An easy go-to in this cataclysmic moment is to think of a pre- and post-, and before and after. All the chapters besides Chapter 1 are pre-, and the first chapter on SARS-CoV-2 is somewhat “post” in an emergent way. The future has always been non-linear, and it is much more volatile in the grip of a black swan event and its aftermath. The only real throughline is time, and between Time 1 (pre) and Time 2 (post), a lot will change beyond the jolting of humanity from relative security to survival mode, from relative comfort to privation, from social togetherness to separation, and from hidden risks to exposed ones. Where do these respective topics go?

1. What of the mutating novel coronavirus as it instanti-
ates in human populations around the world? ("Emergent COVID-19 and SARS-CoV-2 in Social Imagery and Social Video: Initial Three Months of Viral Dispersion")

2. What of plastics usage and management? ("Transnational Meta-Narratives and Personal Stories of Plastics Usage and Management via Social Media")


5. What of political speech when mass public gatherings are unsafe and ground zero for contagion hotspots and dispersion? ("In Flames, In Violence, In Reverence: Physical Protest Effigies in Global and Transnational Politics from a Social Imageset")

6. What of human rights and street democracy, when governmental power is at an apex to face down a virus with pandemic potential (at the same time that it has been faced with one of the largest possible challenges of the time)? ("Exploring the Transnational Allure of ‘Street Democracy’ via Twitter based on a Contemporaneous Real-World Case")

7. What of romance altogether, faux or otherwise? ("The Remote Woo: Exploring Faux Transnational Interpersonal Romance in Social Imagery")

People will co-write their mutual histories into the future as now, even in the face of mass-scale challenges, which have always been with humanity (but the types and scopes are different).
Thanks to New Prairie Press (of Kansas State University) for accepting this work for publication. Pressbooks is an amazing platform for digital (and print) content distribution, even as it requires close attention to details and plenty of iterative work and versioning to get the work right. Consistency seems like a humble standard, but it is actually difficult to achieve. For me, I “fat fingered” while revising and deleted a whole chunk of a table, at one point, and it was the due diligence that ensured that the table did not go in incomplete. (“Sanity checking” applies not only to data analytics…but to the presentation of research.) All research and writing are exacting and demanding in every phase, and it was so with this book as well, with years needed to accrue the skills and knowledge and then a hard and stubborn will that ensured that this made it to press. I included alt-text for all informational graphics, but I left the decorative social network graphs without alt-text.
In ITS, we test everything...multiple times. We understand about dependencies required to achieve anything.
We practice iterations *ad nauseam*. We are persistent.
We try to code and script to precision. We use workarounds for anything that does not align with what we are trying to achieve. We tend towards cynicism and disbelief. We balance our internal “bean counter” of costs/benefits against an inner poet; we are ultra pragmatic dreamers. Ultimately, it is about “commits” in an imperfect context. All these IT-infused approaches helped in this project.

I am also appreciative of the prior academic publisher / press for supporting this work for a year before financial pressures forced their decision to stop this project at the typography stage. Thanks also to the anonymous reviewers who critiqued the respective chapters; their insights helped improve the work. It helps that we’ve had a long history of collaborative work. We will get beyond this difficult phase.
About Book Updates...Not So Much

Even though electronic books are conducive to updates, I will not likely be making more than cosmetic changes, as needed. All the topics can be updated *ad infinitum*, and I am hoping to move on to other projects. Every book demands excessive head-space, and it is important to draw a line of when a work is provisionally complete. Even as there is always room for improvement, I am hopeful that others can build on this work (with their own).

Dedication
To close, I would like to dedicate this to striving peoples, to us all, to the mass social (as individuals), in a difficult present moment. While the sense of shared threat has driven us all to ground, we will adapt and adjust, whatever the “new normal” should look like. As always, R. Max, Lily, and Asher, you are all my hope.

Thanks!

To the readers: Thanks for your interest! I am hopeful this
open-access resource finds a readership.