Google It

I have noticed that as I have gotten older and used the computer more and more that I no longer spend my time reading long books, let alone thinking hard about a book’s plot. My mother recently encouraged me to read a book, like I often used to, by purchasing me a paperback. The first thing I noticed is that I wasn’t absorbing the material as quickly. A short chapter took me an hour. Then, after I started loving the characters and becoming involved in the plot, the reading became noticeably more enjoyable. From my own experiences, I disagree with Nicholas Carr’s argument that the internet decreases our intelligence. Although Nicholas Carr’s argument identifies several good points about the problems surrounding the internet, Google has the potential to increase not only our access to materials, but also help our brains process information more efficiently.

Socrates, a Greek philosopher, believed that the development of writing would hinder one’s ability to retain information, because they were no longer exercising them with information and this train of thought is similar to Carr’s because they both seem to distrust the expansion of technology. This Luddite thinking process can only hinder innovation and expansion. In Socrates’ time, he feared that people would cease to use their brains with the advancement of writing; instead of having to memorize everything, it would be more easily accessible. In the end, writing became an invaluable source of knowledge to look back into the past. Carr’s theories about the internet lessening our intelligence are very similar to Socrates’ way of thinking. The internet is a very understandable and available source of information. It helps with research and school along with entertainment purposes. Since Google increases our access to information, it increases our potential knowledge because our brains can only recall so much information at one time. Google being at the tip of a finger enlarges the amount of information we can access considerably, thus making us “smarter.”

Mr. Carr kept returning to the fact that more people skim the materials they are reading rather than delving deep into their contents. With so many links and advertisements attempting to steal a person’s focus from what they are reading, people tend to skim to see if the article is really worth their time. People are constantly choosing what links to click on and read and which to ignore; this huge quantity of possible choices requires skimming. If people chose to read every single possible link on every website they entered, it would never end. If required to think deeply about a book or passage, people still have the capability to think intensely. Most people tend to shift towards mindless entertainment, such as a silly television show or a movie that requires minimal attention to understand it. Mr. Carr stated his recently developed short attention span when he stated, “When I mention my troubles with reading to friends and acquaintances—literary types, most of them—many say they’re having similar experiences. The more they use the Web, the more they have to fight to stay focused on long pieces of writing.” However, people still have the capability of extensive and deep thought, even if they choose to spend their time trifling on the internet. With the sheer amount of information available at any time of the day because of Google and our capability to comprehend complex material, Google has in turn made us “smarter.”

Mr. Carr’s suspicions concerning the expansion of the internet are reasonable; however, the internet is an important part of modern society. Humanity has become increasingly dependent upon the internet, and their way of processing information has changed dramatically. Although the process of understanding information has changed, people are smarter because of it.

