

# What is the effect of the recent information deluge on our intellectual capabilities...

[Philosophy](#)



Hypertext experiments in the past on the web showed that hyperlinks would improve the comprehension and learning ability since they would strengthen critical thinking as one moved from one link to the next. The findings of experiments related to this field, however, showed that there was little that hypertexts improved in comprehension and critical thinking in they only served to act as interrupters or distracters from the actual task of reading and comprehending that which was at hand. It also affected the memory of the users in that they forgot that which they had read and that which they had not read since moving between links disrupts memory and the transfer of information from working memory to the long-term memory. As a result, the conclusion was that hypertexts in documents did for learning and in any case, it lowered the ability to retrieve information from documents by affecting retention (Carr, 2010).

People's general misconceptions were that use of the internet actually made people smarter as there were more stimuli and there was increased brain activity as people go through the web. The rerouting of brain neurons allows people to be better at problem solving, which is apparently not since increased brain activity does not translate in improving brain activity or cognitive skills (Armstrong, 2011). Instead, it only serves to reroute people's neural pathways for information. It is also a misconception that the web is making us smarter as; in fact, it only strengthens brain functions in relation to solving fast-paced problems.

The reason behind web surfing and multitasking is the need to absorb information rapidly and within the shortest time possible in bits and pieces (Carr, 2010). This is meant to identify information quickly in order for one to

choose whether he or she will read further for more information. This is such that web surfing is meant to allow one to be in communication with the rest of the world while at the same time obtaining information from the internet. Multitasking, on the other hand is a form of distraction from one task to the next or another task and it is done to the presence of multiple stimuli and search for relevance in everything people do in the web and beyond. Cognitive overload and switch cost has significant effects on our brains in that it corrupts our power to retain the knowledge that we acquire and the ability to relate between memories by creating connections between them. This way, cognitive overload affects the brain in that it influences our ability to learn and understand in that it weakens the two, as the brain is unable to match the information flowing in and the one that is retained. In regard to switch cost the brain has to reorient every time it changes to a new form of stimulus thus concentration is affected by being lowered thus misinterpretation of information is common. Because of the internet and multitasking, our behavior is affected in that we lose attention and the ability to pay attention to relevant information as the brain works so hard to filter out that which is not relevant. This is also the effect of multitasking, where loss of attention occurs due to short spans spent on certain activities than others.

#### References

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Armstrong, K (2011). The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains

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