Stop the world, I want to get off!

I am going to preface this month's Spotlight by saying, it has been a very strange beginning to 2018—you've been warned.

Recently, I ran across a term that I hadn't seen before: TEOTWAWKI. At first, I honestly thought it was a reference to some Mesoamerican mythical figure. As an alternate possibility, it struck me that it could have been some new type of online role-playing game.

In actuality, it is an acronym for "the end of the world as we know it,"[1] and it seems to mainly be used by survivalists and in episodes of shows like *The Walking Dead.*

As 2018 has progressed and we see more evidence of sweeping changes, this term keeps popping into my head—not in the SkyNet or end-of-days sort of way, but in the everything's-going-to-change sort of way.

This feeling of impending change is reinforced by watching the news (in this case, BBC, because I lost my taste for national networks after the most recent presidential election). There is extensive coverage of drones and missiles, Amazon Go, and refrigerators that track your every purchase and report back, and the hot new services that will collect your DNA (for a fee) and tell you where you came from.[2]

More than where we came from, it all makes me wonder where we are going. Perhaps my trepidation is a little reminiscent of the somewhat paranoid rhetoric that surfaced in libraries when it became apparent how much of a paradigm shift the web was going to be for us. I know that change can be good, but, like so many things, it is the how that makes the most impact.

We have all been through reorganizations, construction, system migrations,

moves, furloughs or library closures. When these situations occur, administrators seem to always say the same thing: "change can be positive." As if it is unreasonable to be anxious about having no control over one's life and no say in the direction that it follows. I would assert that it is easy to be sanguine about change when you are the one controlling it, but much less so when you're a victim of it.

And it does feel like the world is a little out of control—politically, economically, socially, technologically. Enough so that I have noticed that I even am starting to watch those living-off-the-grid home improvement shows.

So what does any of this have to do with libraries? Well, all of the change that is occurring in the world is also happening in and happening to libraries. There are so many changes, competing priorities, different customers and stakeholders, patron needs, new technologies, legislative agendas, and policies.

How do we filter out all the noise and focus on what is important? Or an even better question, how do we decide what actually is important?

Those are questions that need to be contemplated and answered individually —everyone needs to figure them out for themselves.[3] However, in the whirlwind of change that seems to be the new norm for libraries, one of the strategies that has worked for me has been to take a step back and breathe. I look for a voice in the wilderness that speaks to me—an author, practitioner, or scholar who has insight into this environment and can help me reflect on new directions and meaningful ways to engage. It helps bring my professional work into clarity.

So, while everything seems out of control, focus on the good work our peers are doing that may inspire you in your own practice.

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I offer as a potential source of such focus, this month's issue of *College & Research Libraries* and hope that it may offer you encouragement, wisdom, and ideas for furthering your own efforts.

"Analyzing Citation and Research Collaboration Characteristics of Faculty in Aerospace, Civil and Environmental, Electrical and Computer, and Mechanical Engineering" by Li Zhang offers some insights into how engineering faculty use information in their research, including implications for collection management and research assistance. Findings indicate:
- Journals are the most highly cited type of publication, followed by conference papers.
- While engineering faculty cite current scholarly articles, "aged books remain valuable, especially those that are considered fundamental, or are historically significant."
- An examination of the discipline of the cited materials demonstrates transdisciplinary research in some engineering fields (as in Aerospace Engineering), a steadfastness to their own discipline publications in others (like Civil and Environmental Engineering), and even a propensity for citing publications from a single publisher (demonstrated by Computer and Electrical Engineering).

"Survey of Information Literacy Instructional Practices in U.S. Academic Libraries" by Heidi Julien, Melissa Gross, and Don Latham offers a snapshot of information literacy practice in the United States within the "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education." The survey addressed practices, challenges, and opportunities for improvement with these results summarized:
- Less than half reported writing objectives for the library instruction, which the authors assert is a "key step in assessing instructional outcomes and evaluating instructional effectiveness."
- Relatedly, they also reported that assessment and evaluation, as well as marketing of instruction, were "largely informal," which could impact administrative support for instruction efforts.
- Undergraduates appear to be the primary audience for instruction efforts, and the focus of sessions tends to be on using specific sources rather than broader research strategies.

"Should We Yak Back? Information Seeking among Yik Yak Users on a University Campus" by Elizabeth Price examines the role of a popular social media platform for answering library-related questions at one major university. The findings support earlier research about student preferences:
- Authors indicated that students seemed to be more comfortable asking questions of their peers and in an anonymous environment.
- Questions reported appeared to be largely directional with 100% falling into the institution's lowest tier and rarely meeting RUSA's definition of a reference transaction.
- Replying posts, answered by students' peers, were deemed accurate 79% of the time. According to the study authors, this coincides with the law end of the range of accuracy for reference transactions in other studies.

"Vignettes: Implications for LIS Research" by Allison Benedetti, John Jackson, and Lili Luo offers the use of written narratives as a method and strategy for engaging and assessing students on library efforts, including information literacy and library service marketing. Results offer insight into the effectiveness of using vignettes for instruction:
- The execution of a vignette model may be tailored to the content, audience, and goals of the session. In fact, the authors stress the importance of these choices to the success of this effort.
- The use of vignettes or hypothetical scenarios seems to elicit more engagement from students, demonstrated by students expressing empathy for the character and

their propensity to ask questions about their motivation.

• This method does not focus on a "right" answer, so students can focus on a scenario, allowing the assessment of behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions.

"The Emotional Basis of Library Anxiety" by Erin L. McAfee introduces her study with a statement with which many of us can agree: "Few other institutions make us reflect more on our intellectual identity than the academic library." While library anxiety is a concept known to librarians, the author views it through the lens of the "shame effect" and a valuable perspective into how and why libraries can invoke anxiety in their patrons: "A severe shame state, such as library anxiety is a collective experience. Whether it is through avoidance, contribution, reaction, reputation, or denial, the librarian and library are integrated into the emotional experience of the student." She explores its different manifestations from overt shame to attunement to bypassed shame and offers strategies for addressing or mitigating it.

"The World's Approach towards Publishing in Springer and Elsevier's APC-Funded Open Access Journals" by Hajar Sotudeh and Zahra Ghasempour investigates the status of journals with an open access APC option in the repertoire of two leading commercial publishers. Using a bibliographic analysis, the findings indicate:

• Looking at the prevalence of the use of OA-APC: "each university [included in the study] had contributed to 2.18 OA and 43.52 non-OA papers."

• However, "The results showed that ten universities with the smallest scientific output and a total number of papers ranging between 1 and 2 papers had published all their papers in OA format, thus placing themselves among the universities with the largest contribution."

• Results are also provided by country with a comparison demonstrating that "highest number of the OA-APC papers came from the advanced nations," but that underdeveloped nations were exhibiting higher growth in the adoption of OA-APC.

"Rethinking the Subscription Paradigm for Journals: Using Interlibrary Loan in Collection Development for Serials" by Gail Perkins Barton, George E. Relyea, and Steven A. Knowlton provides a timely examination of the journal subscriptions and the predictive value of ILL statistics on usage. The results may be useful for collection management decisions:

• Surprisingly, "there is little correlation between ILL requests for individual titles and their later use as subscribed titles." Although, ILL requests within a specific subject are correlated with use.

• Unsurprisingly, continuing analysis of ILL requests "shows that database search results, not journal titles, dominate," which may indicate the value of aggregator databases over journal subscriptions.

Notes

1. Cue the song by R.E.M.

2. And just what does the fine print say about what they are doing with your DNA information anyway?

3. Except when it is your director who is deciding for you. ✄