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Assignment #2

Is Google Making Us Stupid?

At the beginning of his article, Carr talks about how he used to be able immerse himself into a book and how he could read an article without being distracted. Instead now he gets loses his concentration even after a small bit of reading. I can strongly relate to this. Back when I was in high school and when I didn’t have access to as much technology as I do now, I was able to read and do all my homework in one sitting without getting distracted by anything. I was also able to read a whole book in a day. Now, just like Carr says “I’ve had an uncomfortable sense that someone, or something, has been tinkering with my brain, remapping the neural circuitry, reprogramming the memory”, I feel as if something has gone into my brain and changed it to work in a vastly different way. This is very relatable to his example of Friedrich Nietzsche where he bought a typewriter. He was growing blind and was scared to give up writing. However, the countless hours on the typewriter taught his brain to be able to type without being able to see. This relates to how our brains are being taught to become more fast-paced and to become more impatient. Before, when I would have to read a text for a class, I would be excited to read it because I knew that I could understand it since I could sit there and read it at once. Now, I dread reading long texts. The first thing that is most important whenever I do any reading or schoolwork is that I must have music. I admit that this is one of the factors that makes me distracted. So my brain has definitely changed in a way that makes me want to do other things like surfing the web and searching for music rather than staying focused on the task at hand.

One thing Carr says in his article really piqued my interest, “Once I was a scuba diver in the sea of words. Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski.” This metaphor is good at depicting the way our minds work now, just skimming through everything and not soaking up any information or knowledge. I can feel this now as I read books for college courses, I will read a page from the book without understanding a word but I won’t care and will continue to struggle to read the rest of the book. The fast-paced nature of the web is definitely a large cause of this “zipping along the surface”. The way we get information on the internet is in short bursts. We go from Twitter post to Twitter post, from Instagram photo to Instagram photo, from Facebook video to Facebook video. And most of us do this every day, including me. This way of taking in small amounts of information at a fast pace has trained my mind to take in all kinds of information in that way. This is why when I read a lengthy article or book, I will tend to wander off to some form of social media to go back to a fast-paced style. I believe that I speak for a lot of people who use technology. So, for us to take in information like we did before technology brainwashed us, we either try to conform back to a slow-paced style or the information we take needs to conform to our fast-paced thinking.

The last thing that I relate to and agree with Carr on was on the quote he gave from Maryanne Wolf, “We are not only *what* we read, we are *how* we read”. Carr also shows that we are reading more now than we did before. So even if we are reading more, we aren’t reading the way we should. For example, as I was reading an article for a class I would read a paragraph or section then I would swap the tab to Reddit or Facebook for a couple minutes then go back to reading another paragraph. Sure, I’m reading posts on Reddit and Facebook but it is not consistent reading which is why the “how” to reading is very important. I realized that the internet puts text out there in clear ways in which you won’t have to go deep into to find the meaning, which is what most if not all works of literature lean towards. In the end, reading this article has really helped me to realize how much my mind has changed because of the internet.