


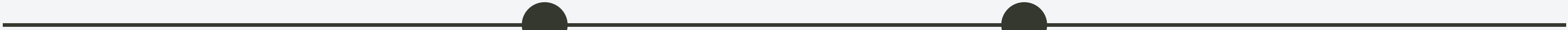
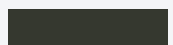
THE INFORMATICS OF
MUTUAL AID



MUTUAL AID: INFORMATION & KNOWLEDGE LANDSCAPE

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CIRN Seminar Series | October 2020
Virtual

Topics



Media coverage

Themes

Consequences

Info & knowledge

sharing

Opportunities

Challenges

MUTUAL AID SUDDENLY SEEMS TO BE "EVERYWHERE"

Rebecca Solnit, *The Guardian*
Jia Tolentino, *The New Yorker*

Takeaways from Mutual Aid Working Group of Science for the People

Coverage glosses over...

- Exacerbation of inequities
- Failures of U.S. state
- Mutual aid as filling an unacceptable gap

Media coverage

Consequences

- "We can be so moved by the way people come together to overcome hardship that we lose sight of the fact that many of these hardships should not exist at all." (**Jia Tolentino**)
- Over-focus on resiliency can lead to "happy-washing" & prevent necessary govt criticism (**Yvonne Su**)
- Marveling at people's generosity walks a fine line with believing in potentially brutal human nature

SURVEY RESULTS: [TINYURL.COM/SFTP-SURVEY](https://tinyurl.com/sftp-survey)

Information & knowledge sharing

CENTRAL FACET OF MUTUAL AID ORGANIZING DURING PANDEMIC

1

Necessary to combat misinformation

2

Leveraging the praxis of librarianship

3

Implicit support for capabilities approach (**Amartya Sen**)?

4

"Data intermediaries" (**Matthews**, 2016, Journal of Community Informatics)

5

Solution to all-virtual organizing space

Challenges

of organizing in a mostly/all-virtual space

Technological

- Data security (existing guidance for organizers from the **Electronic Frontier Foundation**)
- Backdrop of ramped-up state/corporate surveillance

Leftist infrastructure

- Popularization of collective action w/o infrastructure creates vacuum (**Paul Engler**, The Intercept)
- Lack of widespread experience w/ strategies & tactics

Building trust & relationships

- Really hard to do virtually! (**Jassmin Poyaoan**, East Bay Community Economic Justice Clinic)
 - Pod mapping as potential model? (**Mia Mingus**, Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective)
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Mutual aid represents another example of the complicated rebuilding of leftist infrastructure

Presents explicit opportunity for librarians to embed themselves in social movements, now and in the future



Conclusion

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References

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Thank you!