

Resources for Making Reliable Sense of Our Confusing World

All of the material which follows is reliable and edgy. These are multiple sources of information which, when taken together, offer multiple perspectives. We assume you have access to the normal sources of information in our culture. Pay attention to that which catches your eye. Skim other pieces and ignore the rest until it calls you.

Blogs and Blog Aggregators:

These are all from my top tier. All are free. Just sign up.

[AEON](#). They publish three short (3-8 pages) well-written, provocative essays each day. Every area of life is touched on over time. Helps me stay current with the edge of thought. “Subscribe to our newsletter” is at the bottom of the home page. Daily.

[Ethical Markets](#) by Hazel Henderson. Hazel has devoted her life to thinking about markets, finance and the economy, why they do not serve us and what can be done to align them with both humanity and nature. “Subscribe” is on the Home page in the middle just a bit more than a screen length down. {Disclosure: I know Hazel.} Daily.

[Naked Capitalism](#) by Yves Smith. She brings passion, insight and grit to the work of making reliable sense of money, the financial world and economics. Four ways to “subscribe” are at the top right of the home page. Daily.

[Our Finite World](#), by Gail Tverberg. She brings an original mind and a courageous voice to the root issues of energy and human cultures. Sign up at the top the column on the right on her home page. Weekly.

[Resilience](#), by the Post-Carbon Institute. The “Get Resilience delivered daily” bar is at the top right of the Resilience home page. They focus on societal transformation. Daily.

[The Conversation](#). Insightful, research-based journalism and commentary. “Get newsletter” is on the top bar towards the left. Daily.

[The Energy Mix](#), by Mitchell Beer. Canadian. Great access to top energy stories from an insightful team of Canadians. “Subscribe” button on front page. {Disclosure: I know Mitchell.} Daily

[The Energy Skeptic](#), by Alice Friedemann. Very knowledgeable and frank. Her site has extensive resources. To “Follow” click on the symbol of your choice at the bottom of the right hand column. 2-4 a week.

[The Tyee](#). Based in BC, its coverage is mostly BC and Alberta. The Tyee is a good source of commentary on current issues from folks whose insight is deeper than most. There is a “get our Newsletter free” link at the top right. It is in small letters. If you wish to add your voice, you must “Become a reader.” The link is on the top bar on the right. Daily.

Resources for Making Reliable Sense of Our Confusing World

Books:

All these books deal with the profound (epochal, paradigm-bursting) changes of the 21st Century. Of course, there are hundreds of others.

[A Short History of Progress](#) by Ronald Wright. The CBC's 2004 Massey Lectures. A short and accessible introduction to the notion that we who are Modern Techno-Industrial (MTI) persons and cultures are "Progress trapped," why this is and what it implies about our future.

[Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in without Going Crazy](#) by Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone. I have found it depressing to come to understand the actual historical situation we are in and the fact that I live in a culture which lives by a view that can only be described as both "to be expected" and "unhinged from reality." The issue of hope arises. Joanna Macy is one of the best guides in this space. {Disclosure: I know Joanna.}

[Christianity After Religion: The End of the Church and the Beginnings of a New Spiritual Awakening](#) by Diana Butler-Bass. A case study of a major dimension of our lives and how it is evolving as our MTI cultures disintegrate.

[Energy Slaves: Oil and the New Servitude](#) by Andrew Nikiforuk. A fine introduction to the central and critical role of energy in human cultures, the way high carbon energy has become our "slaves," and the way we are now trapped by this relationship.

[Immoderate Greatness: Why Civilizations Fail](#), by William Ophuls. This may be the best short (75 pages) and substantial essay which explain the basic dynamics of the major reasons human cultures eventually fail. It is the background you need to understand why breaking out of the miasma of our Modern cultures is necessary, reasonable and difficult.

[Swans Swine and Swindlers: Coping with the Growing Threat of Mega-Crises and Mega-Messes](#), by Can M. Alpaslan and Ian Mitroff. This is a fine short book which explores the mind-set we who were formed in MTI cultures have inherited and why it no longer lets us make reliable sense of our world. (Disclosure: I know Ian Mitroff.)

