split into different “fandoms,” meaning groups who are very into certain parts of pop culture, an example would be the Harry Potter fandom which has read every book, knows the supplemental history of background characters, and reads into slight details found in the movies for inconsistencies (like Daniel Radcliffe not sharing the eye color of his on-screen mother despite it being said by Snape). However, Tumblr doesn’t only dabble in these specialized groups that are about pop culture or rising up for equality, but it features an extensive pornographic segment too, which is blended in through user notes. What this means is that if you see a post that you like by a user and do the reddit thing of checking out more from the source of the post, you are more likely to stumble upon explicit and Not Safe For Work material than you would be on Reddit. This is mostly because part of Tumblr’s core ideology is “free expression of your inner self” which is also why Tumblr was a big proponent of Net Neutrality the first time it was brought up. Recently, however, the site was fully acquired by Verizon during

their purchase of Yahoo, which leaves a good amount of the content and former practices up in the air. Expect Tumblr to actually go through some changes, this is a meme climate that can be changing before our very eyes, quite exciting indeed!

A quick note

In this break, it is important to go over previous concepts and get the self-described “advanced” section up to speed and ready for the final stop. We’ve spent three chapters now going over different types of memes, the concepts and emotion behind them, and even briefly went over two sites where the majority of memes are able to be seen in an orderly fashion. However, this does not quite do the Internet’s history justice. It was not always a orderly landscape of websites that are both helpful in giving news and information as well as finding people that are excited about the same topic as yourself. The aforementioned sites are well-oiled machines that have had years of feedback and testing put into how they (sometimes) work, for no site is completely bug free or perfect. This next

site, however, has thrown caution to the wind and not changed much since its inception. It is both the epitome of why people were very against the internet and sharing information online, and also a big example of just how connected we can be when brought together. There is a lot of stigma over this site, but a good field journal is used to inform about all, and so, we march onward to 4Chan. This guide is not in the business of judging websites based on anything in the past or present, but is meant as a tool for future use in your internet travels.

4Chan

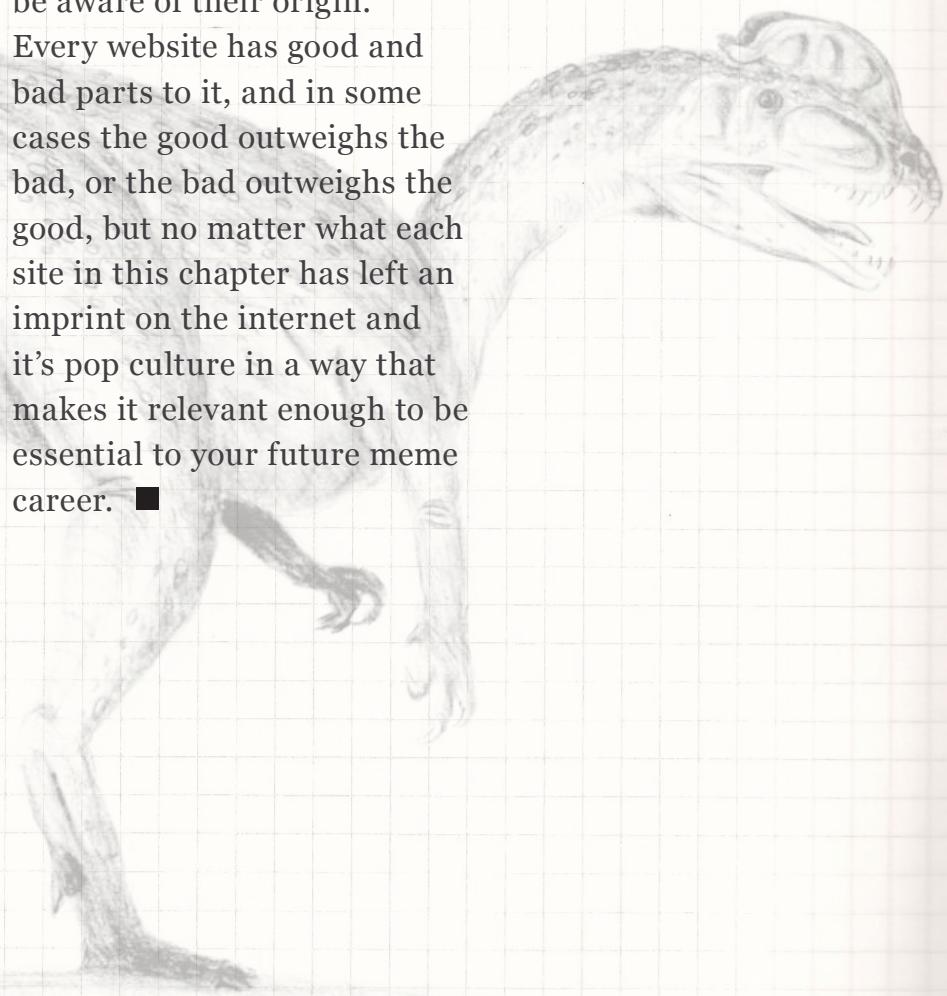
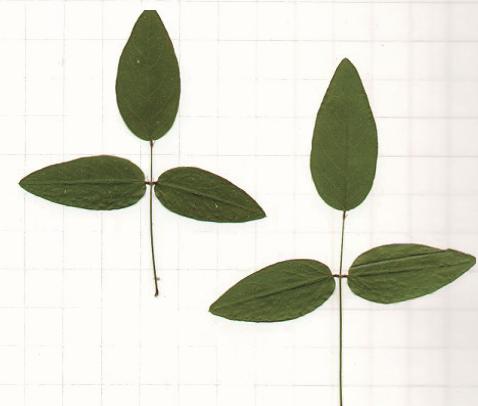
4Chan is a site that is classified as an image board. What this means is that the primary function of the site is to post a picture and then have accompanying text with it. All posts on it are done anonymously, which means that you can post a picture of your dog and no one will know its you, your dog, or anything unless you tell them or there is something in the picture they can identify. As often is the case, you never truly know who also goes on the site, and there have

