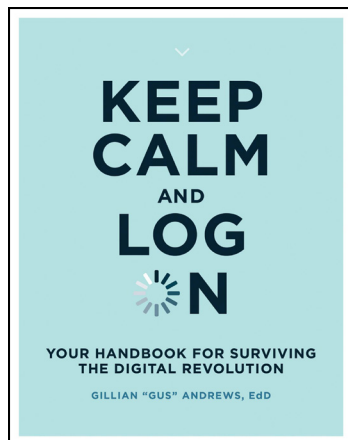


Gillian “Gus” Andrews. *Keep Calm and Log On: Your Handbook for Surviving the Digital Revolution*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2020. 368p. Paperback, \$24.95 (ISBN 978-0262538763).



A co-worker and I have a saying among ourselves: There ought to be a booklet about this stuff. Gillian “Gus” Andrews has attempted to write a booklet on a hot version of this stuff: the whole internet. It is an admirable attempt, but a gut instinct is to roll one’s eyes at the attempt. Can one write a (368-page) booklet on emotionally, technologically, socially, and politically navigating the quagmire that the modern web has become?

Keep Calm and Log On is divided into several sections covering topics such as “Keeping Calm,” “Staying Secure,” “Conserving and Rebuilding Trust,” and “Why Trust the System?” The first half of the book focuses on individual behaviors for internet safety while the second half orients itself around larger community issues related to trust and algorithms in social media environments and

search engines.

Andrews writes in a conversational, friendly style addressing readers in the second person throughout the text. The You at the center of the writing was a constant question for me. Who is this book for? It most sharply strikes me as a manual for older adults nervous about the internet and social networks and less a guide for younger readers, even though much of the information Andrews presents could be useful and is presented in a digestible format—even if that format is more of a theoretical applesauce and not something the reader is allowed much space to chew on.

Attempting to keep the tone accessible, Andrews opts for applying a heuristic list of “Scout Laws” for facing the emotionally and technologically confounding modern internet environment. However, instead of organizing the book around these laws, they are tossed in as callouts, which adds to a list of perplexing editorial choices in this book.

However, the back half of the book digs into some of the social, format, and systemic issues behind the current information landscape, including a direct nod to Shoshanna Zuboff’s work, *Surveillance Capitalism* in the epigraph for chapter 14.

Accessibly riffing on surveillance capitalism is one of the points that Andrews addresses particularly successfully. However, it takes much too long to reach that high point. Teasers are given initially, including a sweet version of the title’s origin—British WWII propaganda—but Andrews buries a much better story of the title’s origin in chapter 18: a man designed an algorithm to churn out T-shirts with “Keep calm and ___” slogans all over them, including “Keep Calm and Knife a Lot” (Andrews 2020 294).

At certain points in section III, Andrews offers activities that could be adapted to use as lesson plans, even though they are not spelled out as such. Andrews’ activities could work well for integrating into undergraduate courses—specifically discussing online privacy, the “five whys,” and identifying representation in media and information. Select activities may be useful for one-shot integration, but using the text for a credit-bearing course would be less successful; the work of other scholars would work better.

Andrews’ works-cited list and rendering of some sources needs help. Most relevant to the audience of this journal, Andrews attempts to translate the Framework for Information Literacy to a lay audience. Library instructors can glean a bit from the text about how people

from “the outside” interpret our work. However, Andrews fails to adequately address how the Framework operates in our field, depicting them as “guidelines” rather than the much cussed and discussed threshold concepts developed by volunteer librarian labor to teach about information. This is one of several cases where the thinking is reductive for convenience and misrepresents the actual document or situation. For example, Andrews describes a Jordan Peele impersonation of Barack Obama as a “deepfake”; the video was done as a PSA, and Peele was known for doing an impression of the former President.

Similarly, Andrews’ discussion about bias in algorithms critically fails to include the work of Safiya Umoja Noble, while a discussion of Facebook never engages research on content moderation that Sarah T. Roberts has explored in her work. These are glaring omissions in a works-cited section that borrows more heavily from lay and professional sources than scholarly ones. If anything, *Keep Calm and Log On* is a better starting point than most for introducing the complex nature of how information functions on the internet and the ways communities manage intersections of information and capitalism and profit. But does the internet need a booklet? Andrews suggests that maybe we do. However, with it come the problems endemic to such a document: material is destined to become rapidly out of date, and better scholarship is bound to emerge rapidly. Also, as the book keeps telling me and I verified, you can glean most of the information from visiting Andrews’ blog: keepcalmlogon.com. —Carrie Wade, *University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee*