Demons, Determinism, and Divining the Future of Information Science

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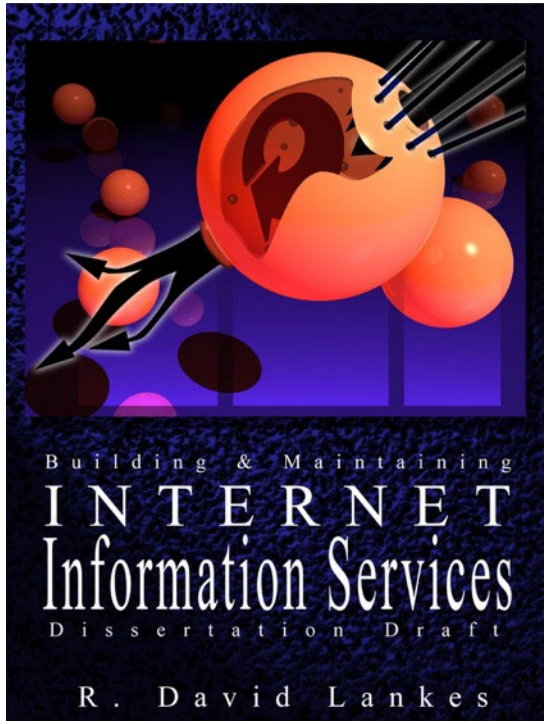
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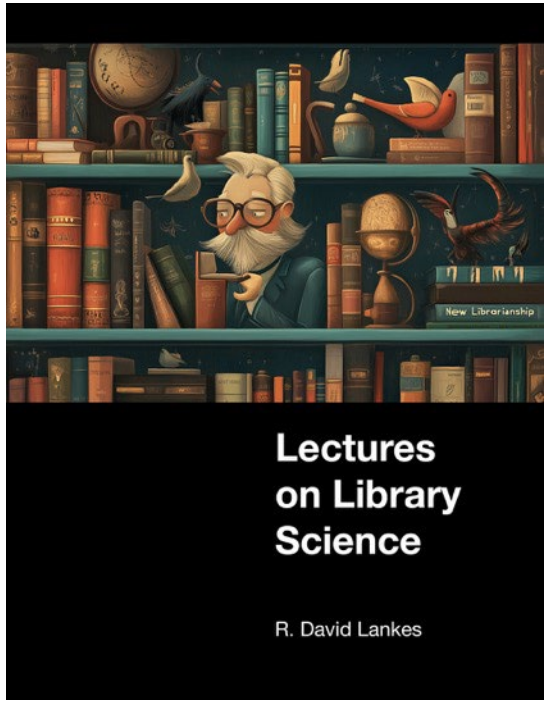

New Librarianship
Lectures
on Library
Science
R. David Lankes

1997-2024

Internet Expansion
Social Media
Search Engines (Google 1998)
Mobile
Ubiquitous Computing
Big Data
Misinformation
Streaming
Cloud Computing
Blockchain
AI

