

# How is Automation Revolutionizing Learning?

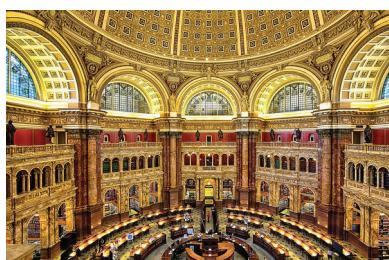
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## Age of Information

Information surrounds us more than it ever has before. Within seconds we have the ability to cite random facts, like how many satellites Jupiter has (67), to how long it would take us to get there (6 years)<sup>1</sup>. But being able to cite random facts is not knowledge. Places of learning have always been held in prestige. But as our ability to know everything has become commonplace, many of the traditional forms of learning are falling to the wayside in preference of more immediate digital ones.

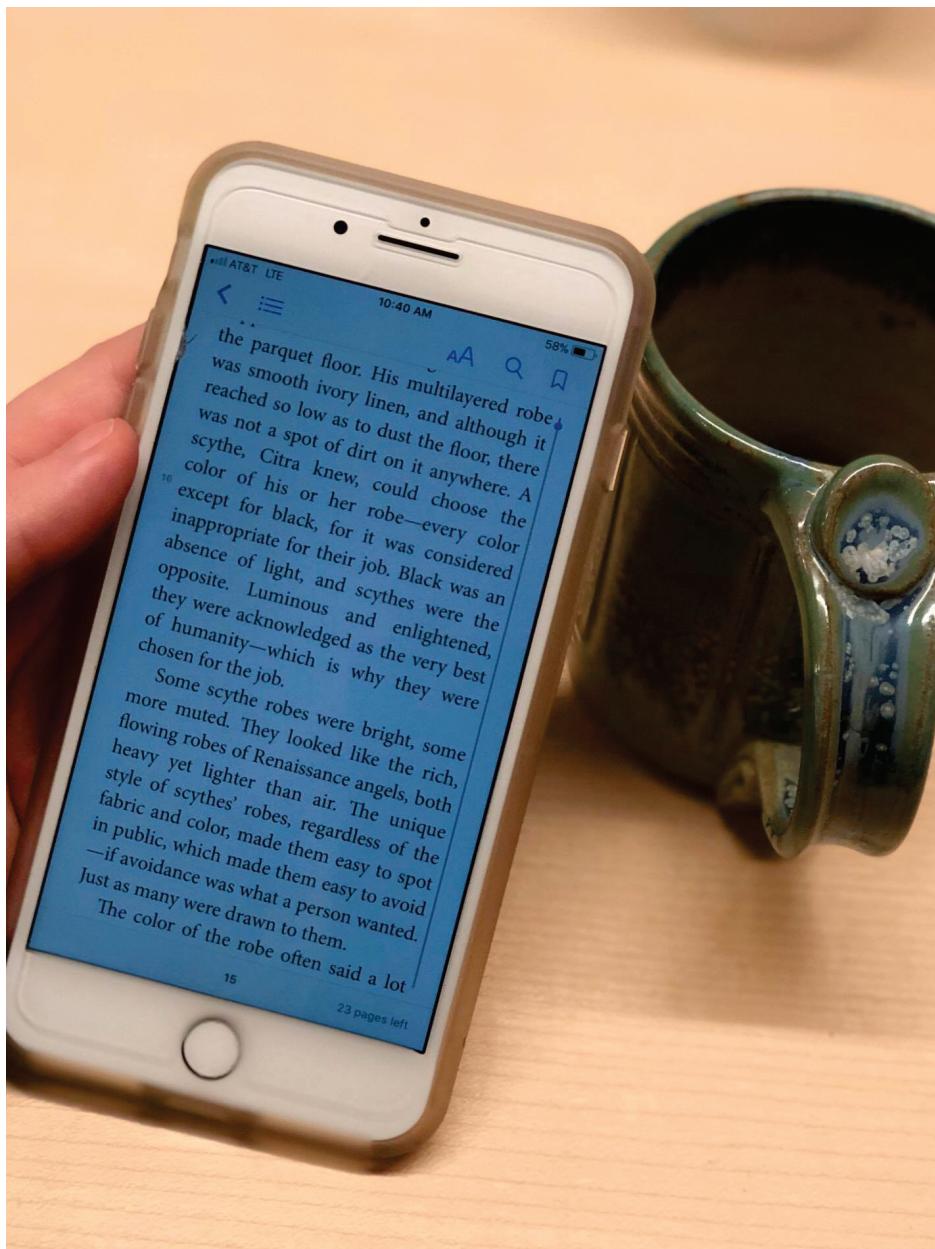
Some of the world's best buildings and places were housed to store knowledge, from the Library of Congress, Philips Exeter Academic Library, to Boston's Public Library. Libraries are still held in high esteem with 76% of Americans believing their Libraries well serve the needs of their community<sup>2</sup>. Still though, fewer and fewer people are visiting these institutions. And the same can be said about bookstores. People love to visit bookstores, but that is the problem, they like to visit not purchase<sup>3</sup>. Instead of buying a physical book at a store or picking one up at a library, readers are preferring to purchase their books online either through digital stores, or a digital format.



