

 SI 429 RABBITS

r/charlxcx

OLIVIA, 





AGENDA

1. Introduction

2. Related Work

3. Methods

4. Results

- *General Observations*
- *Newcomers Seeking Advice*
- *Nostalgia Factor*
- *Defensive Nature of Older Fans*

5. Conclusion





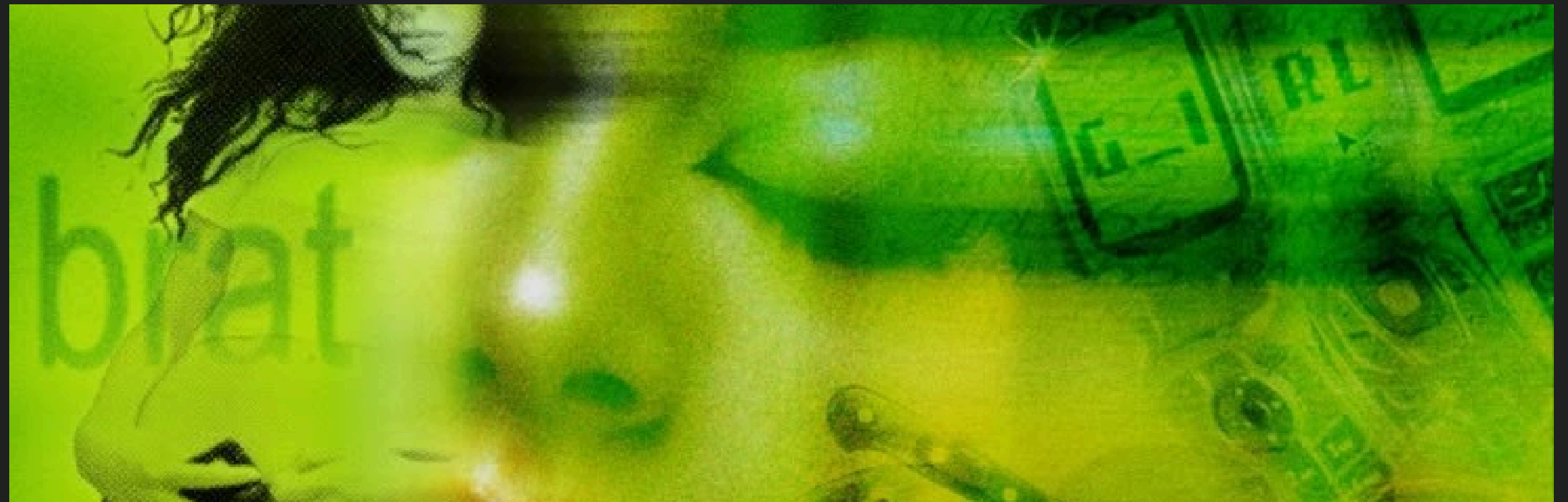
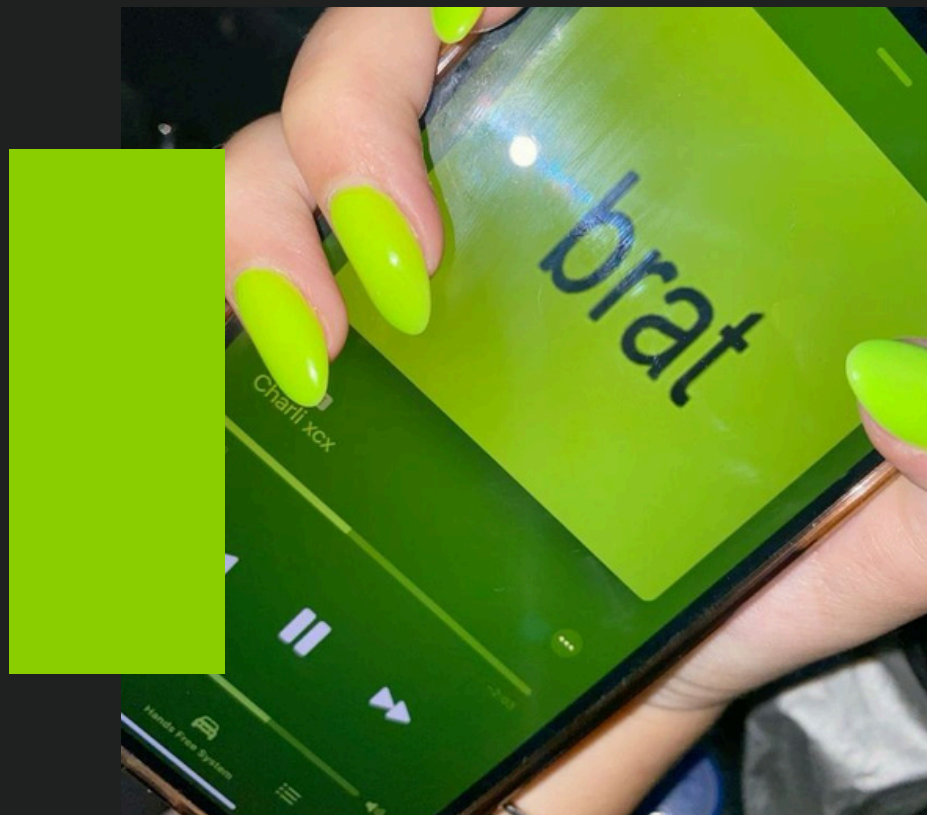
INTRODUCTION