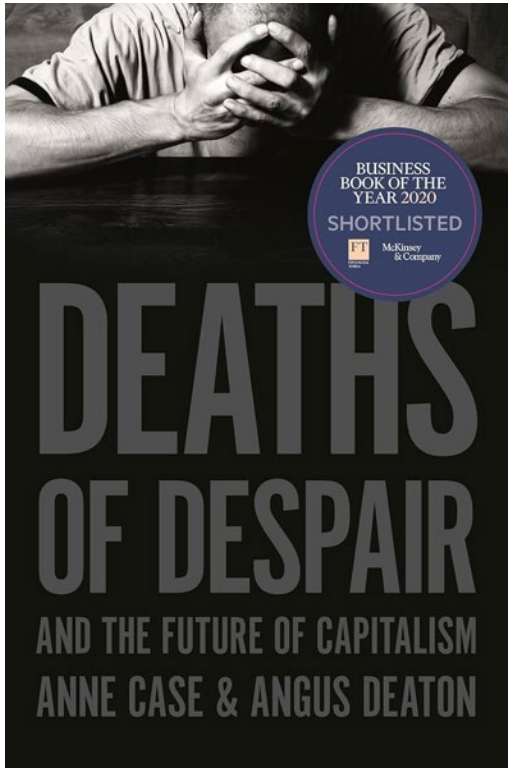
The True Grand Challenge

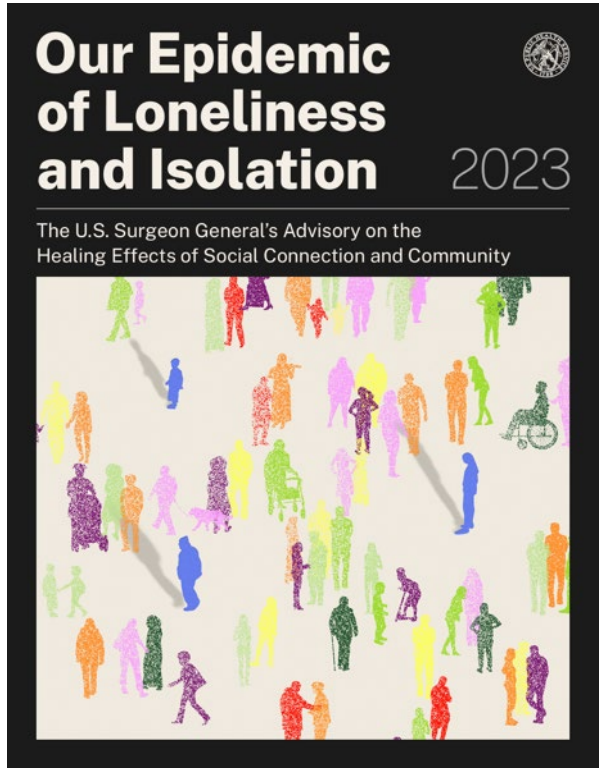
A concerted effort from scholar, librarian, and data scientist to save our increasingly isolated and fragmented communities.

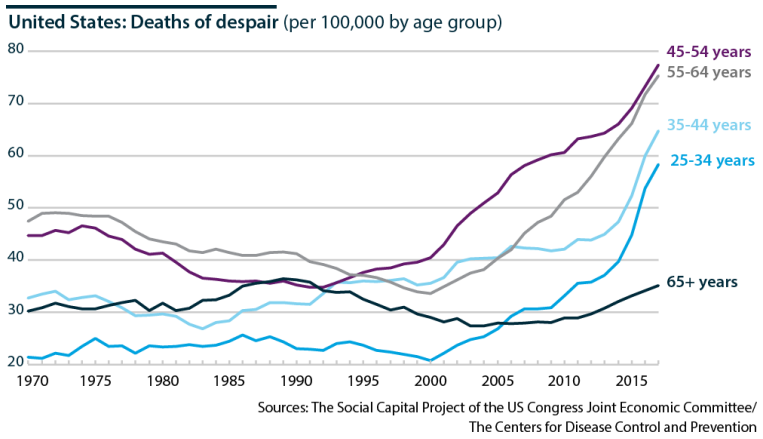
The grand challenge for information science is nothing less than saving lives.

Deaths of Despair

“The mortality impact of being socially disconnected is similar to that caused by smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day”



