# THE OPEN SOURCE GUIDE TO THE ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE

It's Z-Day. Virus, toxic gas, or re-animation experiment gone wrong? "How" doesn't matter now. What matters is you and what you're going to do to keep from becoming one of them. Lucky for you, open source adapts to fill needs. And that's exactly what you need to do right now—adapt to survive. You're facing the quest of a lifetime: Find energy. Find your friends. Rebuild all of civilization.

You can do it. Here's how.
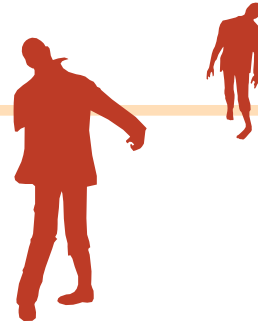
PROBLEM 1:
ENERGY

In the pouplar zombie TV show, there's one big problem facing the survivors. Ever since power generation ground to a halt and radio and TV broadcasts stopped, nobody has had a clue what's going on in the world. Plus, without

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leaking too many first-season spoilers, viewers learn that it's just not a good thing when certain places run out of generator power.

You think you can't live without your phone? Wait until you're stuck in the woods for six months with no Angry Birds, much less

Facebook or new episodes of *Warehouse 13*. You'll start talking to passing bluebirds in 140 characters and re-enacting Very Special Episodes of 80s sitcoms with "actors" you made from sticks and moss.

Or you could spend a little time making power, ensuring you'll be the most popular person in town. (What's left of it.) The sun will still be shining, and that means solar power. Opensource-solar.org to the rescue—this community publishes the know-how you'll need about off-grid photovoltaic systems. As Dana Blankenhorn writes [1], "The point of open source cooperation...is to create structures that can take what's available, when it becomes available, and then run with it." And that's exactly the approach it's going to take to survive the zombie apocalypse.

Of course, having power doesn't help without a reason to use it. You're still going to have to look for alternative entertainment if Nathan Fillion gets bitten. Now is the time to encourage your favorite entertainment professionals to also adopt important zombie preparedness measures.
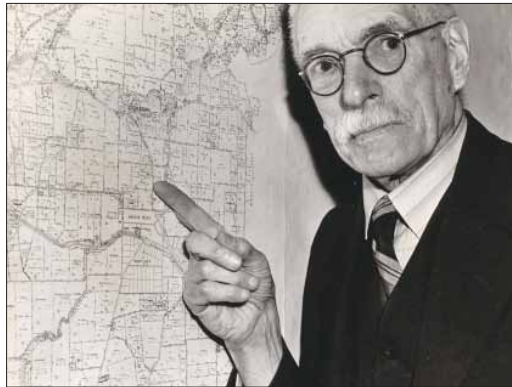
FINDING YOUR FRIENDS

If you participate in open source communities, two things are probably true about your friends:

1. They're smart.
2. They live nowhere near you.

You're going to need maps. There are several open source projects and software for mapping, and they've already made a huge difference in areas affected by disaster, like OpenStreetMap was able to do after the January 2010 Haiti earthquake [2].

The practical options for how to deal with mapping needs post-zombies depends on a few things. Whom will you be meeting? How far apart are you likely to be? What resources will you have? This is one good reason to perfect a solar-powered charger for a device on which you can store maps. Assume that GPS will no longer be available. Your preparedness plan should include regularly downloading current maps from one of these open source projects. It's impractical to download all of their maps, so we recommend analyzing the distances your group will need to travel to your pre-arranged meeting location, then choosing maps accordingly. Include a few maps that will get you from your gathering spot to secondary locations in case your encampment becomes zombie-compromised.

PREVENTING BOREDOM

Assume the worst—not only did the zombies get Nathan Fillion, but they took out Jonathan Coulton and George R. R. Martin. You'll never know what happens to Westeros. They even got Joss Whedon. (The guy writes about vampires and space cowboys—he won't be prepared for a zombie apocalypse.) What do you do for fun now? Those effigies of *The Golden Girls* won't keep you laughing forever.

