

Bibliography

Carr, Nicholas G. *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains*. Atlantic Books, 2020.

Summary

This book studies the effects of different tools mankind has developed throughout history with a focus on modern day technology and how it is re-wiring our brains. The author wrote this book because he was an early adopter of technology, but soon began to notice the effects this technology was having on his brain. Yet, despite these changes in his brain, he continued to use his computer. Throughout the book, Carr looked at how our brain functions and adapts, as well as how it has evolved over time, and now in the modern-day, mankind and technology are in a feedback loop where both have influence over each other. Calling us to action at the end of the book, we are challenged to not go easy into this new age. We need to not accept these changes in our brain without being conscious of what we might lose if we accept this new technological age without questioning ideas, the longer-term effects, and our humanity.

Quotes

“Our ways of thinking, perceiving, and acting, we know now, are not entirely determined by our genes. Nor are they entirely determined by our childhood experiences. We change them through the way we live – and, as Nietzsche sensed, through the tools we use” (38).

“What makes us most human, is what is least computable about us, our emotion and empathy” (182).

“We program our computers and therefore they program us” (187).

Response

This book was fairly easy to read yet did jump around a lot. There were digressions and some tangents that were relevant yet interrupted the flow. I appreciate all of the research that went into this book and the use of personal examples and testimonies of others that have experienced the effects of technology. I would recommend this book to those that are interested in this new technological age we find ourselves in. It uses many great examples of how different tools have shaped history and the lessons we can learn from them today based on the new tools that have been developed. I do agree with the call to action as well to question the new changes, and even though we use these tools for many hours of the day, finding ways to escape from them as well before we know the true effects of technology on our brain.