

Smartphones/Flip Phones/Filters? Kosher Tech

Posted by adam2014 - 29 Aug 2024 11:03

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I hope that this is the right place for this. I was thinking that it might be good to have a place to discuss Kosher Tech and how we all balance tech in our own lives. We live in a hyper-connected world, and the challenges and pitfalls of tech are significant.

What kind of phones do you use? Who do you use for filters? Are you using a smartphone? Do you have a computer at home? What is the best Flip Phone? What about smartwatches? Anything tech-related can be discussed.

I personally struggle with tech, as I work in IT and am around unfiltered devices all day. I would love to hear what everyone is doing in regards to tech.

Thanks

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Re: Smartphones/Flip Phones/Filters? Kosher Tech

Posted by yiftach - 29 Aug 2024 12:22

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Hey Adam!

You're always an inspiration. Your desire for ultimate purity is enviable!

Personally, I use techlog for my laptops. I have whitelisted whatever I need and they're fairly good at opening pages when I request it.

I do not use a smartphone for day to day use. I have a fig flip phone. But I do have a "safe telecom" smartphone (which is a Google pixel phone with no access to browser whatsoever) which I keep at home. They have their own app store with all (?) apps that are needed for day to day life.

Balancing tech in this day and age is complicated. On the one hand, I'm the guy that still has to search his pockets to find the right CC when paying, while the guy next to me just takes out his smartphone and taps it. But on the other hand, the farther I manage to stay from technology, the less temptation and accessibility I have to slip.

Wishing you all the bestest of the best!

- Yiftach'I

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Re: Smartphones/Flip Phones/Filters? Kosher Tech  
Posted by adam2014 - 29 Aug 2024 13:32

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When you say that "They are family good at opening pages when I request it"... Do you mean that you have to call someone and they decide whether or not it is acceptable ?

So the Fig Flip for daily "out of the home " use and the curated Pixel for things at home? That sounds like a good combination. I don't mind going "old school" and pulling out a Credit Card, but Uber and not having a camera with me and access to emails would be quite a change.. but I think that I could handle it.... The best filter is a phone without access! and that is what I want to strive for

Thanks so much!

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Re: Smartphones/Flip Phones/Filters? Kosher Tech  
Posted by BenHashemBH - 29 Aug 2024 13:42

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Thank you, Adam, this should be really helpful.

I'd like to bring some other discussion points to the table.

Even when our tech is limited or filtered so that access to \_\_\_\_\_ is adequately mitigated, it can still have disastrous effects on our lives.

Even a flip phone can be abused and overused, consuming our time and demanding our attention on a constant basis.

If married with family, our wives and children are affected by it, either by losing us to it, or for kids growing up it is a poor hashbo when they see us obsessively fixated with always having that thing in our hands.

I struggle with this, though I've gotten a bit better. Kid time should be phone-free time. Spouse time should be phone-free time. If you really must, try to take it into a private room to briefly take care of something. Even if you use your phone for positive things, like listening to shiurim, when you are around family it takes you away from being present, and the source is a device - particularly if you have headphones, so it's not perceivable what you are doing. A physical sefer (something light) would be a better way to fill lulls while around family.

It's the balance. What we look like when over-interacting with devices does not necessarily convey whatever positive things we are doing with them (and of course all the more so if the things are not positive).

I didn't really do research for my phone filter. When I decided that I wanted one, I contacted my local TAG office and got MB Smart. I've never tested it, so I don't know how thorough it is, but it has its own browser and if I need any website or app, I contact them to unblock it. It's pretty simple and works for me.

The main reasons I wanted a filter were to set a precedent for my home, to limit my overall phone use, and to limit my access - to shmutz but also to general time-sucking distractions. I'm a baal habus with a secular job and it's not stam (at least where I live) that people like me have

filters, limited access, etc if they aren't of the more 'yehivishe' families. That made it even more important for me to do, so show my family that we don't just go with the flow because of what others are doing. We assess ourselves and live according to the Torah and serve Hashem to the best of our abilities. We do the right things, not the 'normal' things.

?Hatzlacha to all

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Re: Smartphones/Flip Phones/Filters? Kosher Tech  
Posted by chosemyshem - 29 Aug 2024 14:14

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Love this topic.

I think it's important to mention that technology is changing so fast that it's impossible to rely on filtering ideas from even just a couple years ago (anyone saw AI text lines coming a year ago?). When choosing a filtering setup it's important to talk to someone who is up to date on the options (such as your friendly local or non-local TAG office).

My personal setup: Very locked down iphone. No browser, social media (including whatsapp), "endless scrolling" apps, streaming of any sort (besides torahanytime). Basically just email, calendar, needed travel apps (uber and maps), and a couple torah apps (and of course google voice to be in touch with the chevra). My goal is to 1) not be able to access porn or any inappropriate content on my phone and 2) not to be on my phone alot.

Until I got my current job I had a dumbphone for a very long time, then a smartphone that couldn't access the internet (it was cheaper and more convenient than one of these Fig phones or an equivalent). Now I need email access etc. but my phone is locked down as much as possible.

Computers I use Techloq. A partner gets a notification when I request a site to be unblocked. Techloq is responsive, and my setup is pretty tailored to what I need (including blocking "kosher" entertainment sites I waste time on). Is it inconvenient sometimes? Yes, but the time I lose working on straightening it out is way less than the time I lose to porn. My home computer I try to only use facing a public room and that's honestly more helpful than Techloq. I would like to install additional accountability software at some point (Covenant Eyes or Triple) but have not yet.