Lucky for you, there's still old-fashioned pen-and-paper role-playing games. You won't be complaining about how much you hated the fourth edition of Dungeons and Dragons after the forty-second night in a row of a campfire singalong with that one guy who's so tone-deaf you're actually hoping for a late-night zombie

Creative Commons licensed songs, perfect for post-apocalyptic campfire singalongs:

ZOMBIES ARE PEOPLE TOO
RE: YOUR BRAINS
ZOMBIE NATION
CERTAIN DEATH
THE ZOMBIE ALPACA-LYPSE
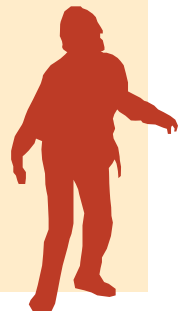
ambush. (See sidebar regarding recommended songs.) And with any luck, the apocalypse won't happen until after the fifth edition comes out. It's being crowdsourced [3], so now is your opportunity to have some input on the next generation of rules. Remember that munchkins have spent a lot of time considering the optimal ways to beat monsters, and thus are likely to be your fellow living players after the zombies take care of people who were watching reality TV instead. You should keep this in mind while helping to guide the game's future rules, lest you be a DM alone with a game full of NPCs, and then you might as well be back in the woods with your sitcom effigies.

For those who aren't content to play monsters when there are real monsters to face, there's the age-old entertainment of dance, valuable both for the participant and observer. Dance is historically collaborative and derivative, and even modern styles are learned in what could be described as an open source manner [4]. The NYC Ballet is gone, and Mary Murphy won't be there to criticize you. It's up to you and your chosen band of survivors to rebuild culture. Embrace a limp and invent "The Zombie," or play the survivor in a dance move that will be imitated by future generations and known to them by your name. You'll be the star of post-apocalyptic cultural history.

PROBLEM 4:
STAYING ALIVE

You're welcome to use Gloria Gaynor for entertainment inspiration, but staying alive post-apocalypse is serious business. Once you've survived the initial outbreak, you're going to need to figure out how to thrive. Hospitals will be overcome early on. You won't be able to turn to them for help. We know how to open source the study of an outbreak [5], but in a large-scale zombie apocalypse, that's not going to matter for a long time.

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A friend with a backyard biology lab will be handy [6]. Consider establishing your meet-up point near one of these and make sure to include biology and science enthusiasts in your survival group. Unfortunately, doctors and nurses will be called to help early and will largely fall to the zombie virus due to their line of work. Medical care will then be left to enthusiasts and scholars who have figured out how

to innovate with resources like Plexiglas panels and wire screens.

Unless you snag one of the few living doctors who remain, you'll need to do some research. For that, you can turn to PloS Medicine [9], a peer-reviewed, open access medical journal, as well as LinuxMedNews [10]. The latter is largely about software and thus may not be as useful depending on the remaining infrastructure and technology available.

Again, do not assume that power or Internet access will remain. Preparedness is your only hope. Stay up-to-date with resources like these and maintain printed copies of information that will be useful for the survival and regrowth of civilization. Take special note of information on the spread of epidemics or any information that even obtusely suggests research towards a cure for reanimated corpses.
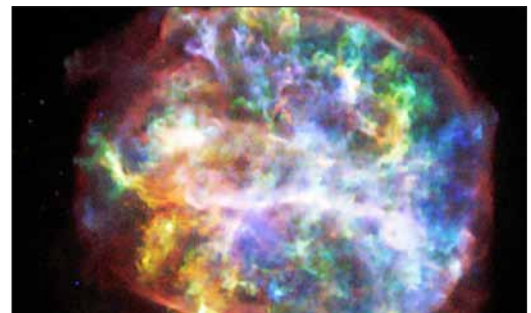
PROBLEM 5:
REBUILDING CIVILIZATION

Once you've survived and begun to advance civilization again, you're going to need some sort of economy, and your mattress stash of dollar bills will have become about as valuable as a pile of quatloos. For at least a time, the new sharing economy [7] will be the only economy. Open source values will be the values—concepts like sharing, community, and collaboration [8] will be the basis of your economy.

As Brian Gentile writes, "The only sin in open source [which in this case means all of post-apocalyptic civilization] is not participating."

You must begin participating now, not after the virus outbreak. By then, it will be too late.

Choose the ways that you will be most valuable and become a part of those open communities today. Learn what you'll need for the end of the world—while you still can. It may very well be the secret to your survival.

LINKS

1 Open source solar power:
opensource.com/solar

2 OpenStreetMap in Haiti:
opensource.com/osm

3 Crowdsourcing Dungeons and Dragons:
opensource.com/dnd5e

4 Open source dance:
opensource.com/dance

5 Outbreak investigation:
opensource.com/outbreak

6 DIY biology labs:
opensource.com/openlabs

7 The sharing economy:
opensource.com/sharing

8 The distinguishing principles of open source: opensource.com/principles

9 PloS Medicine:
plosmedicine.org

10 LinuxMedNews:
linuxmednews.com