

STEEP Process Guide

Purpose

Futurists use this tool to think about the future. It is important to remember that changes in the future do not happen in a vacuum. They tend to impact the five key areas represented by STEEP.

Society
Technology
Economy
Ecology
Politics

This tool can be used to brainstorm the implications of anything new or interesting that is beginning to impact one or more of the key areas, and considering how that will affect society and library services.

How to

1. Share STEEP acronym with group.
2. Select a specific topic (ex. Cell phones)
3. Write topic on a flipchart pad.
4. Ask the group what has been the impact or possibilities of the topic on each key area.
 - Record all ideas on flipchart with headings for each key area.
5. Ask the group what are potential impacts or possibilities of the topic on each of the key areas.
 - Record all ideas in a different color under the headings for each key area.
6. Ask the group - Given the impact, potential impacts and possibilities, how can libraries be prepared to adapt or innovate?
7. The next steps depend on your purpose of using this tool. If you are truly using to brainstorm impacts to innovate, ideas can be presented to leadership for consideration and next steps. If you are using to inspire, it is a good tool for people to have in their thinking toolkit. If used enough, it can become a natural way of thinking about the future.

Materials

- Four flipcharts or large pieces of paper
- Markers