Any free filter is gonna be garbage. Before I was on GYE I used Qustodio and it was a joke. Endless holes. The frum filters are much better, but no filter is perfect - hence accountability software. Even with that nothing is perfect but my view is the stronger the fence is the easier it is to do the inner work.

I used to have a router level filter but it stopped working. When my kids get to the age where I'm worried about them connecting to the wifi on their own (so like 7) I'll install a new one.

Edit: Forgot to mention. One huge plus of the frum filters is skin filtering. As HHM has said, people forget that lo sasuru applies to gazing at any woman, not just porn. The skin filtering on Techloq is 97% great (they can also block all images, no images, or just inappropriate images (which is shockingly accurate).) After I installed that I was shocked retroactively at the images I'd been seeing in news, ads, shopping etc. etc.

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Re: Smartphones/Flip Phones/Filters? Kosher Tech  
Posted by yiftach - 29 Aug 2024 14:24

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[adam2014 wrote on 29 Aug 2024 13:32:](#)

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Thanks so much!

No, you don't have to call them. The page gets automatically filtered and you could request access with a code. I used to know my code, but that did me no good. Now, my wife knows it and opens up the sites for me.

The safe telecom device has all those apps (Uber and all travel apps etc. they even have Google wallet but doesn't work on my device). But no browser (I think they have a kosherized WhatsApp. No profile pics or status). I use it when I need it. But normally manage with just the fig phone.

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Re: Smartphones/Flip Phones/Filters? Kosher Tech  
Posted by chosemyshem - 29 Aug 2024 15:12

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[adam2014 wrote on 29 Aug 2024 13:32:](#)

When you say that "They are family good at opening pages when I request it"... Do you mean that you have to call someone and they decide whether or not it is acceptable ?

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Thanks so much!

I know a **lot** of guys who use a kosher flip phone and a filtered tablet. That way they leave the tablet in the car or in a different room so it's not on them all the time, but it's still portable enough that they can take it wherever they need.

To be clear on the techloq unblock process. If a page is blocked you enter a code and it's either automatically unblocked or manually reviewed and unblocked (probably depending on the categorization of the page). The manual review is only a couple of minutes. If the review blocks something you need, you can email or call them and they'll unblock it (assuming it's not like,

actual porn) and that is also pretty quick.

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Re: Smartphones/Flip Phones/Filters? Kosher Tech  
Posted by chaimoigen - 29 Aug 2024 19:30

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Just putting this out there because it's a bit hard to find a router filter these days.

There's a product called Firewalla that is terrific. It comes in different levels and prices. To set it up, you may need someone with decent tech knowledge

It's an amazing product and it's amazingly flexible - allows different rules for every device in your home. It also filters out all ads on all your devices. And you can see pretty much **everything** that's happening....

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Re: Smartphones/Flip Phones/Filters? Kosher Tech  
Posted by tzaddikvikam13 - 29 Aug 2024 22:40

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I personally struggle with tech, as I work in IT and am around unfiltered devices all day.

I'm pretty techy, although not mamash IT, and I was once thinking about making a small business setting up computers for the first time, and then I realized that if I'm working with brand new computers that = no filter.

So I didn't do it.

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Re: Smartphones/Flip Phones/Filters? Kosher Tech

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Posted by tzaddikvikam13 - 29 Aug 2024 23:06

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I don't mind going "old school" and pulling out a Credit Card, but Uber and not having a camera with me and access to emails would be quite a change..

What about the kosher Qin?

Has a great camera, email and Uber.

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Re: Smartphones/Flip Phones/Filters? Kosher Tech

Posted by tzaddikvikam13 - 30 Aug 2024 04:18

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I think it was actually designed to help people transition from smartphone to dumbphone.

(In reality, it helps bochurim transition from dumbphone to smartphone.)

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Re: Smartphones/Flip Phones/Filters? Kosher Tech

Posted by adam2014 - 30 Aug 2024 10:20

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I never heard of it, but I will indeed look it up. I would like to support a Jewish company, and the Fig Phone seems to be popular (but expensive). Thanks

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Re: Smartphones/Flip Phones/Filters? Kosher Tech

Posted by adam2014 - 30 Aug 2024 10:33

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I like having the computer in the main room of the house. That would help a lot. My work-issued laptop, which I never act out with, is monitored by work, and boy, would that be embarrassing!  
LOL



That leaves only my iPhone and personal laptop that need to go or need filtering. I know that FREE filters are easy to break, but a free app called Cold Turkey has helped me quite a bit. You put blocks on specific categories and then assign them a time to be blocked. It is mainly made to block out everything for a few hours while you work, but you can extend the block for two weeks. I refreshed the two-week limit when notified that the two-week block had ended.

I like being notified that I finished a Two-Week Block. It is like a little reward for staying away for those two weeks. There is a work-around that you can do (I won't mention it in case someone wants to try it), but it takes about 10 minutes to do, and in many cases, the urge passes, and I am OK.

It puts up enough friction to give me a little time to regroup.

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Re: Smartphones/Flip Phones/Filters? Kosher Tech  
Posted by frank.lee - 30 Aug 2024 14:02

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I have been using Techloq for all my devices for years. Even for work, they are great. But you need to have it set up right. It does not hamper my work.

Great points here about not being in devices when around family.

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Re: Smartphones/Flip Phones/Filters? Kosher Tech  
Posted by tzaddikvikam13 - 30 Aug 2024 17:21

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Btw, its possible to use Uber without the app. About a year ago Uber came out with a service that allows you to order a ride through an operator by calling 833-USE-UBER (833-873-8237).

There's a frum company that has an automated system that lets you order an Uber or Lyft by calling or texting their system. It's called Tremp. 732-479-7080. (They charge a percentage of

what Uber or Lyft charges you.)

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