Steve Berthiaume September 18th, 2020

CART 211 As We May Think ~ Reflection

While reading several decade old articles is usually a fascinating look at another period, *As We May Think* offers shockingly grounded predictions for the future of science and technology, based on what was available in 1945. Vannevar Bush’s writing offers a glimpse into a time where technology had been refined for warfare, though not yet readied for the advent of the internet which was to come. This period of plentiful knowledge suffered from a lack of accessibility to said knowledge, leaving most unable to understand much of what was being developed. This piece talks of an increasing need for specialized workers proficient in their fields, unable to communicate with each other due to a lack of common knowledge on their areas of expertise.

Reading this paper with modern hindsight, it becomes immediately evident how blessed we are as a modern society to have access to the internet as a resource – any specialized field is one that can be researched and learned by any person across the globe, should they so choose. This development has been so extreme that even with Bush’s incredible predictions on the development of technology, he could not imagine a system for sharing knowledge quite on the level of the internet. I found it incredibly interesting to read into his thoughts for the future, however, as he shows himself to be at the very least quite knowledgeable on the topics he’s discussing the future of. His predictions for photography, communication and even medicine all generally fall in line with what we have today, in some manner. An article such as this one brings up an inevitable question, regarding how much further our technologies can really progress. Have we truly reached the pinnacle for our consumer resources, or are we simply unable to imagine the machinations which will make our futures, or the futures of our children, easier to live in? Putting aside pessimism about the current state of the world, the topic is fascinating, and I’m glad to have read this article in spite of it’s length.