

The illiteracy paradox

[Business](#)



Isn't it eerie? Although we now have no end of information sources at our disposal, recent statistics reveal a shuddering truth: illiteracy is growing steadily.

A new species of so-called “ functional illiterates” has loomed. They are like the idle cricket of a well-known fable, which died of starvation in the middle of a wealth of food, because it wouldn't bother to lift a finger and store it for winter, taking a leaf out of the ant's book. Figuratively, neither do they know how to capitalize on the surrounding resources, just that in their case it is information that evades them. The phenomenon called “ mass culture” emerged together with the Industrial Revolution that is in the second half of the XVIIIth century. The typing machine had indeed been invented much earlier by Gutenberg, but it was not until now that information began to swiftly dispel worldwide. However, people had to do research in order to gain the needed piece of information and that was usually done by in-depth study.

Although arduous sometimes, this kind of work had innumerable benefits on individuals, since they were coerced to delve into the subject, in order get a particular novelty. When the age of Internet set off, people regarded PCs only as the perfect gadget to supplant their demanding scouring after information. In other words, all you wanted to find out was just a few clicks far from you. You didn't need to pore over an entire book for a single piece of data. The World Wide Web had already compressed all the knowledge for you. The downside of the technological revolution failed to be foreseen.

Having all this information so readily at hand turns us into some spoilt children being served everything on a silver platter. We don't appreciate anymore the underlying efforts invested into the stuffing of this store of knowledge. We virtually became some copy-machines, devoid of critical thinking and objective analysis. We are dependent on Copy-Paste and don't even bother to skate over the document we are printing, to proofread it and check for possible errors. Creativity is a side-victim. Give a five-year-old child a paper clip and he will contrive dozens of different forms of interacting with it and put it to different uses.

Give the same paper clip to a school-leaver who has uninterruptedly been subject to the self-vision erasing Internet searching treatment and chances are that he will remember solely its primary function (sticking files together) at best. Another knock-on effect is the easiness we let ourselves manipulated. We tend to take things for granted and don't raise any question marks over untenable subjects, but get straightforward duped by their surface meaning. To conclude, Internet is by and large a marvelous invention. Nonetheless, if we immerse headfirst into it, unaware of its underground dangers, we run the not-to-be-underestimated risk of dwindling our store of knowledge, instead of enriching it.