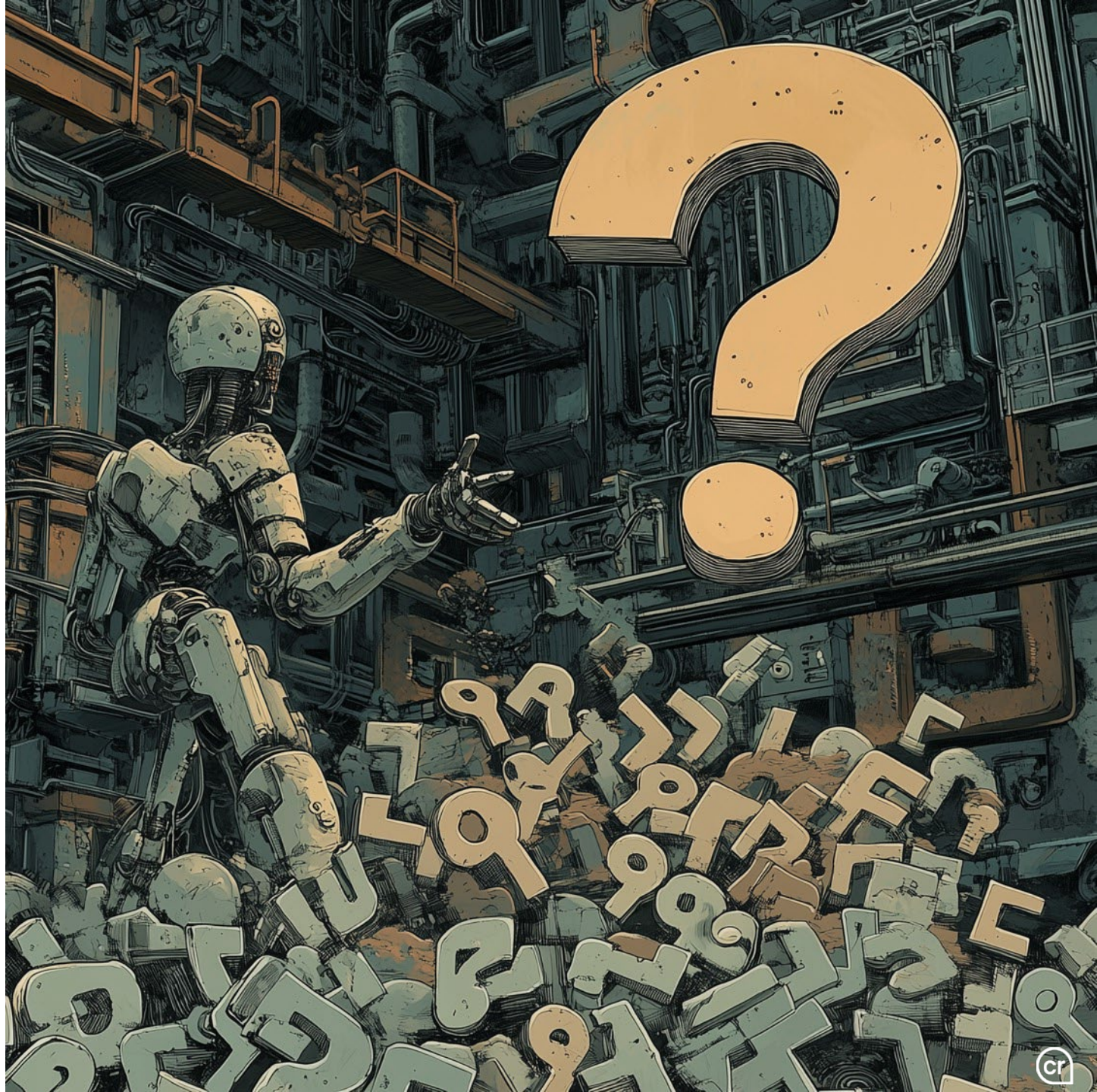




The Topic

What comes after AI for research, education, and professional work in Information Science?

What ***should*** come after the societal effects of AI are ***shaped*** by the research, education, and professional work in Information Science?”



Information Science as Conversation

A conversation about the application of technology, data, and humanity in addressing the pressing issues of society

Information Science as Conversation

We hold some responsibility for the current state of affairs.

Includes librarians, data scientists, iSchools, iSchool alumni, my fellow scholars, data scientists, analysist, records managers, and archivists

Artificial Intelligence

Issue? Challenge? Problem?
Yes
data making stories real, and
stories makes data matter

Laplace’s Demon

Knows every action occurring across the universe in an instant and thus perfectly predict the future and divine the past