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## Digital Books

eBooks, despite a recent decline in popularity are still widely consumed today<sup>4</sup>. Giving the reader the ability to carry an entire library worth of information in their pocket is powerful. A reader can instantly choose which book they want to download whether it came out 3 minutes ago or decades before, it does not matter. In fact, many books found in the public domain are often free to download, giving the reader a wider range of knowledge at a lower cost than a physical book, and without the hassle of having to go to library<sup>5</sup>. One of the bigger trends in digital books is the increase in prominence of the audiobook. There are services like Audible, which gives book lovers a subscription-based service on audiobooks. Audiobooks have started to feed into Americas obsession with productivity<sup>6</sup>. They can fundamentally transform even the most mundane moments of life into entertaining and educational experiences with the press of a button. Apps Such as Overdrive bring the best of both worlds by creating a free online library that is connected to a reaginal one, and now with Google including your local Overdrive librabry in their serch results finding a book quickly could never be easier<sup>7</sup>.



## An Online Education

One of the areas that the eBook is struggling is in academia. Despite some obvious advantages of the digital over the physical edition, students often will choose to purchase the physical edition<sup>8</sup>. That is changing, especially as online universities are having a more significant presence in our world. Currently, eighty percent of regionally accredited institutions of higher education are now offering online access, including elite universities such as Harvard, Berkley and the University of Chicago<sup>9</sup>. Most of these universities offer online cores as a supplement to the traditional in person education, but many others offer courses entirely online. These schools have always been extremely convenient for nontraditional students, giving them the chance to study outside of the traditional environment and on their own time schedule. Many people dismiss the quality of these universities, however, according to U.S. Department of Education, there is no evidence that these universities are inferior to a traditional classroom<sup>10</sup>.

New Technologies also allow for a deeper level of emersion. Though still in its infancy, VR as well as AR, seem to hold insane amounts of potential. Will an entire class take part at one's home while you are plugged into a sort of virtual education simulation<sup>11</sup>? Why not? Will we all experience the world through our own crazy yellow school bus? Only time will tell.



- 1 <https://www.thrillist.com/tech/transit-times-to-planets-how-long-would-it-take-to-get-to-mars>
- 2 <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2016/04/americans-like-their-libraries-but-they-use-them-less-and-less-pew/477336/>
- 3 <http://www.ibtimes.com/borders-closing-why-bookstore-chain-failed-300009>
- 4 [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/02/27/print-ebooks-studies\\_n\\_6762674.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/02/27/print-ebooks-studies_n_6762674.html)
- 5 <https://ilmk.wordpress.com/why-are-some-e-books-free/>
- 6 <https://qz.com/924075/audiobook-readers-obsessed-with-multitasking-are-driving-americas-biggest-new-reading-trend/>
- 7 <https://goodereader.com/blog/e-book-news/google-now-includes-overdrive-library-ebooks-in-search-results>
- 8 <http://www.onlineuniversities.com/blog/2012/06/10-reasons-why-students-arent-using-etextbooks/>
- 9 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tomlindsay/2014/10/08/the-top-eight-things-you-need-to-know-about-online-education/#6d1ae4a6fd4>
- 10 <https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/tech/evidence-based-practices/finalreport.pdf>
- 11 <https://techcrunch.com/2016/01/23/when-virtual-reality-meets-education/>