

Computer literacy

[Technology](#), [Computer](#)



The computer technology became a very important aspect in human lives that is greatly relied upon. Nowadays personal computers are made quite affordable and allow for easy and fast way to access information and solve problems in daily life. Life is a continuous information interchange and technological progress helps accelerate this exchange. However, people are so dependable on computers that they do not realize the impact it has on literacy.

Computer literacy is essential in our modern society but with great advantages of this skill come disadvantages that can have a negative impact on the three basic skills such as reading, writing and arithmetic. Reading is a skill that is taught from a very young age that makes people more intellectual and formed in an everyday life. Technology made access to information very simple which is why many people turn to computers for news, books and others sources of information.

A trip to a library or a newspaper shop is a thing of the past since everything is available at your fingertips in the comfort of your own home. However reading from a computer screen can be much slower and inefficient. In the following quote, “ These differences in reading speed are assumed to be due to a declined sense of orientation when reading long lines of online text presented in single wide columns” it is evident that reading from a computer screen can affect the reading speed when comparing to reading from the book.

A person can easily lose track of where they are when reading from a screen and as a result this can affect comprehension of the text. This is evident in

the “ Failure to Connect” by Jane Healy, “ Reading from the screen is slower, more fatiguing, less accurate, and more subject to information overload than standard reading. In several studies, students tested for comprehension after reading from a screen demonstrated less understanding and poorer memory than those getting the same information from a book. They tended to get lost or flip too quickly through the screens without reading” .

When reading of the computer screen people tend to stare and blink less causing static stare which increase chances in eye strain and headaches, while on the paper there is rapid and rhythmic eye movement which significantly causes less strain on the eyes. Reading printed text gives a reader time to reflect and imagine thus creating an overall different environment. Clifford Stoll also points out a negative effect of computer literacy on reading, he writes “ As computers replace textbooks, students will become more computer literate and more book illiterate.

They’ll be exploring virtual worlds, watching dancing triangles, downloading the latest Web sites. But they won’t be reading books” . When computers were invented there was an argument that this technology will sharpen intellectual skills and their development which in part is true through the use of various teaching software. However it seems that people spend more time on entertainment such as online chatting and playing games rather than taking an advantage of reading an intellectual book which is certainly intended to teach. Writing is another skill that produces human literacy.

Writing on the computer changes the way of writing and the nature of the relationship between the writer and his writing. “ Writing requires focused

attention, and anything that diverts attention away from the process of writing (in particular, thinking about what to write) is going to affect the quality of the work produced” . As mentioned by Armstrong and Casement writing requires focused attention and writing on the computer can be very distracting since online chatting software or other means of distractions are only a click away.

Writing can be frustrating at times since organizing and expressing your thoughts is always difficult but it can be much harder to do using the computer due to distractions. Work written using the computer appears stilted and less considerable even though it is neater. However, the hand written work appears better organized, and has a better expression of thoughts as there is no distraction. There is an advantage to reviewing several pages at the same time when hand writing rather than on the computer where you can only see a page at once.

People tend to focus more on how their work looks paying more attention to things such as font size and alignment instead of organizing their thoughts and what to write. Many people think that writing aids on the computer are good for their writing, but this is not true. As Jane Healy says, “ Computers will not themselves teach writing skills” , computer ought to help in writing, but they will not teach those skills. Due to the word processing software a lot of students cannot write clearly and punctually nowadays. Clifford Stoll made a very good point about writing on the computer, he said “ Instead, you type delete or undo.

Your mistakes don't teach you as well" . Since it is so easy to use spell-check that people tend to not pay attention to their mistakes and let word processing software do the job. Quite frequently the software automatically corrects mistakes while typing that a person does not realize he spelled the word incorrectly. The trend of online chatting and text messaging also has a huge impact on writing skills due to the use of short forms. Arithmetic is the third basic skill which develops human logic. Computer is not a way to develop logic because it only gives someone else's logic.

There are programs which solve problems and calculate answers, but they certainly teach nothing. Students find answers to problems online or in special software without understanding and manipulating the concepts. As the example of this problem, " The World Wide Web will tell me the volume of water behind Egypt's Aswan Dam – a fact. Far more useful is to know how to calculate this number – a skill" . The use of calculators can greatly affect the understanding of numerical relationships since students go from numbers to answers skipping the fundamentals of understanding the concept.

This is evident in " High Tech Heretic" by Clifford Stoll, " No surprise that students weaned on calculators can't multiply in their heads. They can't divide. They're minimally cognizant of basic arithmetic" . Computer programs and calculators work against learning basic arithmetic and have a big effect on the arithmetic skills. Students are dependent on computer programs and calculators that without the use of this technology, their skills

are very limited because they are taught on how to plug in the numbers to get answers without understanding the concept.

As another example of a computer program Logo, “ I see Logo as a means that can, in principle, be used by educators to support the development of new ways of thinking and learning. However, Logo does not in itself produce good learning anymore than paint produces good art. ” . Logo does not fit in mathematical skills, because it is just a program that solves the problems. The program makes to believe that there is always answer to the problem-solving, where one click on the mouse will show you the answer.

The very good point was in the book “ The Cult of Information” by Theodore Roszak, he says “ The problem that AI(Artificial Intelligence) has encountered in pursuing its inflated claim are illuminating, if for no other reason that they reveal the limitations of the mathematical mind when it strays beyond the boundaries of pure reason – or rather seeks to extend those boundaries into the real world” . Mathematics is a translation of problems into an abstract view where numerical solutions are converted into understanding which neither computer programs nor calculators can do.

Nowadays, there is surprisingly a big amount of people that do not get the mathematical concepts and the logic of solutions. Computer literacy has a negative influence on the three basic skills. There is nothing taught using computers, except of a bad access of information, the manner of its presentation, manipulation, and the easy answers. Computer cannot impart information to a human. It can only changes human views to a life. “ They dull the skills we use in everyday life” .