Determinism and a clockwork universe

An Information Demon

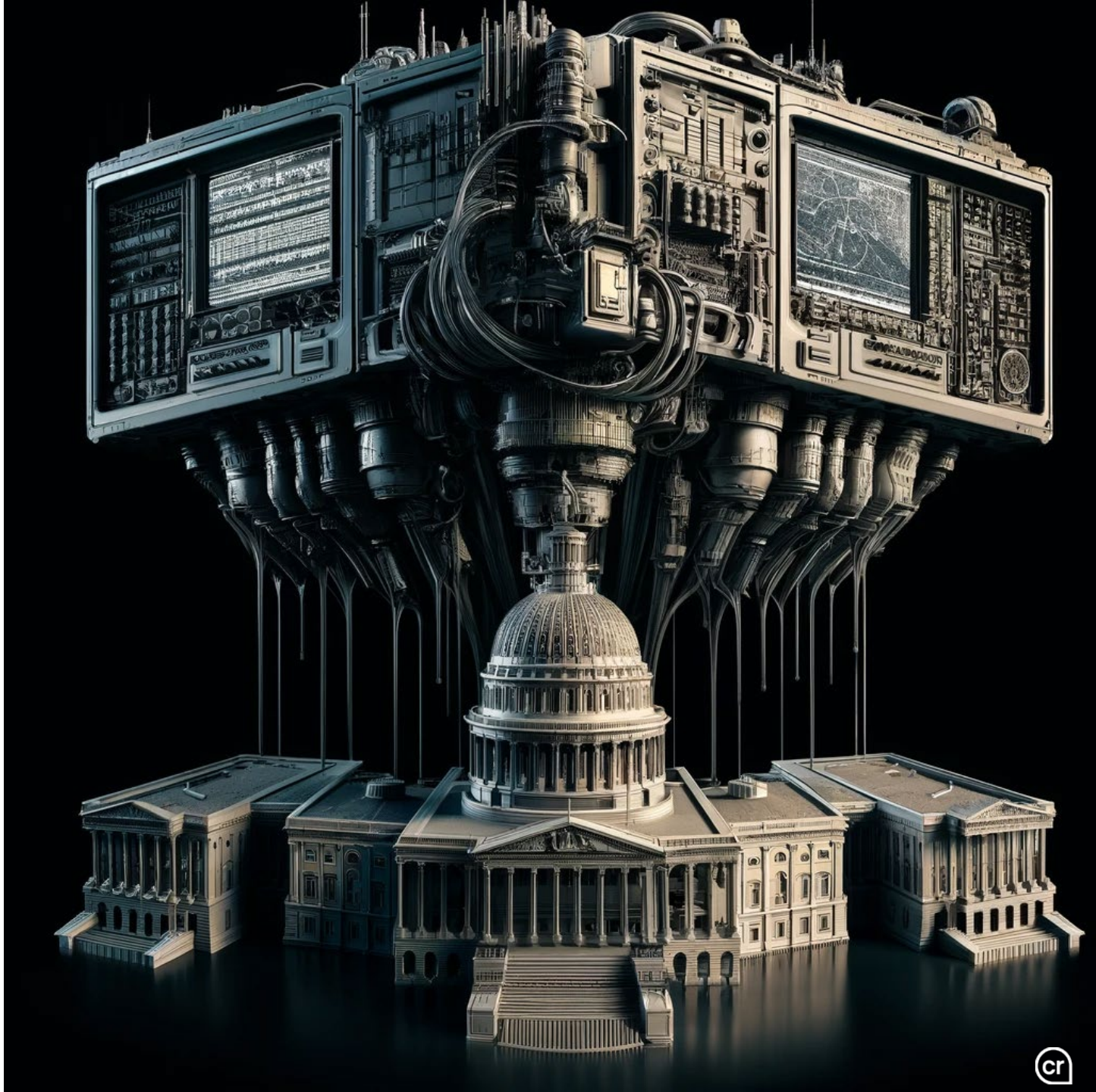
Information Science is an unruly and glorious mess

The edge of chaos, an infrastructure where people come to make meaning in their lives