Fan communities have thrived online ever since the Internet first saw mainstream use. Over the years “music stan” communities have become more and more popular. One place these communities convene is subreddits. Charli XCX’s recent spike in popularity combined with her long time prevalence in the pop scene make for a wide range of fans. r/charlixcx is a subreddit created in 2013 that still sees activity from new and old fans today.



OUR RESEARCH QUESTION

How do power imbalances between older and newer members of r/charlixcx impact the community experience?





RELATED WORK

“Chapter 6: Starting New Online Communities” (Kraut & Resnick, 2012)

- Displays of membership / indicators of status reward long-standing members and encourage new members to join and aspire to reach these levels of fanship
- Ex: Markers such as “Fan Since 2012” or “Key Contributor” which are visible to other community members

Applying Common Identity and Bond Theory to Design of Online Communities” (Ren et al., 2007)

- Newcomers can be a “problem” for online communities, asking questions and making comments that older members have grown tired of
- Steps may be taken to “socialize” newcomers
- Ex: Displaying frequently asked questions, outlining rules / norms





RELATED WORK

“More gay’ fits in better: Intracommunity Power Dynamics and Harms in Online LGBTQ+ Spaces” (Walker & Devito, 2020)

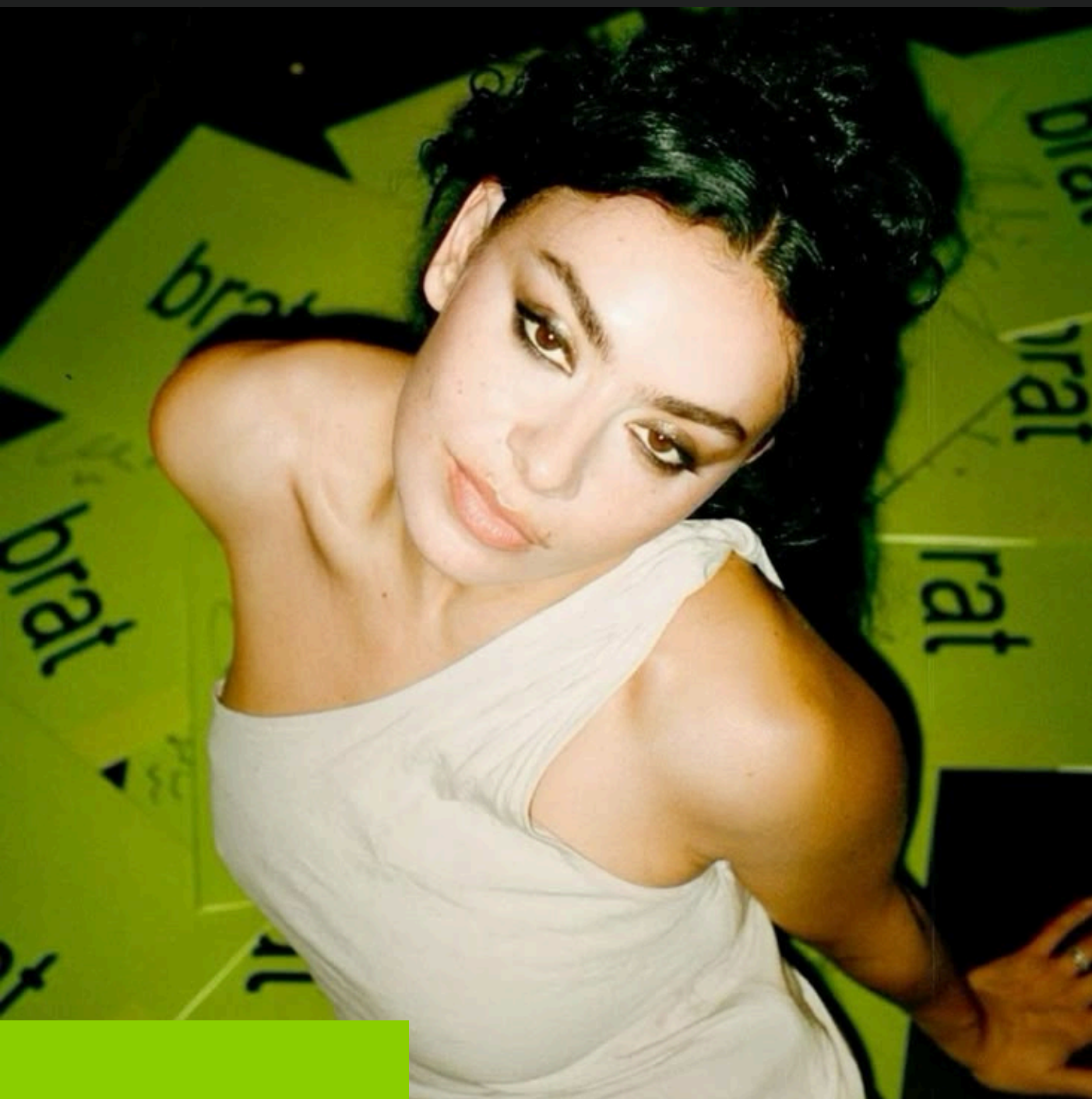
- Intra-community conflicts arose between bi+ individuals and LGBTQ+ community members who subscribed to more heteronormative ideals
- Important to consider issues such as power dynamics and silencing of certain member groups

RELATED COMMUNITY

“Stan Twitter”

- Paved the way for online fan communities
- Experienced fans remarked upon as leaders who guide newer members of a fandom to become acquainted with behavioral norms of their community (Hacker, 2023).





METHODS

Range of processes

To allow for a comprehensive analysis, we each:

- Spanned our research across **different times of the day**
- Had **various focuses**, ex: one member focused on posts discussing nostalgia and Charli XCX's older work, while another member scrolled chronologically from most recent to least

Ethics

- Privacy for community users by anonymizing data included in the report, and stating our purpose in our bios
- Chose not to engage directly with users to avoid influencing data

Challenges

- Fast-paced flow of information that occurs during online discourse, mitigated through consistently revisiting posts over time
- No straightforward indicator of whether someone is an old or new fan, we had to identify them ourselves using other cues