been numerous examples of seemingly innocent pictures taken (most recently of Shia La Beouf setting up a live stream staring at a flag up in the air outside) and someone being able to recognize the location because they live there or nearby. There are various boards on 4Chan in which the posts are safe for work and innocent, as in /v/ (Videogame), or /sci/ for Science and Mathematics discussion. However, for every Board that is innocent and completely appropriate for work, there are those that aren't. A quick glance at the board list should tell you right away which ones to avoid unless you are feeling adventurous and want to see what one of the most notorious sites in the meme world has to offer. Now you may be wondering, "why is this site even being discussed?"

"Every website has good and bad parts to it"

I heard some news stories about people on this site being hateful and attacking other people" and you would be correct to an extent. This site has been the central force in many things that people would say is "wrong"

with the internet, but there have been some stories out of it that have been good as well, such as when a faction of the users anonymously sent letters and donated to people who were diagnosed with terminal illnesses. With that said, 4Chan is also the central location where many of the memes that are floating around started out, and it would be an incredible disservice to you if it was not discussed as anyone who wants to have a working knowledge of memes needs to be aware of their origin. Every website has good and bad parts to it, and in some cases the good outweighs the bad, or the bad outweighs the good, but no matter what each site in this chapter has left an imprint on the internet and it's pop culture in a way that makes it relevant enough to be essential to your future meme career. ■





Behind the Meme (BTM), a YouTube channel with over half a million subscribers that explains the origins of memes, seems to have lit a fire under the asses of those who consider themselves professional meme connoisseurs. Though their reasons vary, their desire is the same: to see Behind The Meme gone. A few months ago, a scheme was concocted to take down the YouTube juggernaut, coming from the great mind of the hacker 4chan himself. Zenzi, a decoy meme, was meant to confuse and discredit BTM. People brigaded the comments of BTM, flooding them with an overwhelming amount of requests to cover Zenzi. It was not 4chan's finest work, however.

They were found out, and Behind The Meme responded in his video, "...Some people like to act elitists when it comes to memes. They hate channels like mine for explaining memes...Some of them like to feel that memes belong to them or their community. Because my channel has...a decent amount of subscribers, when I explain a meme, I expose it to what they call 'normies'. [Normies are] just people who need help understanding something...What I do here is to help people." He goes on to say that memes should be accessible to everyone, no

matter who they are, or what they look like.

