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Reflexion on Vannevar Bush's *As We May Think*

In this article, American engineer Vannevar Bush describes not only the machines he uses and develops on a daily basis, but the ones that will be used in the future as well. By drawing links with the past industrial revolutions, he is able to map precise assumptions about how (his) present technologies can evolve to become greater than anything scientists of his days have ever seen. The focus of his text is the advancement of an extended storing machine capable of being consulted by the popular mass; what we would come to know familiarly as the computer.

Furthermore, he goes over limitations of past and present technologies and explains how future endeavors should solve them. For instance, he mentions the selection processes of said machines to be able to speed up radically if "increased speed were economically warranted". After all, most people did not actually need nor want access to the data within these machines until very recently. There was therefore no need for scientific advancement until they became more popular and accessible.

Bush additionally describes the limitations within the selection process in itself, pointing out that while computers work by storing alphabetically or numerically subclasses of data, "the human mind does not work that way. It operates by association". The way the human mind

jumps from one idea to another is a gymnastic very few complex programs are able to mimic. Nevertheless, the human mind tends to forget information that has not been triggered in a some time, something computer machines do not lack.

In the end, Bush pushes the idea that we, as humans with associative thought processes, could not hope to attain the "permanence and clarity" of stored data that modern computers can offer. However, we remain necessary to technological processes because of the flexibility of our minds and the speed to which we associate thoughts together.

Works Cited

Bush, Vannevar. "As We May Think." *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 9 Jan. 2019, www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1945/07/as-we-may-think/303881/.