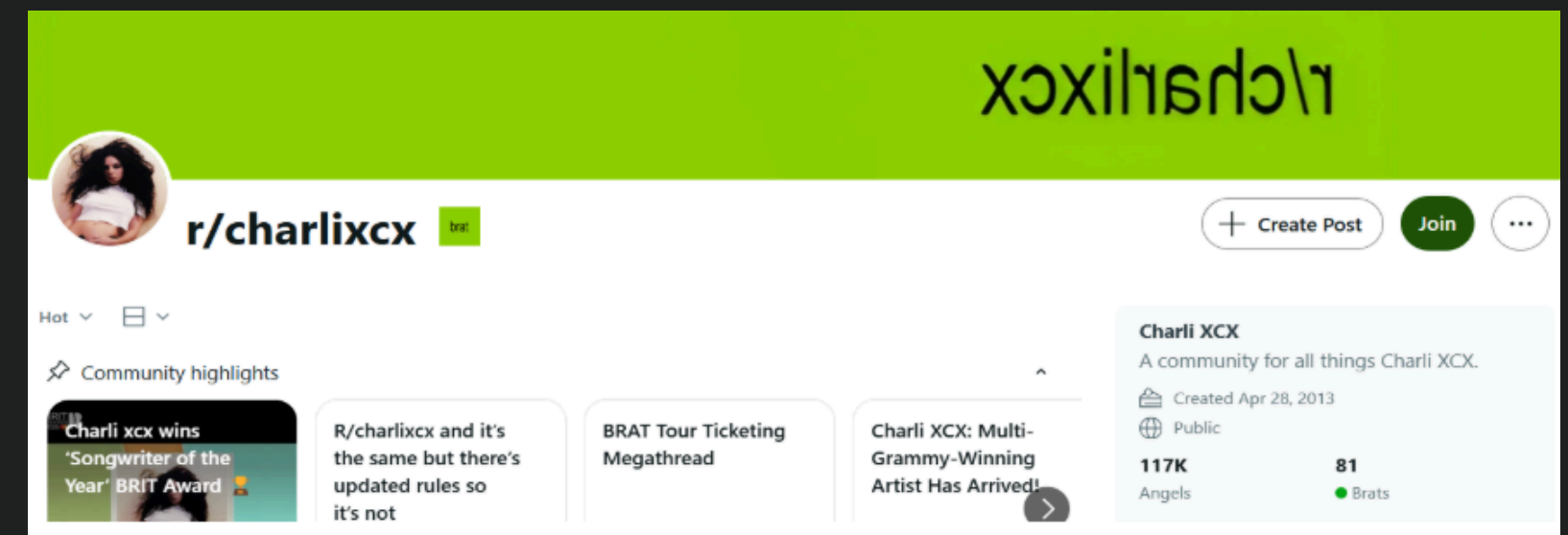


RESULTS

General Observations using Amy Jo Kim's "Nine Principles for Community Design"

- Purpose - Charli XCX fan community
- Gathering Places - Main feed
- Profile Evolution - User flairs
- Leadership - Moderators
- Code of Conduct - Rules on side bar
- Cyclical Events - Anniversaries
- Range of Roles - Moderators vs general members
- Subgroups - N/A
- Integration with the Real World - Personal discussions (ex: people getting Charli merch)

Overall, we found that the subreddit incorporated all of these (except subgroups as it is already a subgroup of Reddit itself)



The clearest principle was Purpose, demonstrated in the homepage.



RESULTS

Newcomers Seeking Advice

- Newer r/charlixcx users frequently sought out advice/recommendations from veteran members
- This contributes to the power structure within the community → veteran fans as beacons of knowledge

Newcomers' comfortability seeking advice

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Veterans' willingness to provide guidance

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Positive impact on the r/charlixcx community experience



