

RIPS Law Librarian Blog

Covering trends in research, instruction, and patron services within today's law libraries.



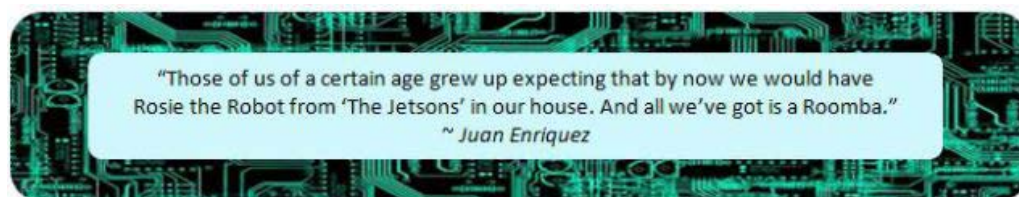
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I Want an Aluminum Foil Hat!

Posted on [September 2, 2014](#) by [Catherine Lemmer](#)



[I want an aluminum foil hat!](#) That was the first thought that crossed my mind after reading Symantec Corporation's white paper, "[How safe is your quantified self?](#)" In short, Symantec identified significant data security risks in many of the self-tracking devices on the market (e.g., [Fitbit](#), [Jawbone](#), and the now discontinued [NikeFuel](#)). And perhaps more disturbing, Symantec concluded that these are known data risks that manufacturers have no real interest in curing. Add in the [news and commentary](#) from the recent [Black Hat](#) security conference about how televisions, refrigerators, thermostats, and many other everyday appliances pose security risks, and visions of [HAL 9000](#) don't seem so easy to dismiss as an outlandish figment of a science fiction imagination.

I read a wide-variety of technology reports, both the disturbing and the uplifting. I have long and loudly cheered the uplifting technology reports — those reports from studies on the role technology can play in reducing teenage pregnancies and promoting higher high school graduation rates and enrollments at post-secondary education institutions. In other words, I signed up for a [Rosie the Robot](#), not a HAL 9000.

As a research instructor and research librarian, I function at the juncture of information and technology. An early adopter of [David Lankes'](#) theory of "librarian as information facilitator," I'm comfortable in this ever-evolving place. Comfort, however, doesn't mean that I am not constantly evaluating and redefining. As part of my constant evaluation and redefinition, I spent time this summer working on a law school course proposal that explores the intersection of technology and law. The new course proposal was driven in

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part by my interest in understanding how technology has and will continue to enhance the delivery of legal services and in part by my unflagging optimism that technology is the best tool we have to reach the legal profession's goal of serving all segments of our society. Perhaps it was my time at a public library reference desk, but I remain undeterred in my conviction that "access to justice" is in essence "access to information."

An interesting thing happened on the way to developing my course proposal. First I learned that there is no shortage of talented and knowledgeable law librarians already exploring this arena. Colleagues at [Emory University School of Law](#), [Valparaiso University School of Law](#), [University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law](#), and [Suffolk University Law School](#) shared ideas and syllabi. Second, I came to realize that I really wanted to teach two courses.

The first course is the technology of legal practice, a course that introduces and takes students through the various technologies they will encounter in legal practice. This advocacy with technology component includes topics in three broad areas: (i) legal practice management (i.e., virtual practice and cloud computing, presentation and practice management tools, social media); (ii) legal infrastructure (i.e., knowledge management and governance, outsourcing); and (iii) legal tools (i.e., competitive intelligence, e-discovery, and project management). Recent reports predict that these courses will become part of our law school curriculum. [Gartner Legal IT 2020](#) predicts that by 2018, "legal IT courses will be required for the graduates of at least 20 U.S. Tier 1 and Tier 2 law schools." It goes without saying that, given our expertise, law librarians are well-suited to teach these courses.

The second course, and perhaps the more interesting to me, is the legal informatics component. What is the structure and management of data? Who is managing the collection and safekeeping of private data? Who gets to decide how and when it is used? Alternatively, who is responsible for making sure that public information stays public (à la, [Pacer's architectural changes](#))? In sum, this area covers the ethics of technology.

Library land's luminary and current bad boy, [Stephen Abram](#), once told baby boomers to "get over it." In short, the previous generation had experienced the advent of electricity, automobiles, nuclear energy, and so on. In his words, all we had had to do was learn to "double-click," and it was time to get with the program and stop whining about technology.

I believe we will all agree that we've completely mastered the "double click" as we race to embrace technologies, but we often do so without fully understanding the ramifications. Even the pros jump in with out looking! Orla Cox, director of security response at Symantec, recently admitted in an [NPR interview](#) that she stopped wearing her fitness device once Symantec did the audit of the personal data devices and apps that revealed so many data insecurities.

Today's lawyers must not simply abdicate responsibility for the ethics of technology to the "technology experts." So how do we get these concepts into the classroom as we work to prepare our students for practice? This is the idea that I am currently thinking about and would welcome any suggestions and ideas.

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Multimedia Learning, Part I

- beausteenken on Experiences, Simulations, and Games in the Classroom
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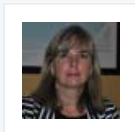
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About Catherine Lemmer

A life long learner interested in most aspects of the creation, use, management, and control of information.

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One Response to *I Want an Aluminum Foil Hat!*



[calemmer](#) says:

September 11, 2014 at 8:00 am

For anyone with further interest in this topic, the FTC is hosting a conference with a free live link: “Big Data: A tool for Inclusion or Exclusion?” September 15, 2015 <http://www.ftc.gov/news-events/events-calendar/2014/09/big-data-tool-inclusion-or-exclusion>

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