Corrosive AI

AI will undermine trust in public institutions and will do so quickly

Calls for a new form of information literacy



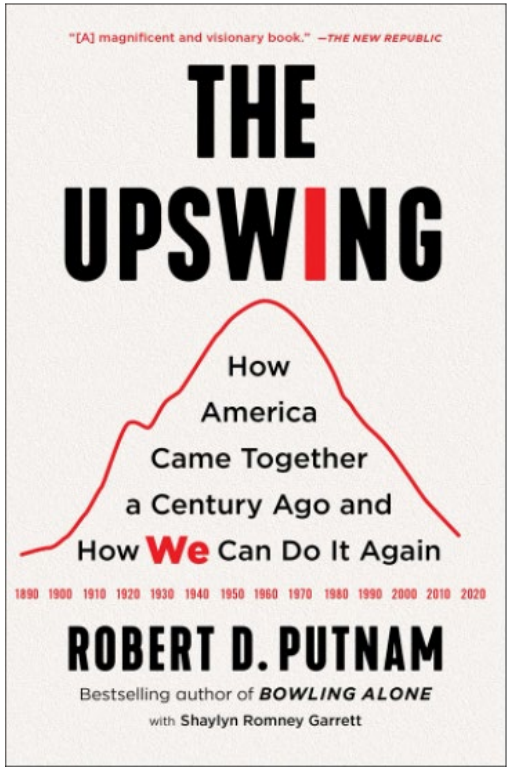
Conflict Over Connection

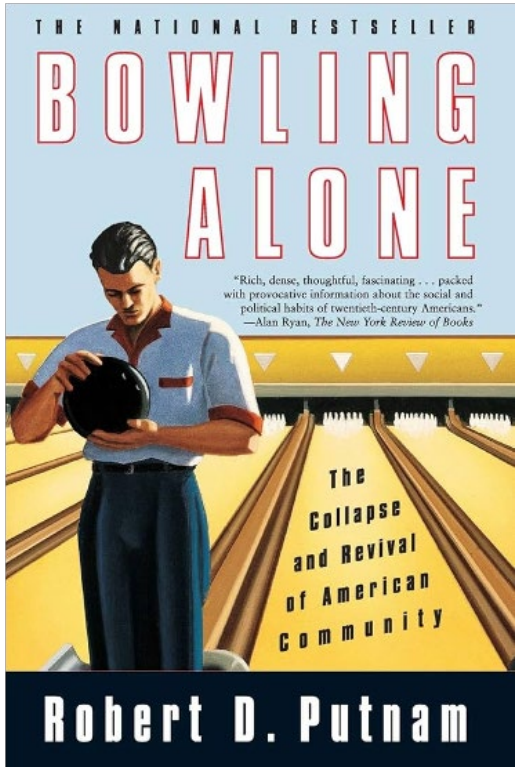
one does not build strong social systems on dopamine hits and enraging people

Destabilizing the underlying social connection is the act of self-destruction

Social Cohesion

The I/We curve where members of a society focus on themselves and their wellbeing (I) versus where a community comes together around common goals (We).





Conflict to Classroom (to Conflict)

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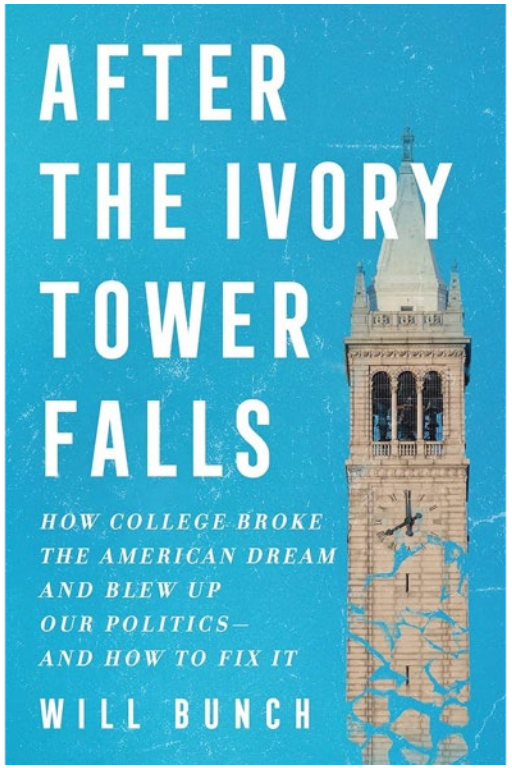
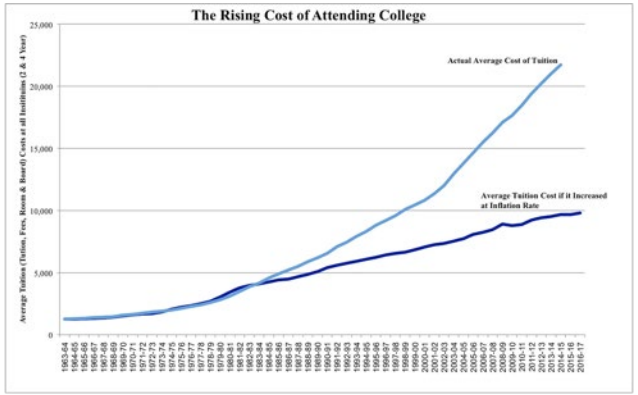




A Matter of Degree

Increasing the number of graduate students and international graduate students is a common funding model. The benefits are a stronger, more diverse, and more educated workforce, but the costs are an increasingly disaffected communities that see only more barriers and less agency.

