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Testimony for the Working Group on the Status of State Libraries:

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As I prepare this, I am participating in a Webex Event conducted by the NASA/HQ TOPS panel of experts. NASA where I had worked in Digital Libraries has determined to Transform to OPen Science (TOPS), a complete transformation that dares to "take a sledgehammer to traditional NASA research operations". New opportunities.

Brooks public library is working on a Strategic Plan. After I expressed some exasperation at the impossibility of planning given the world's outrageous pace of change, Tonya Ryals in the Vermont Department of Libraries suggested an OCLC WebJunction Course entitled "Strategic Planning in a Deeply Weird World." We are experiencing in our lifetime changes that would have taken 20,000 lifetimes to experience in the past.

One of the American Library Association Divisions, The Library and Information Technology Association (ALA LITA), has fused to become a new ALA Division called CORE. Its mission is to bring library infrastructure into the center of an ALA 5-Year Pivot Strategy.

Pivot  
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For now, Vermont probably can't spend the \$40 million that NASA is devoting to its transformation to Open Source. But I would consider some sort of pivot. Libraries form the human center for the explosive new changes we are seeing -- changes that stretch even beyond library and information technologies -- changes that affect every segment of Vermont society across age, education, and economic status.

Compassion and Support  
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People active in the evolving technical infrastructure know -- no one can understand the opportunities or the dangers of the current tack.

Librarians need to understand this! And they need new appreciation by their state for unpredictable new responsibilities. Librarians need new sources of money and possibly new organizational support for work-wide regional teambuilding.

Staff  
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Librarians are busy and could not hope to keep up with all the changing opportunities and risks. Those who take the time to try -- leave to join the tech industry at a much higher salary. Yet at no time have local public libraries been more essential.

Libraries need additional staff to allow worktime training and testing of the new opportunities. Staff need the freedom and responsibility to create agile transformations. And they need new personal resources (not limited to increased salary) to gain the resilience they will need to face new challenges at work.

### Lifelong Learning

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It is no longer the case that learning "advances" with age: our children understand the new gamified reality better than the professors. Yet there is also much gained by the lived experience that is not obvious to the twitching youth: values don't change! Perhaps library staff should not come to work as "experts" but as co-learners facilitating, catalyzing community projects that bring age groups and work groups together across existing divides to share what they have to contribute. There should no longer be a barrier across library types: one card for school, public, academic, and museum libraries. Common technology application advancing together requires this!

### Collaboration

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Divided we fail. It may be that asking more of trustees could help here: trustees come from beyond the MLS, or more recently MLIS, degree. As a trustee wanting to offer so much, I have slowly become aware that librarians are already busy. And what experienced librarians were trained to do is still needed --

But now!! Patrons carry cell phones: they often already \*contribute\* to the "information ecosystem." They write, and video, and podcast... Oh, and Tweet and Instagram. They have facebook and linkedIn accounts. Many have already replaced these with more the robust Google docs and map utilities; GitHub and personal websites.

Divided we fail. Libraries are the natural public center to address security risks and to consider the new reasons to want privacy. Librarians might work together regionally to become aware of the nature of the risks and to recruit the cyber-crews that up our game. Trustees bring with them their training and lived experiences. Recruit new types of trustees to take on new helper/advisor roles beyond mandated Board duties.

By aggregating assets and extending the virtual community perhaps Vermont libraries can be, you know, all that they can be. As it stands, vendors are experiencing "consolidation" and costs and license rules are out of control. We need new approaches to hardware and software purchasing, and new contracts with the vendors that block profit-taking.

### Status of Libraries in Vermont

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The charge to this Working Group is "making miscellaneous changes in education laws." A strong message should come out of this report that it will take much more than "miscellaneous changes!"

Strengthening and supporting libraries of all sizes and improving library services for the public might need a "pivot" to new definitions. "Libra" has always been more "judge" than "book." In this new Age of Information and Misinformation, libraries have a deeper role to slide communities as painlessly as possible into their rapidly evolving new world.

Faster link speed and broader bandwidth are insufficient to the cause: they bring trouble without a deepened understanding of what all these fast links entail, what they impact. And this is new for libraries; libraries need advocates so they can be re-envisioned as leaders in cultural, economic, and civic advances -- just to see that these changes are, in fact, "advances."

Rapidly evolving information landscapes have created critical new risks, obligations, and responsibilities. And locally, it is Vermont libraries that must take these on! -- but to do so libraries will need to be transformed, even re-imagined!

For me, the main message is that we are all in psychic denial, numbness.

Vermonters don't just need "more" access – they need more literacy, enough literacy to gain respect for the outrageous and unpredictable emerging realities.

Libraries are trusted. To maintain that trust libraries and librarians need significant new investment; they need additional time and staff to engage their communities in testing the new tech.

Vermont must transform libraries into information literacy centers – to do this they need investment in a new scale of funding and staff support.

Libraries will lead the State of Vermont into a safe and exhilarating future.