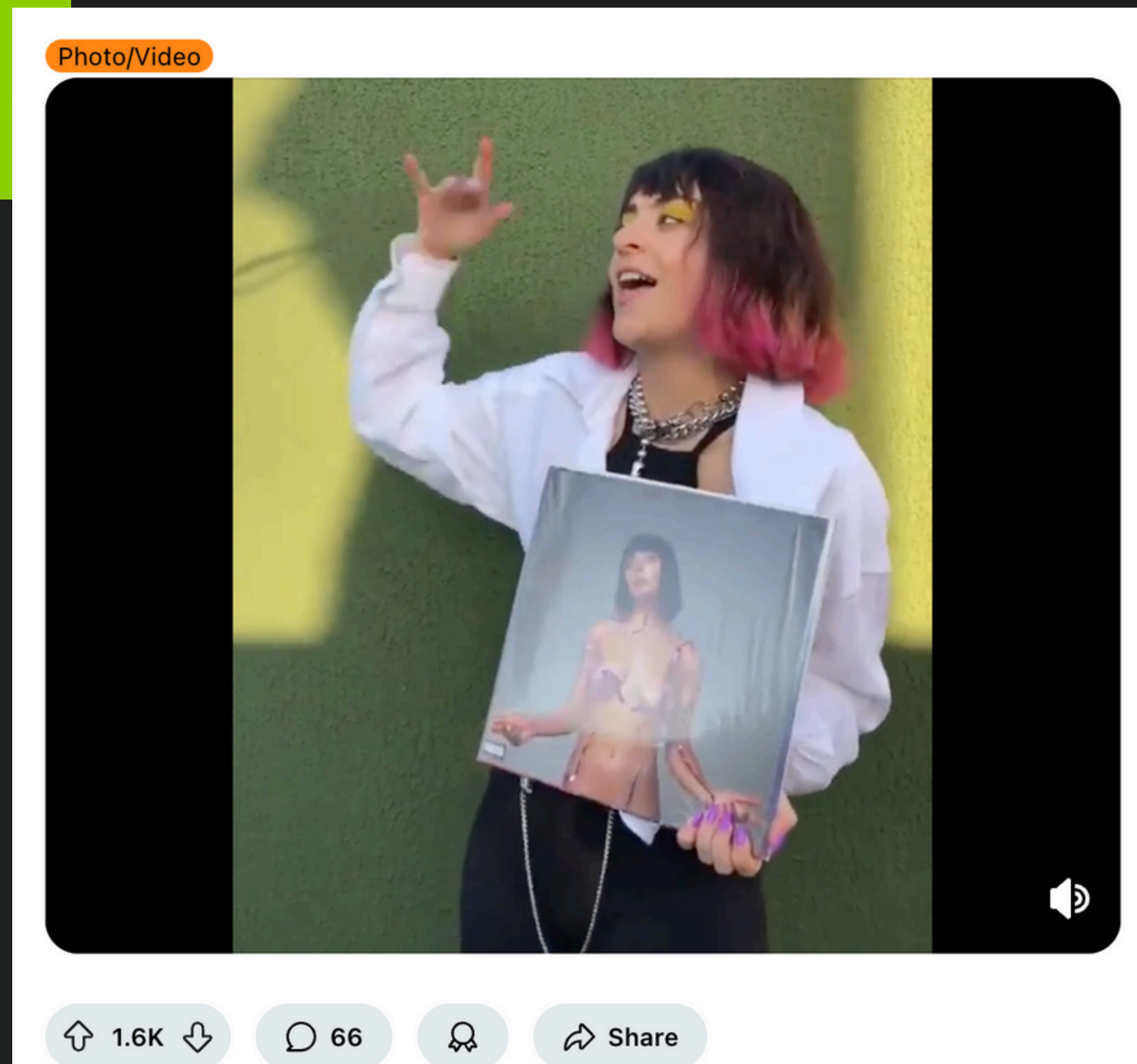
A new fan asks for songs similar to one they enjoy, and other members provide their recommendations.



RESULTS

Nostalgia Factor

- The dynamic between new and old Charli XCX fans highlights how nostalgia can both connect and divide a fandom.
- The phrase "You just had to be there" is commonly used by older fans to reinforce their connection to past moments in Charli XCX's career.
- Nostalgia strengthens bonds among older fans but also provides new fans with valuable historical context about Charli's work.
- Long-time fans often educate newer fans by sharing inside stories and historical knowledge, fostering trust and shared excitement.



A throwback post to one of Charli's pre "Brat" albums.

