

Human although we
accomplish many
tasks at the



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Human are endowed with the ability to multitask, thanks to their unique brains.

Have you ever imagined what life would be if humans lacked the ability to swiftly and flawlessly shift their attention from one task to another? We would be unable to chat while cooking or listen to music while we type a document. In a nutshell, our way of life would crush to a depressing halt. However, as aptly suggested by Maggie Jackson in her article titled *Multitasking, the Effects: A Culture Less Thoughtful, Less Productive, Less Creative*, humans pay a dear price when they multitask.

This is because multitasking stalls the ability to learn and understand. Although we accomplish many tasks at the same time, we know less (Jackson 1). Our cognitive abilities diminish the more tasks we do and switch between them. This paper will present arguments to support Maggie's assertion that multitasking compromises our ability to think and learn. Human have always been multitasking since time immemorial. However, the underlying problem is that humans are constantly on a multitasking mode. Our daily activities have been magnified by an array of interconnected gadgets that frequently barrage us with bits of trivial data that disrupt our train of thoughts. Consequently, humans spent less time to their attentive and calmer modes of thoughts that have constantly given wealth to their culture and intellectual skills (the modes of thoughts that entail meditation, concentration, reflection and introspect).

The less time we engage in these patterns of mind, the more we are likely to lose them all (Jackson 1). There is no doubt that humans are extremely

industrious in many areas. For example, we are able to read emails and clear items from our ever growing to-do lists in a matter of seconds. We are able to solve many problems in split seconds. Consequently, according to the Families and Work Institute, approximately 30% employees complain they are very busy hence cannot afford time to reflect on what they do. According to Harvard Business School, many workers experience frustration, stress and lower artistic quality as a result of escalating levels of interruptions.

Ironically, one study has shown that people who regularly multitask cannot focus on important things compared to people who scarcely multitask. The Stanford's Clifford's Nass aptly refers to people who regularly multitask as “ suckers for irrelevancy” (Jackson 3).

The overdependence on digital equipments and current search engines (such as Google) hamper the ability of humans to generate knowledge from oceans of information around them. For example, a mere 50% of college students are able to assess the impartiality of a website. In 1990, 40% of college students were able to read a document (such as food label) competently. Currently, less than 30% of them can achieve a similar feat.

In addition, 75% of these graduates are only able to demonstrate basic critical thinking abilities. The overreliance on the digital age is the main reason for these shortcomings. Maggie Jackson asserts that if this pattern continues unchecked, the society (and learning institutions) will continue to nurture novel forms of ignorance born from inability to create knowledge from the sea of information around us (5). We cannot dispute the important role of technology in our lives. Technology has played a major role in fostering socio-political and economic growth as well as integration. The

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world we live in today has been decimated into what many people refer to as global village. All this remarkable advancements are largely attributed to the digital era.

Technology has also facilitated new levels of community interactions and connectivity. For example, when Danah Boyd (a sociologist expert) examined the email inbox of Mike, she discovered that he was connected to over 11 million people around the world. It seems breadth (and not depth) has turned out to be the custom in the current world of hyper-connectivity. In nutshell, your email inbox not only consumes most of your time every day. It draws you into an ever-widening circle of associates, steered through anonymous means of communication. You simply do not have sufficient time to sustain deep and quality communication with other people (Jackson 6).

Maggie Jackson states further that diluted attention as well as fragmented moments have negative impacts on relationships. Our current digital age (characterized by gadget-driven hyper connectivity) has altered the manner in which people interrelate. Reciprocated focus is a critical ingredient for any meaningful social engagement in our lives. When we permit interruptions to intersperse our social interactions with other people, we compromise the opportunity for a true “ meeting of minds” (Jackson 7). It is worthy to note that we can only nurture in-depth interactions if we lend credence to our social engagements with other people. In addition, social fragmentation has been identified as the main reason why many households with multiple communication gadgets spend less time together.

Nowadays, mothers multitask about 80 hours a week compared to 40 hours per week in 1970s. What's more, children aged below six years are brought up in an environment where television is kept on for more than half a day. As a result, parents spent less than 25% of their time with children (Jackson 8)

No one can dispute the fact that we need multitasking in our daily engagements. Nonetheless, we should not sacrifice our critical thinking abilities, in-depth focus and social relationships at the expense of what the digital age has to offer. Humans are currently experiencing numerous social, political, economical and environmental challenges that need to be addressed immediately. Humans can effectively address these problems by reinforcing (and not weakening) their critical thinking abilities as well as social interactions.

Works Cited

Jackson, Maggie. "Multitasking, the Effects: A Culture Less Thoughtful, Less Productive, Less Creative.

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