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## **Keynote: Library Futurisms: Interoperability, Adaptation, and Resilience**

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# LIBRARY FUTURISMS: INTEROPERABILITY, ADAPTATION, AND RESILIENCE

Scout Calvert

Online Northwest

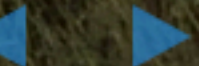
26 March 2021

she/her or hen/hen

calvert4@msu.edu / @windloochie



# PRELIMINARIES





**WHAT COMES NEXT?**



*Our goal is to survive not just as individuals  
but as a society.*



*What is most urgent to keep doing?*

*What can we stop doing?*

*What must we stop doing?*

*What must we resume when it is safe to do so?*



# ZUBOFF: IN THE AGE OF THE SMART MACHINE

1. Technology is not neutral, but embodies intrinsic characteristics that enable new human experiences and foreclose others,
2. within these new “horizons of the possible” individuals and groups construct meaning and make choices, further shaping the situation, and
3. the interplay of intrinsic qualities and human choices is further shaped by social, political, and economic interests that inscribe the situation with their own intended and unintended opportunities and limitations.<sup>7</sup>





## FUTURE MAPPING

"Both in the remembered state and the future-mapping state, the steps to success, the starting point and the successful outcome are all taking place in the mind. Both processes are imaginary in nature with no real-world, tangible elements at all. It is important to recognize this, especially when comparing future-mapping with other, more chronological ways of planning or vision building. Our thought processes can and do operate in any direction, forwards or backwards, often whether we want them to or not." <sup>8</sup>



# FUTURISMS





*Dancing on Mars*  
copyright Joanne Barker  
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## ADRIENNE MAREE BROWN #BLACKHISTORYMONTH

write an alternate present (story, poem, song, letter) in which enslaved African people/ descendents were actually given 40 acres and a mule in 1865 (which abolitionists pressed general sherman into committing in a wartime order, but lincoln successor andrew jackson reversed and annulled).

what would Black life look like today? how would Black/Indigenous relationships work? how would the economy feel? what would Black relationships to land and family feel like? how would it impact Blackness throughout the nation - would there still have been a great migration?

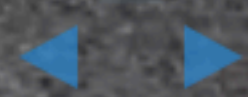
bonus: what characteristics would define the current south?



STAY  
WITH  
THE  
TROUBLE



RA!

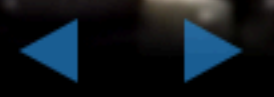






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# LIBRARY FUTURISMS

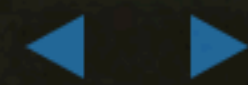


*In libraries, we can begin by articulating a vision of abundance, against fears of austerity, and making our visions malleable, responsive, and open, rather than appropriative and acquisitive. This is part of what I mean by interoperability.*





# INTEROPERABILITY AND INTERDEPENDENCY



# INTEROPERABILITY IN PRACTICE

*Part of the work that standards and systems like Dewey Decimal Classification, Library of Congress Subject Headings, and MARC have done for library practice is to allow us to cooperate, to share labor, to build technologies together. They have also embedded exclusions into our technical and organizing systems.*



↻ You Retweeted

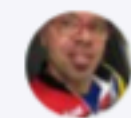


**Gordon Shotwell** @gshotwell · Sep 24

Data scientists: "We should make decisions based on data because bias causes your intuition to be unreliable"

"Great! Did you know that diverse teams do better on basically every single metric?"

"Actually my experience is that people just like me are the best candidates"



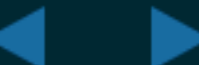
**Reginald Braithwaite** @raganwald · Sep 23

Programmers:

"We are Gods because we grok the incredibly complex and subtle interactions inside code. We live in a place where very small choices can have vast consequences."

Great! Can you stop calling everyone "guys?"

"That's too hard, and why does a different word matter?"





**Gordon Shotwell** @gshotwell · Sep 24



Replying to [@gshotwell](#)

When I was interviewing for DS jobs I kept wanting to say (and sometimes did say) "well really you probably shouldn't hire me because you should have a strong prior that someone who's not a white guy will add more value to your organization"



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# ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE



**THE FANTASY OF APOCALYPSE IS THAT WE GET  
TO START OVER**







# LIBRARY FUTURISMS



## Library Technopractice

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Openness: open access, open standards, open systems, open source.

## Attendant Future Vision

Interoperability as a goal for building technical systems across and within library-related practices; interoperability as a metaphor. Openness works both ways, as people who do not work in libraries can access standards systems and engage in their revision. Teams are open to different necessary technical and non-technical knowledges. More ways of being become visible and we appreciate difference, not neutrality. We eschew dehumanizing rhetorics as incompatible with genuine interoperability.



## Library Technopractice

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Collaboration: facilitated by open standards and interoperability, knowledge and cultural organizations work better within and across institutions.

