**Unplugged**

In a world where information and technology are everywhere and ever-present, opportunities to unplug may become more essential, benefiting both professional and personal experiences.

**How It’s Developing**

The availability of technology and the constant connectedness that it provides coupled with an immense amount of information (news, e-mail, social networks, etc.) places many individuals in danger of cognitive overload.  Faced with this overload, individuals and organizations may struggle to achieve focus on what is important. [[1](http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/unplugged#Notes and Resources)]

In addition to requiring an unplugged space to focus on work, unplugged spaces may also be required for retreat and renewal. In spite of research connecting vacations to improved productivity and job performance, more than half of American workers stay plugged in, responding to work emails and communicating with the workplace, while on vacation. [[2](http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/unplugged#Notes and Resources)] While most hotels currently promote the availability of internet and work spaces, some “escape” destinations actively promote lack of internet and phone signals, seeking to lure travelers interested in disconnecting from workplace demands and connection. [[3](http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/unplugged#Notes and Resources)]

New products, including clothing, phone cases, and bags, are being developed with the express purpose of disabling technology and limiting incoming communication. [[4](http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/unplugged#Notes and Resources)] Pushes for “device-free zones,” digital detoxes, and unplugging challenges all demonstrate an awareness of the hyper-connectivity of life and a growing movement away from that level of connectivity. [[5](http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/unplugged#Notes and Resources)]

**Why It Matters**

Libraries may capitalize on users’ perceptions of libraries as quiet spaces, marketing at least some space in their buildings as places to unplug, concentrate, and focus. This may be a rebranding from "quiet reading spaces" to "unplug zones" or "digital escape spaces" that capitalize on the trend's language.

Programming and services that encourage quiet reflection or that limit the use of technology may become novel and popular as they contrast with the everyday connectivity that people normally encounter. [[6](http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/unplugged#Notes and Resources)]

The constant connectedness of society may change the ways that future generations concentrate and collect, synthesize, and analyze information. [[7](http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/unplugged#Notes and Resources)]

Library workers may increasingly seek opportunities to unplug, be reflective, or quietly focus on specific work activities – and this may be a challenge in a culture that does not provide opportunities for that type of work time.

**Notes and Resources**

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[3] “Lonely Planet’s 10 Predictions for the Future of Travel.” Brittany Jones Cooper. *Yahoo Travel*. September 26, 2014. Available from [https://www.yahoo.com/travel/the-future-of-travel-is-cheaper-and-tech-fr...](https://www.yahoo.com/travel/the-future-of-travel-is-cheaper-and-tech-free-plus-8-98470165242.html)

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[7] “Unplug! Your Children’s Future Depends on It!” Jennifer Moses. *Time*. October 28, 2014. Available from<http://time.com/3543498/unplug-your-childrens-future-depends-on-it/>