Libraries Leading the New Normal

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When will life return to normal? COVID experts consider what summer, fall might look like

Mass vaccinations this summer could give way to a 'new normal' by fall.
Old Normal

- Wealth, health, education gap in communities of color
- Digitally disconnected communities in rural and urban settings
- Increasing partisanship and xenophobia
- Rise in disinformation and social anxiety
- Attacks on science and sustainability
Failures of the Knowledge Infrastructure

• To be clear these problems are rooted in racism, classism, and economic disparities and we must tackle these as a society, but…

• We are key parts of the knowledge infrastructure of this country - and it is failing
The Knowledge Infrastructure

• Sources: Information and data storehouses

• People: Citizens, students, experts, neighbors that seek to make meaning

• Technologies: (Digital) tools used to produce, remix, access, distribute, and hold information and data

• Policies: The rules that define what is allowed from what is possible
The Knowledge Infrastructure

Sources + People + Technologies + Policy = Worldview
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- Increased digitization pushing toward Dataism
- False Sense of Transparency
The Knowledge Infrastructure

Sources + People + Technologies + Policy = Worldview

• Death of credibility by authority
  • Long live reliability
• The truth behind trust and neutrality
• Artificial divide between consumer and producer
• The death of expertise
The Knowledge Infrastructure

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Sources + People + Technology

The Librarian War Against QAnon
As “Do the research” becomes a rallying cry for conspiracy theorists, classical information literacy is not enough.

Barbara Pister February 18, 2021

RECOMMENDED READING
Secure Your VPN with MFA from Duo
You Probably Don't
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- The vital need for diversity: the richest learning comes from the richest sources
- Rabbit holes and QAnon - a problem of our own making?
- Reduction of scientific voices in public health (from local to national)
- The vital need for compassion (not empathy)
- We have now seen the every day lockdowns of too many of us

Worldview = Sources + People + Technologies + Policy
The Knowledge Infrastructure

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• Data of the Producers of the World Rise Up!

• It is Time for Self Sovereign Systems

• Ethical AI

• Accountability | Value Alignment | Explainability | Fairness | User Data Rights

The Knowledge Infrastructure

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- It is time for universal broadband
- Revitalizing the public good
  - Copyright reform/rethinking
- Future of the Big Deal? MIT Libraries and PLOS agreement
The Knowledge Infrastructure

Sources + People + Technologies + Policy = Worldview

- The vital role of librarians and the libraries they manage in democracy
- Importance of the local
  - Leading difficult conversations
- Creating community-wide strategic plans
  - Taking on democracy explicitly
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Sources + People + Technologies + Policy

GOAL 1

Help create a strong and resilient economy.

Outcomes:
• Community leaders view us as a vital part of what makes our community more livable and attractive to business and economic development.
• Artists, designers and makers have access to the tools, resources and knowledge needed to turn their talents and passions into business opportunities.

GOAL 2

Strengthen community cohesion.

Outcomes:
• Residents have access to safe spaces and trusted, competent facilitators that encourage courageous conversations.
• We support problem-solving at the local level, empowering residents with the knowledge and skills they need to advocate for themselves and fully participate in democracy.
• We are a part of what attracts, grows and retains talent in Columbia and Richland County, building partnerships with welcoming, vibrant community groups.

GOAL 3

Transform educational outcomes for youth.

Outcomes:
• Beginning and struggling readers and their caregivers gain valuable support, knowledge and inspiration from the resources and expertise on our team.
• We support teens, helping them build confidence and skills as they achieve their personal, professional and educational goals.

GOAL 4

Increase equity, inclusion and opportunity.

Outcomes:
• Regardless of a person's circumstance, neighborhood or background, the library is an accessible and supportive community anchor.
• We are part of an ecosystem of service providers and advocates for marginalized and underserved communities, eliminating barriers and strengthening support for those who need us most.
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The “New Normal” Agenda for Librarianship

- Universal Broadband & Digital Equity
- Workforce Development and Training
- Expanding Voter Access to Democratic Participation
- Ensure the Health and Well Being of Our Communities
- Essential Crisis Response Capacity
It is Up to Us

• We must be weavers of communities and mighty platforms for the stories of our members

• We must be the vital social infrastructure that engenders trust through principles and transparency, not through the illusion of neutrality

• We must repair the knowledge infrastructure of the country and through it, the country itself
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