## Attendant Future Vision

“Work better” reroutes productivity gains to qualitative improvements in work satisfaction. With enhanced interpersonal capacities for working together and cherishing difference, we appeal to people’s intrinsic motivation to do our work well. Our products are better because our process is better. We distribute both drudge work and opportunity equitably across all job titles. We learn from team science and human-centered organizational development. We attend to, and reduce, power differentials that shape who can say what in our organizations. Justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion -- and anti-racism -- meaningfully transform libraries.



## Library Technopractice

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Digital fluencies: understanding the ways our world is co-shaped by our technologies, our ways of knowing, and the traces we leave in our digital world.

## Attendant Future Vision

We understand that there are many uses for technologies and that they are shaped by those who adopt them. Thus, we insist on developing and buying technologies that embed library values related to privacy, intellectual freedom, appropriate sharing, stewardship, and interoperability. We define the parameters of those values with a wider range of knowers than in library science's past. We build and demand transparent and fair algorithms and data sources as a public resource and utility and in every instance when their use is non-optional. We inspect technologies with cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural groups, because no single person can do it alone. We assist different communities in adapting technologies in culturally specific and sensitive uses. We understand that constituents will exceed our expectations for how technologies can be used. We do not demand sharing or ownership of private or sacred knowledges. We know we are enriched when we give back the things that are not ours to keep.



## Library Technopractice

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Data and data infrastructure: we build collections and tools that allow us to use computational power to the benefit of our constituencies.

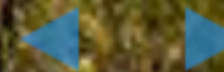
## Attendant Future Vision

We build data infrastructure through open standards and collaborative endeavors, and collect data that is produced as a public good, through social systems like science, public funding, shared technologies. We recognize that data must be documented, that is, that all knowledge claims have context. We recognize a wider range of knowledge and knowers. In data sharing, we commit to a partially shareable representation of reality: the data are observations of the portion of reality that's shareable. Accountability to data practice is requisite. We recognize group consent for research and human subjects protections beyond the individual, and that not all data is ours to share. Guided by interoperability and openness, we freely license life saving knowledge of medicine and technology for use by others.



An aerial photograph of a futuristic library complex. The central feature is a large, vibrant green lawn. To the left, a large building with a complex, grid-like facade and a peaked roof. To the right, several large, white, dome-shaped structures with a grid-like pattern. In the background, a range of mountains is visible under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The foreground shows a dirt path and some sparse vegetation.

# CONCLUDING: LIBRARY FUTURISMS



# **WE DON'T NEED TO FEAR ROBOTS TAKING OUR JOBS IF THEY ARE OUR ROBOTS**

(unless they are sentient robots)





*What do we want to keep doing?*

*What do we want to stop doing? What must we stop doing?*

*What must we resume when it is safe to do so?*

*What are we willing to imagine we can make possible?*





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<http://bit.ly/library-futurisms>

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2. Image by [Memi Perkins](#).
3. [Provisional Land Acknowledgement \(MSU\)](#), [Native-Land dot CA map](#).
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5. Image of Australian bush fires, January 2020.
6. [What to Say When a Pandemic Looks Imminent](#)
7. [Zuboff, In the Age of the Smart Machine](#)
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9. Art of [Joanne Barker](#), used with permission; see also [Water as an Analytic of Indigenous Feminism](#)
10. Screenshot from [Black Panther](#)
11. [Coyote and Crow](#)
12. See also: [Indigenous Futurisms Mixtape](#)



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13. See, "The Camille Stories," in [Staying with the Trouble](#)

14. Screen shot from [She-Ra and the Princesses of Power](#)

15. Screen shot from [Q.U.E.E.N](#) by Janelle Monae

16. Berenice Abbott, [Wiring an Early IBM Computer](#), IBM Laboratory 1958-1961.

14. Tweets from Gordon Shotwell [@gshotwell](#)

17. Image from [Biodiversity Heritage Library](#)

18. See also Leary, "[Resilience](#)" and [Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet](#).

19. Screen shot from [Mad Max Fury Road](#)

20. For more on four findings, see [Research Libraries, Emerging Technologies, and a Pandemic](#).

21. For the ARL project, see [Future Themes and Forecasts for Research Libraries](#)

22. For more productive takes on privacy, please see the work of [Helen Nissenbaum](#)

23. See, e.g., Noble, [Algorithms of Oppression](#) and Padilla, [Responsible Operations: Data Science, Machine Learning, and AI in Libraries](#)



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27. See also Posner, [See No Evil](#)
28. See also [Data & Society Institute](#)
29. Biosphere 2, Oracle, Arizona.
30. Davis, Picketpost Mountain, Arizona.
31. For more technologies, see Lippincott, [Mapping the Current Landscape of Research Library Engagement with Emerging Technologies](#)

