

Is technology making us stupider argumentative essay

[Technology](#), [Internet](#)



The two leading and opposite views on the effect of the technology revolution on the human mind are from Nicholas Carr and Steven Johnson. While the former claims that the internet has a very dysfunctional effect on human cognition, the latter believes that the evolution of more complex games and technologies has enriched the average human mind. This essay takes a look at both the schools of thought and draws conclusions from the respective arguments made.

Nicholas Carr starts his essay with the observation that his own book reading and long article writing habits have suffered immensely due to lack of concentration which can be attributed to the time being spent on the internet. He goes on to say that the human beings are developing a new reading habit which he doesn't think is best suited given that there is much less concentration and even lesser contemplation. While commenting on how the future researcher will not do a lot of reading, Carr paints a sad picture of the new generation of readers.

While accepting that his work has no backing from neurology and other brain related science, Carr presents a theory that unlike the ability to speak, which he says comes naturally, the ability to read has to be taught. Here in he says the internet is doing no good to that particular ability. Carr makes a reference to the great German philosopher Nietzsche and his use of the typewriter. He quips about how the typewriter had made the philosopher's work even more abrupt. Carr then reaches the central topic of his essay - the effect of internet on the cognitive ability of man. He says that man had a series of intellectual tasks in his daily routine all of which have now been taken over by the internet.

He further adds that the style of the internet has been adopted by other media as well, further denting man's cognitive ability. Another key aspect of the internet that Carr says has dumbed down the human brain is the conversion of an abstract concept to a concrete knowledge. This he says was previously done by the human being as an intellectual exercise but has now been taken over by the computers. Carr ends his essay on the note that in the past some great thinkers such as Socrates and Squarciafico have expressed similar concerns about new ideas such as the written language and printed working. On this note, he leaves the question open to the reader .

Steven Johnson bases his book on denying the argument that pop culture has affected human intelligence negatively. He first refers to the sleeper curve to make a point that even the society that existed before us had not discovered how cream pies could be a nutritious diet. However here he denies that just the fact about sleeper curve, which itself he draws from the movie *Sleeper*, can exhaustively prove his argument. He then goes on to suggest that the video games of today, contrary to popular perceptions of spreading addiction through violent and vulgar content, are instead addictive because of their structural superiority. He says the games give the mind a lot to think and organize - a task previously not natural to the human cognitive process.

He further speaks about television and says that the TV has taken the understanding of the emotional quotient to a higher level. He gives the example of reality shows and says that these shows have got a realistic understanding of the complex human engagements and relationships. While

speaking about the evolution of films, Johnson says that stories are no more being spoon-fed to the audience. Symbolic references made to help the audience understand moments like flash-back have reduced and it is now assumed that the audience will understand what is going on. This he says has helped the people explore and express their cognitive self - much more than in the past .

Studies have found that the human brain's evolution ceased over a thousand years ago . The technological advances that have been made in recent history have only served to compensate in the declining intellect of the human mind. While people who lives between 2000 to 6000 years ago had to depend greatly on their mental strength to solve problems, the current availability of technology and inventions eliminates this need greatly.

However, the decline in intellect itself is not associated with the advent of technology but to a deterioration in human genes .

Neither of the two theorists - Carr and Johnson have made scientific claims in their arguments. These arguments however are presented in a logical format with each claim being justified by significant arguments. Critics have remained vastly dismissive of both the arguments, calling the latter - an absolution for couch potatoes and the former a little too mournful too early. It is therefore clear that a real understanding of the effect of internet on the human mind can only be justified through neurological correlations and studies. However, human intellect has witnesses a decline for several thousands of years and hence it cannot be solely attributed to technology.

Works Cited

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