

Acronym soup

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Going through the pile of emails that collected overnight in my day job account, I was struck by a sense of my own increasing irrelevance. At least, so it seems, based on the growing number of messages I don't readily understand. My incoming these days abounds with acronyms, company names and suggested computer applications with which I confess zero familiarity.

My concern deepens as I realize how many of these items I don't comprehend even after searching them out. Okay, CMMC stands for Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification, which makes sense in this day and age. The problem is that I had to go to several sites before I found one that expanded beyond the bare acronym; it seems to be widely assumed that I should know what the initials stand for.

Within the sphere of social activity, the hole in which I find myself gets both deeper and wider. When you add generational, social, political and artistic points of view, the rate at which I find myself becoming ever more clueless seems to be increasing exponentially (and yes, I do mean in mathematical, rather than colloquial terms). The list of things I don't 'get' is growing so rapidly that the best imagery I can suggest is of toilet paper unrolling out a car window as said car accelerates to freeway speed.

I don't know which app to use for... or even what qualifies as an 'app.' I also don't know how to use (name your commonly used software) at any level approaching expert. I'm barely competent in MS Word and I use that more often than I pick up a fork.

If I did know which app to use, I'd probably have some trouble figuring out how. Because software is built by and for folks who grew up designing and using it and it bothers them not at all to find that an old Fudd thinks breadcrumbs are errant morsels that come from, you know, bread.

But for all of this, for all my relative cluelessness and struggles to understand the world that seems intent to move on without me, I find great encouragement in the engagement taking place globally as people from different cultures, climates and canons find themselves communicating in real time. The implication of a World Wide Web is that people will find themselves communicating. And when folks talk, they come to know each other. And it's harder to be hateful to a person you know.

I understand this aspect is not nearly in full effect and it can sometimes seem that the Internet has simply revealed the depths of depravity to which some people will sink. But this will pass. In the day of the omnipresent cell phone and live streaming, those who would tear society down are self-identifying, making it ever easier to see them for what they are.

Lots of things about this emerging world that I don't get. But what I do understand is that most folks want to live in a world in which they are allowed and encouraged to be their best selves.

So, go ahead and snow me with your alphabet soup and secret passwords. I don't care about the secret handshakes of the online world. I do care about the content of your character. You're creating a new reality, one in which people of good will can reach each other without having to skulk through the night or subject their thoughts to editing by self-appointed censors. Minds touching minds.

Or, so I hope.