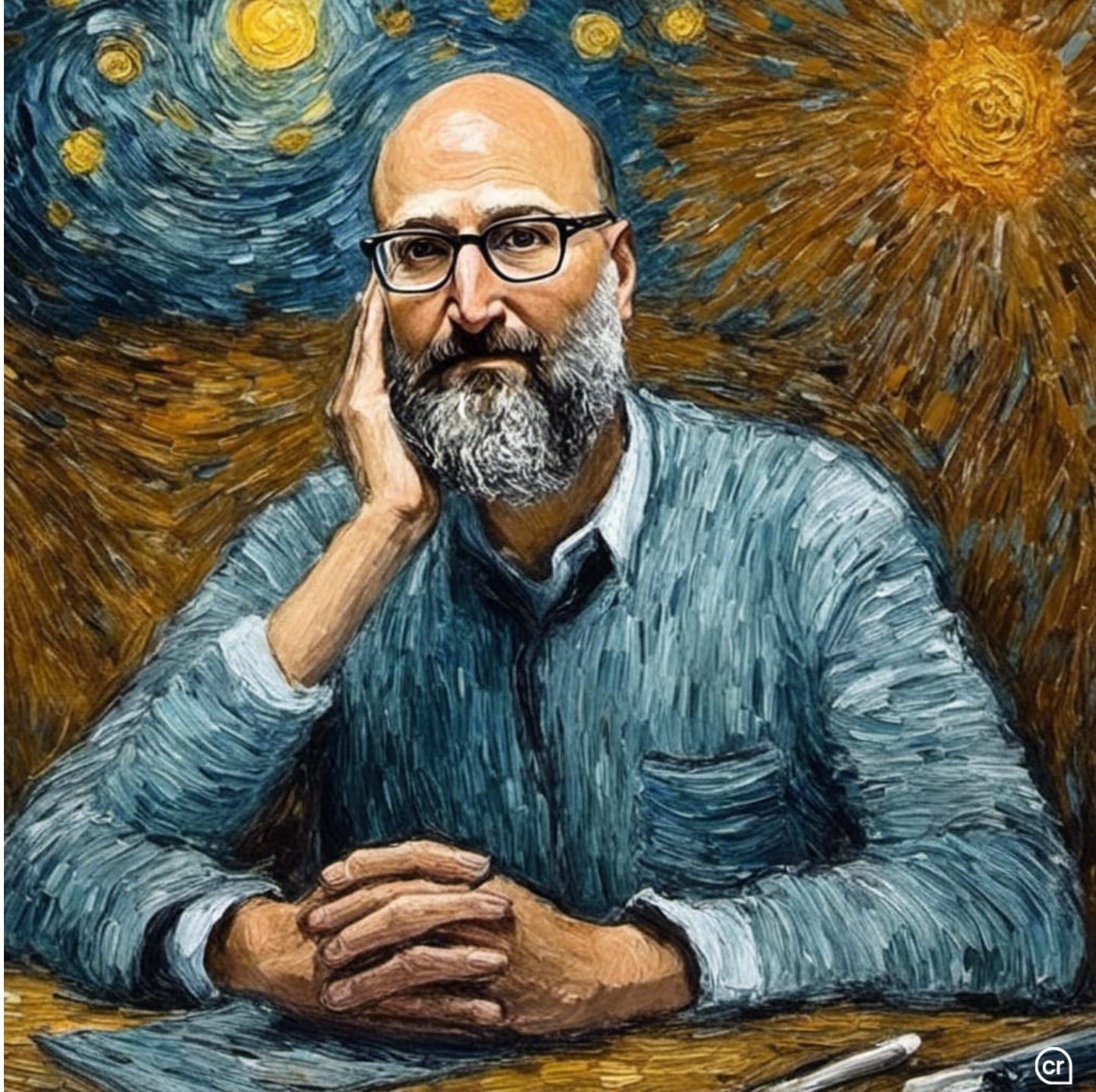
From Phonics to Flying

Librarianship and Information Science are neither separate fields nor do they need to move to some homogeneous new field