[The Limits to Growth: A Report to the Club of Rome](#), by Donella Meadows, et al, 1972. A PDF is available. The book is out of print. If you own a copy it is now worth several hundred dollars. An early warning which was ignored for two reasons. First, too few in the culture were "collapse literate" enough to understand what it said and what it implied. Second, in the early 1970s we who are Modern were so full of our power and success that we were in no mood to hear and digest any truly challenging news.

[The Long Emergency: Surviving the End of Oil, Climate Change, and Other Converging Catastrophes of the Twenty-First Century](#), by James Howard Kunstler, 2006. A relatively early book suggesting where we are and cultures are in more trouble than is understood or planned for. At the time folk thought it was “interesting” but not a storm warning.

[The Illusions of Urban Man](#) by Ruben Nelson. A short prophetic meditation on the state of Canadian society in 1976. A best seller. 2nd edition, 1980, available as a pdf file.

Organizations:

[CACOR](#) The Canadian Association of the Club of Rome.

They have some of the finest minds in Canada in their voluntary community. CACOR sponsors a weekly free, presentation by Zoom. Go to the “Contact us” page and sign up to receive notices. Become a member. I have been a member for decades.

[Cascade Institute](#)

A new centre of research and practice focussed on understanding and responding courageously to the truly strategic risks of societal collapse. Headed by Thomas Homer-Dixon, one of Canada’s most insightful scholars. Their research papers are downloadable. A “Subscribe to eNews” bar is at the bottom on the home page.

[Foresight Canada](#)

FC’s research program has focussed on the long-term dynamics which drive and mark the emergence and disintegration of whole forms of civilization. [Disclosure: Ruben Nelson is FC’s Executive Director.]

[International Futures Forum](#)

A UK-based, international network seeking to make sense of the times with fresh eyes. Their practice centre is worth exploring. Their Three Horizons model has been used all over the world. [Disclosure: I know Graham Leicester.]

[Post Carbon Institute](#)

One of the few bodies devoting all its energy to exploring the need for and nature of a shift to a post-carbon culture/economy. It sponsors the Resilience blog (see above). It has a “subscribe” bar on the top right of its home page. Richard Heinberg (see below) works there and writes for them.

Transformation Research Network

The only Canadian charity which takes as its starting point that ours is time “when transformational changes are both required and actually emerging within us, among us and around us.” Our work is to assist those who wish to explore this new way of framing the deep dynamics of the 21st Century. TRN does not yet have a website. [Disclosure: Ruben Nelson Chairs TRN’s Board.]

Persons:

A very small sample of some of the key person in this space. If you go to You Tube and search for them by name you will find videos worth watching.

Hazel Henderson: See her Ethical Markets in the Blogs section.

Jem Bendell: Author of the very important [Deep Adaptation paper](#).

Nate Hagens: A major prophetic thinker. [Nate Hagens - Post Carbon Institute](#).

Joanna Macy: An extraordinarily wise person. See her book above.

Richard Heinberg: Senior Fellow of the Post Carbon Institute above. Resilience is their blog.

Ruben Nelson: Much of his writing is in the [Foresight Canada Library](#).

Thomas Homer-Dixon: An influential Canadian public intellectual. [See his own website](#).

William Rees: Bill may be the wisest ecological economist alive today. See his own site.

Videos of Presentations:

These are a very small sample of worthwhile videos.

Will Modern Civilization be the Death of Us? June 29th and 30th, 2020. Bill Rees, followed by Ruben Nelson, presented a Special Session of the 2020 Annual Meeting of the AAAS for the Institute on Religion in an Age of Science.

1. Bill <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3GB191UDil&feature=youtu.be>
2. Ruben <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SfZu23ya-AY&feature=youtu.be>

Bill Rees. Too Clever by Half, But not nearly Smart Enough: Why Societal Collapse is Increasingly Possible. Presented to the Canadian Association of the Club of Rome. December 2020. Too clever by half, but not nearly smart enough - Bill Rees to the Canadian Club of Rome - YouTube

Ruben Nelson: Living with a Post-Despair Hope. Presented to the Edge Program of the United Church of Canada, Fall, 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SB-UdHEW1Yk&feature=youtu.be>

Nate Hagens: Earth and Humanity. His most recent summary statement. (2hours+) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNzLkdr7UIU>

As of: September 9, 2021