

Google This!

In his boldly named *Is Google Making us Stupid*, Nicholas Carr establishes the idea that constant access to all the information one could wish for is a detriment on the cognitive ability of the average person. Using both one-sided arguments and claims based purely on conjecture, Carr manages to contend that access to essentially all of human knowledge is a negative thing. However, analyzing the full picture shows that in all actuality, access to this knowledge provides amazing benefits to all people.

To begin, Google gives people whatever information they're interested in with minimal exceptions. Curiosity about the average amount of teeth in a shark's mouth or what "ambience" translates to in Swahili is easily accessible. By providing people the answers to most far fetched and hard to imagine questions, it perpetuates natural curiosity which is the sign of a well-functioning mind. This curiosity gives rise to absorbing information in a much more natural way.

In addition, Carr's article is riddled with cognitive bias. His personal opinions prevail over factual evidence. Even in the very introduction of his statement, he regards his entire position as simply a "feeling". Reducing a monumental discussion to a mere gut feeling speaks volumes of his argument and highlights his article's greatest flaw, its subjective nature. The fact is that his personal thoughts or feelings are not necessarily constructive to the overall discussion. It would not be unreasonable to suggest the exact opposite of this feeling applies to many others. Common sense tells us that with this plethora of knowledge, one is at a better intellectual position than without it. History has shown that regardless of available technology, the brains of everyone can develop according to what their desires are and less as a result of their environment. Perhaps Carr's view of his very own brain being tinkered with is just a result of his newly found intellectual freedom.

The statistically shrinking attention span of the average person is an issue that Carr blames on Google because of how it gets people what they look for so fast. However, there are so many other things that are far more likely to have caused this. For instance, Internet videos and dumbed down television programming function as brief and relatively satisfying stimuli to the viewer. Returning to traditional stimuli makes them seem drawn out and boring by comparison. This effect is more logical than blaming Google, which is combatting this by encouraging people to read. Carr also makes the argument that the increasing habit of skimming is an overall negative for humans' cognitive ability. However, much like the rest of human behavior, it works the best in its given situation. It is an excellent example of the human mind's skill at adaptation.

Nicholas Carr's argument that Google is making people stupid is ineffective and too reliant on his personal apprehensions. This is a very significant debate and an argument based solely on emotional response should not be taken too seriously. It is important that we all listen to the ideas that are presented by an emotional argument. However, if there is no actual data to support the argument, it must be taken with a grain of salt.