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# The Impact Of Google On Our Brain: Is It Making Us Stupid

Technology has made life entertaining and engaging in several aspects but has also brought about far-reaching consequences for human social life. Our dependence on technology has eroded the human capacity to reason and think, as it provides immediate answers to human queries with just a click of a button. This has resulted in what might be called 'virtual knowledge,' as it is not stored in the brain as it used to be before technology advancement. This paper examines the shift in human thinking and behaviors resulting from the digital era.

According to Dr. Maria Wimber (Roberts 2), technology has brought a steep shift in the storage and usage of information. The study indicates that, in the past, people could memorize many things and then retrieve them in the brain when they are needed (3). Such data include phone numbers of relatives and friends, for example. Due to technological advancement, however, our memory storage seems to be decreasing and some estimates are that about 90% of people are suffering from what could be called "digital amnesia" (1). This has resulted in what is sometimes referred to as the 'Google Effect,' where instead of storing the information in our brains, we remember where to find it instead, which is on the internet. This corresponds to Professor Betsy Sparrow's research, from Columbia University, about the Google Effect. Sparrow concluded that our brain is nothing without the internet now, as we rely on it for everything (2).

A contrary opinion to this one is voiced by Dr. Genevieve Bell, who argues (Roberts 3) that technology is not making us stupid. Instead, she illustrates how technology is making life simple by ensuring that every content that one needs is gotten in an easier way. She, therefore, contradicts Carr's views on the same issue. Carr believes there has been an erosion of human brain capacity to store information and therefore enhance knowledge. In my opinion, there has been a great shift in human thinking brought about by technology. We are relying more on the internet to get all queries solved. This reduces our capability to store information in our brain, and thus leads to a lack of content in our brains, making us appear stupid.

Yes, technology is making us stupid in many ways. Technology has made the world a global village based on virtual community program, and one can access information from different parts of the world (Kimberly 6:11/17:03). It is the overreliance on technology that makes us stupid. With technology, it can quickly get the information they require with just one click, which might not be always correct (6). Technology has made life entertaining in several aspects. The use of technology has made communication simple and has replaced the older means of communication. It has resulted in the emergence of many social platforms which include Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Linked In, YouTube, Snapchat, among others. This has resulted in a drastic impact on the social life and lifestyle of the broader population.

By using gadgets like laptops, and smartphones we can deprive ourselves of sleep. Sleep is important to our health, and when we lose sleep, we tend to suffer from the decreased focus at work, bad moods, and memory problems. Moreover, the increased use of these gadgets in a day suppresses our body's release of melatonin hormone at night, leading to lower quality sleep (Wilmer et al., 15). I have experienced the loss of sleep on nights before work or school due to being connected to the internet. I noticed that I was more irritable and less able to focus

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thoroughly. I believe that yes, technology can make us more stupid--we are literally losing sleep over it!

In the Digital Nations video, they showed a study on the research of multitasking and the brain. They used an MRI to see the brain activity of a handful of students at the Stanford campus. (Dretzin & Rushkoff, 2010) The college students at Stanford claimed to be great multitaskers. The professor that was doing the study said "Virtually all multi-taskers think they are brilliant at multitasking and one big discovery is that you know what you are really lousy at it. It turns out multitaskers are terrible at every aspect of multitasking. They get distracted constantly their memory is very disorganized" (Dretzin & Rushkoff, 2010 8:29 /8:48). While I was watching the video they discussed the results of the study. I was very alarmed by them. I am guilty of claiming "to be a great multitasker." It gave me a new perspective on my studying habits.

I really enjoyed this part of the video because I can relate to one of the students that were interviewed. He states that he is always connected to social media, YouTube, etc., especially while in classes and studying. When I am studying and doing homework, I usually go to the University of Alaska Anchorage's library. When I first get to the library, I write down exact times to force myself to have a study break. I turn off my social media, and alerts on my cell phone. I have found that if I can set exact times for me to take a study break that it gives me a better incentive to remain focused for a period of time.

To conclude, after viewing the Digital Nations video, I learned that one cannot concentrate on important projects that are set while simultaneously being stimulated by flipping between different browsers, email, and social media.