

Falé Do

Professor Santo Romano

DART 449 The Language of the Web

17 January 2022

Reflection on “As We May Think” from *The Atlantic*

First and foremost, I can point out that the article discusses science, the way mankind uses it to improve one’s knowledge and its application to technology. As Bush stated that “Science has provided the swiftest communication between individuals,” I agree with it because science allows many to list their ideas down on paper or through experiments and eventually make further advancements based on the previous knowledge to improve one’s existence and to evolve one’s lifestyle.

From my understanding, countless researches are being conducted progressively and specializations in certain fields are created to help reach conclusions to those researches, creating countless encyclopedias every year. This method is quite lengthy as it requires other specialists to read, analyze and re-evaluate the knowledge they acquired and their current research. Thus, it raises questions on the difficulty of constantly keeping the researches on human experience up-to-date, and so scientists and inventors rummage through scientific records to create machines and devices capable of storing easily accessible records, information and data. To do so, one has to refer to how the human mind works, meaning associative indexing “in accordance with some intricate web of trails carried by the cells of the brain...memory is transitory” in order to create a “memex” device that “is an enlarged intimate supplement to [one’s] memory” (Bush). The next step is “the process of tying two items together,” such as joining code words and spaces to build “trails of many items,” and eventually “passes [the trail to others] for insertion in [one’s] own memex, there to be linked into the more general trail” (Bush). Then, “[w]holly new forms of

encyclopedias will appear, ready made with a mesh of associative trails running through them, ready to be dropped into the memex and there amplified” (Bush). Basically, sharing and spreading knowledge to the world; a wider audience.

All this to say that technology allows mankind to evolve by making improvements through invention and innovation, and the main message of the article is about Dr. Vannevar Bush’s vision of the future of technology. That said, if I had to compare his vision and today’s vision on technology, I would say that there has been a drastic change, where technology, a new unknown and unexplored innovation, was going to change lives for the better to something that has impacted society in both bad and good ways. Yet, one thing in common I can say from this is the moderate use of technological instruments. It is interesting to learn that the ancestor of what we know today as a “computer,” including “laptop, smartphones, tablets and other smart devices,” was coined as “memex,” a device storing records, data and information to improve research efficiency. Consequently, the existence of instruments, such as computers and the Internet, has made many forget about the process and the making of these innovations; how intricate and sophisticated it was to introduce and fabricate a wonderful non-existent future technology. Thus, I believe that this article is written with a complex vocabulary and a sophisticated outlook to tell people nowadays to not lose “touch with reality and immediateness” and to restudy “the application of science to the needs and desires of man” concerning technology and innovation in order to educate one another on how to improve the previous studies and researches in order to reinvent, improve and evolve (Bush). A constant evolution should be manifested when it comes to the application of science to technology.

Bibliography

Bush, Vannevar. "As We May Think," *The Atlantic*,
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1945/07/as-we-may-think/303881/>.
Accessed 10 Jan. 2022.