Artificial Intelligence

an arms race where products are being pushed to the public in a form that makes a beta test look polished

human beings reacting to tools that already have profound implications



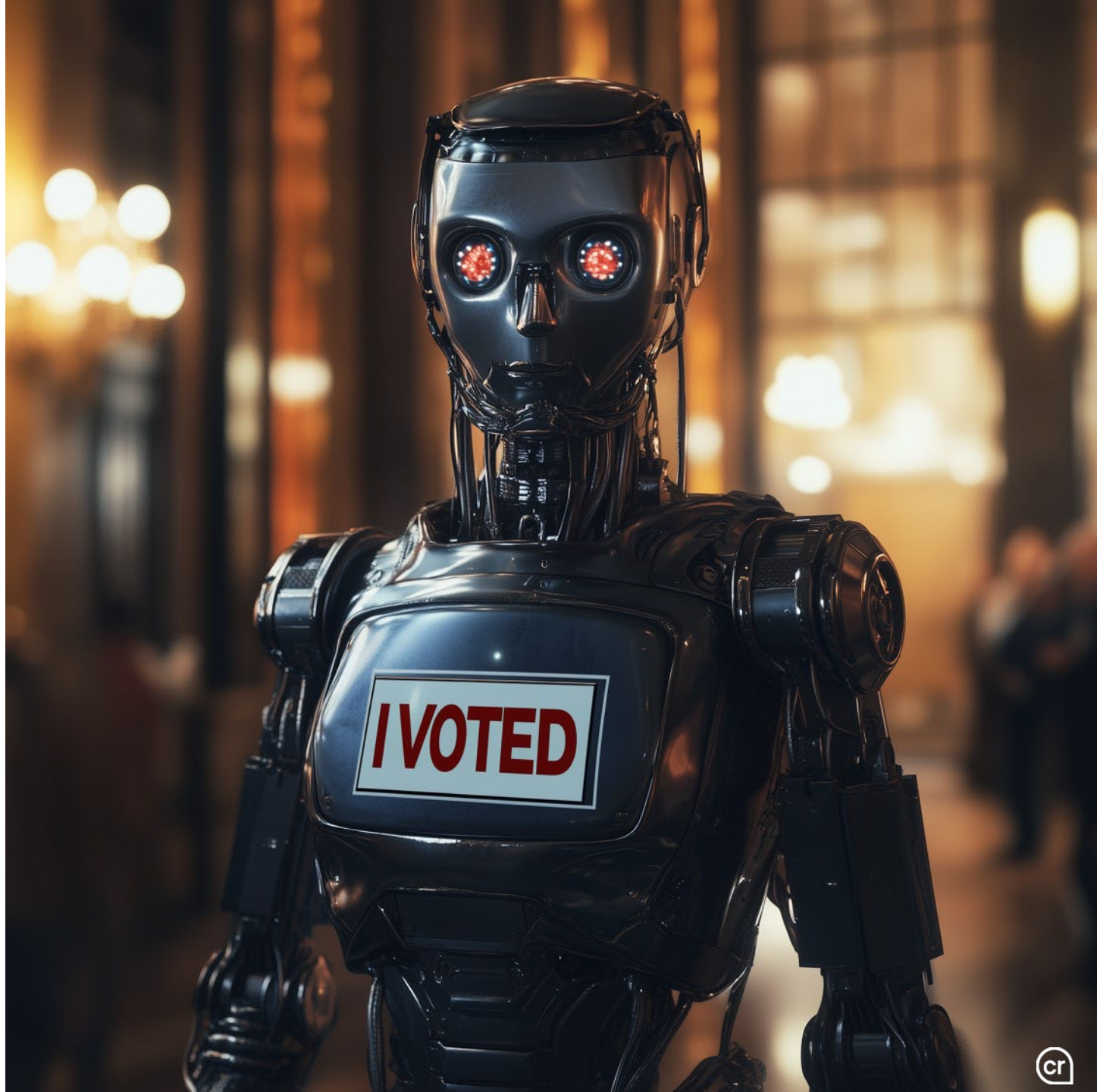
Deaths of Despair

The solutions can’t be to vote for one party or another, it has to start with us – the information science community – that professes the power of information to liberate and educate.

Lessons to Action

a civil society encourages the sharing and debate of ideas, especially those we disagree with

and everyday experience of ethically connecting people to information and that was sorely needed in the state houses.



Information Demon

a connected network of action and ideas- we can bring about change

who will be left behind and how can we as a society benefit

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Slides & Script: https://DavidLankes.org

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Words (and mistakes) are mine

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