
Advancement in Technology: Friend Or Foe?

Is Google truly making us stupid or are we getting smarter because of it? Nicholas Carr and Jamais Cascio, both writers for The Atlantic, published their very own distinct views on technology and its impact on human advancement; physiologically and psychologically. Ironically, Carr introduces his viewpoint by admitting how he feels his brain doesn't work at the rate that it used to while Cascio indicates that not everyone will be able to adapt as fast as technology, putting some humans at a great disadvantage. Cascio claims that growth in technology as we know it supports the development in the human mind and the way we think, but Carr suggests that due to disadvantages in how differently things are processed there are some who suffer major setbacks.

Many people with a profession in literature feel that while the internet is a success in the amount of time it takes to look up information, it also tends to cause people not to think about answers, simply click until they find the right one. Even the greatest philosophers of our times expressed disdain for such advancements in how their teachings are spread globally; in fact, they believed it would make humans dumber to read than to listen. Carr recalls Socrates' fear of writing, while valid, was thoughtless as he didn't realize the areas it would reach or the centuries his teachings still carried on being taught (7). Since, speaking has developed into writing and writing has turned into typing. Innovations like social media are thought to deplete the mind and its functions as all you do is scroll and occasionally like a photo. Cascio mentions Steven Johnson's "Everything Bad is Good for You", with a definitive stance that the many different ways humans are able to communicate and share information "...has made us smarter, rather than dumber" (3). We may not all be Instagram model smart, but the majority are not Einstein smart either.

Alternatively, without the advancements in the way we learn and process things, in 2018 we might only be touching the surface of having cellphones that aren't the size of our heads. The internet has created a way for humans to not endlessly search through books and scholarly journals to answers for the simplest of questions. It's fast paced learning that changes the way our brains think and learn, for the better. Cascio introduces neurophysiologist William Calvin's argument that our mere survival has been dependent on our brains changing to meet the challenges life as we know it throws at us, literally (2). With the idea of learning at light speed giving most people a headache, there are some who just can't process past a certain point at all. Hence, Carr exclaims "...something, has been tinkering with my brain, remapping neural circuitry, reprogramming the memory" (1). Due to one man or even several feeling as if a computer is taking over their lives, processing basic information becomes more than a task. After all, if there were even a chance of mankind being wiped out, technology can time it decades in advance. Can something that helps us, still hurt us?

With technology and its discussion of improvement, the revolution of science is almost always noted. Artificial Intelligence is such a mysterious form of technological science; a controversial topic in how it forms against religion or whether it's even natural. Both Cascio and Carr discuss technology's impact on artificial intelligence and agree how it is more of an assumption than a true effect and it's one of the hardest problems to solve that no one wants to crack (8;6). Presently, not one real answer remains on the origin of artificial intelligence and could very well

remain inconclusive.

Reading is a form of learning that is supposed to be the most beneficial, whether from a screen or on paper. Through different grade levels it's obvious to assume that reading is not a skill everyone possesses and in turn promotes the thought that if one cannot read, they cannot speak. Referring to Carr's use of Maryanne Wolf who states that "reading is not etched into our brains the way speech is" (3). The same paths that our minds take to make connections to words and actions when learning a language is very different than the path taken to learn the alphabet. These same twists and turns are also the ways humans process reading from the internet. This way of learning for a large percentage of the world causes the assumption of one being more intelligent than the other due to how someone can so differently learn and interpret things than others. While not always a disadvantage, it can cause major setbacks for improvement that is greatly needed.

The human mind is of a great network that is able to hold millions of bytes worth of information but without the resources or full capacity to understand technology and its innovation of life as we know it, such capacity remains empty and unused halting improvement in many. Humans who feel like Carr, that his brain has been reprogrammed by another species, may not ever embrace change for what it is (1). The mindset of Cascio, to not be afraid of technology and to grow with it to the point of never being surprised by the newest gadget as you're already expecting it (7,8). The element of always being one step ahead of the universe will be a tell-tale of how mankind will allow themselves to live; will you allow yourself to live in the present, or forever continue to plan your future?