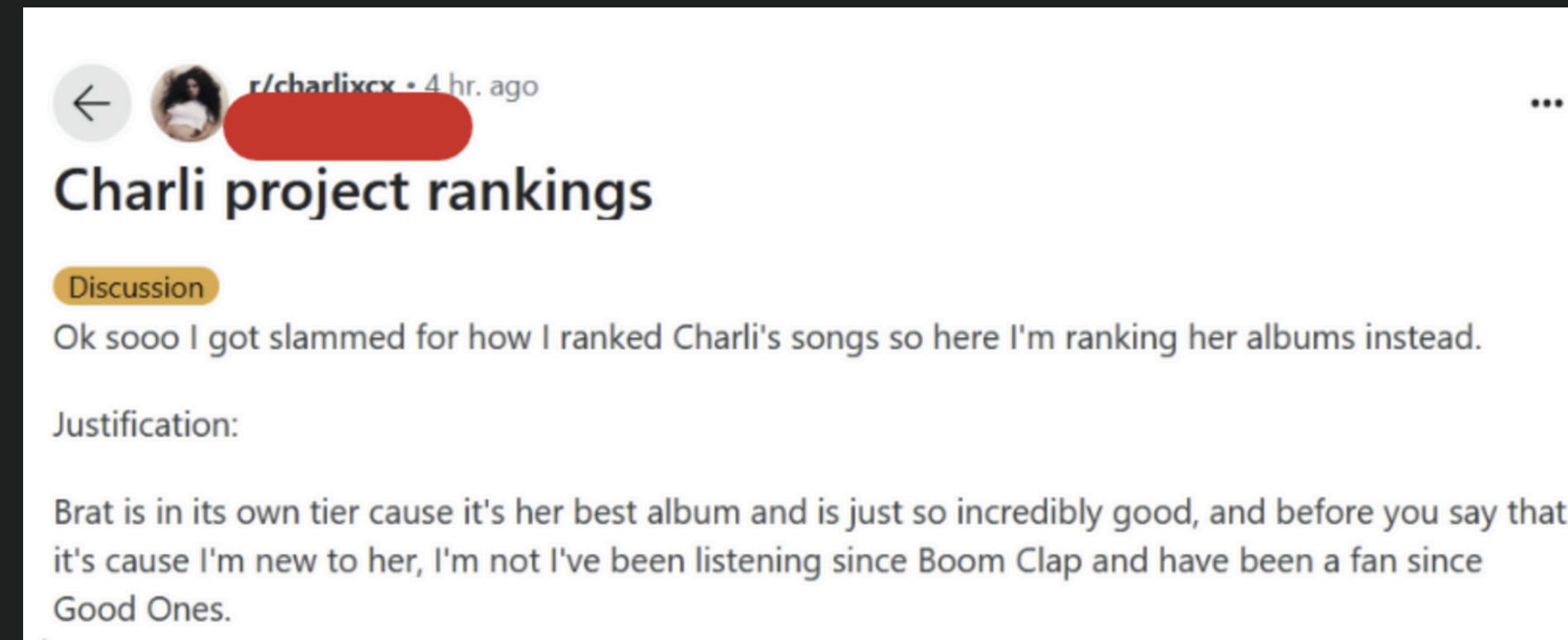


RESULTS

Defensive Nature and Superiority Complex of Older Fans

- Fans believe exclusivity and proof of being a long-term fan add to user's perceived social capital in the community
- Older fans stereotype newer fans as only liking Brat: now old & new fans feel the need to defend themselves if Brat is their favorite
- Some gatekeep music from newer fans to preserve their attachments because they think new fans will "cheapen" the music if found

How can music discussion boards be more inclusive and welcome for new and old users alike?



*A user prefaces their ranking of Charli XCX's album with a defensive disclaimer to **avoid** backlash and **assert** their seniority.*





CONCLUSION

- Reddit serves as a valuable platform for fandoms, fostering discussion and community-building in a structured yet open environment.
- A key limitation observed in the study was fluctuating activity levels, with engagement peaking around major events.
- The r/charlixcx subreddit exemplifies how online fan spaces help maintain a core identity while adapting to an artist's growing popularity.
- A potential solution to ease tensions is a "Charli XCX history" megathread in the subreddit's community highlights section, offering key historical context and reducing knowledge gaps.
- This megathread would alleviate pressure on veteran fans to educate newcomers and help new fans engage in informed discussions.
- Future research should explore the best ways to facilitate positive music discussions between veteran and new fans despite differences in knowledge and experience.
- Maintaining an inclusive and engaging subreddit will help the Charli XCX fandom continue evolving alongside the artist's rising popularity, demonstrating the broader importance of online fan communities.





THANK YOU!





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