Near the end of the video, he remarks, "All those who hate on my channel should be happy it's me. I've been a part of your communities and forums for years. I am one of you."

Whether or not Behind The Meme is a meme OG, he still isn't doing any favors for anyone, normie or otherwise. Despite what most think, this isn't just because he is exposing memes to those ignorant of them. It's also the way he explains them that is damaging.

How the channel's existence hurts memes:

Though the notion that normie involvement always is detrimental to memes is doubtful, it is understandable that people are upset that BTM is sharing niche memes to a wider audience. What was once an inside joke is now subject to the criticism, misuse, and distortion of people who don't really get it. Meme creators aren't the only ones who suffer, though. Once you factor

in the existence of the meme economy, you could say that BTM is messing with one of the greatest discoveries in meme history, and the success of people who monitor and trade in memes. Though BTM found it preposterous, the memes actually do belong to them in this case.

The idea that the existence of BTM's channel harms people is highly subjective, as you can argue that the spreading of knowledge is more important than a sense of ownership or a stupid internet game, but the idea that the content housed within it is harmful is less so. His videos are bland and repetitive, but more importantly, outdated and inaccurate.

How the channel's content hurts memes:

On the off chance they would want to voluntarily, when one enters the BTM YouTube channel the first thing one sees is his trailer video describing the purpose of the channel. He specifically endears himself to a normie audience, saying "Do you sometimes feel left out when you see others using a term you've never heard before?" with a helpful cat meme captioned accordingly. He promises to fix their ignorance, and cements his position as an educator. But if BTM is truly a meme scholar, he deserves an F.

EmpLemon, a YouTube Poop veteran, said as much in his half hour video, "MEME Theory: How Behind The Meme is Ruining the Memescape as we Know It". He covers normies, the BTM vs Anthony Fantano beef, and most importantly, the reasons BTM gets so much hate. Some of his conjecture on the difference between normies and "outsiders" is straight from high school movie nerd/jock archetypes, but he makes valid points.

"Six-and-a-half minutes," he gripes. "Four

minutes of which were actually spent discussing YouTube Poop. And through all of it, he didn't actually explain anything. If anything, he actually made people more ignorant to what YTP actually is. All he did was read some definitions...off of an outdated webpage...He mentions nothing about different styles and methodologies... [and] the incredible evolution of the medium over the past decade."

This is not limited to the YouTube Poop video. His other videos do the same thing. For example, the video on "Triggered". He steals most of the video off Know Your Meme (this time without even acknowledging where the information came from) and it's painfully obvious how much he's trying to pad the runtime by repeating himself over and over again. He couldn't even be original with the visuals, which consist of tired reaction gifs and images, and occasionally a relevant image. The only thing that's actually his is the thumbnail, which is also lazy and uninspired. It's this laziness that is the concern for anyone intending to learn something from Know Your Meme's videos, because he really doesn't care. He isn't willing to go the extra mile for the thumbnail, much less his research.

Let's go back to the question I asked in the title. Is Behind the Meme a hero or a villain? To his adoring fans, he's seen as a valiant champion who ignores the haters and bravely churns out the best explanations he can. To those who are more experienced, it's clear he labels all criticism he gets as hate, even if it could be genuinely helpful, and continues making mediocre videos in favor of putting in effort to educate his predominately normie fanbase. He is not the hero anybody needs or deserves. But is he a villain? Probably not.

The initial question:

EmpLemon admitted this and clarified that he didn't hate BTM, continuing, "I just hate this idea that what he's doing is perfectly okay and we have some sort of obligation to make sure no normie gets left behind... However, I don't view him as someone with malicious intent. Rather, I view him as someone who misunderstands their role in the memescape. I'm not opposed either to the idea of normies learning about memes. I just think you have to...actually do a good job of explaining [them]. I think it's better to...bring normies up to our level rather than

sinking to theirs."

Behind the Meme is not the best meme explaining channel on YouTube. His content cannot stand up next to channels like thatistheplan and Internet Historian. He's proven himself time and time again to be an unreliable source and that's bad news for anyone involved with memes. If he wants to be taken seriously, he needs to step up his game and increase his effort. And even if he became the Casey Neistat of meme explaining, he'd still forever pay for his former content.

But hey, that's the Internet for you. And on the Internet, garbage content thrives.

