Google’s Role in Intelligence

With the advent of the information age, many have raised their concerns on whether the internet and big search engines such as Google are making us “stupid”. One of these individuals is a man by the name of Nicholas Carr, who relates the instant information age to Socrates’ concerns of the act of writing, claiming society must be cautious about how much we depend on things like Google. To fully answer this question, one must delve into both the effects of search engines on oneself and what intelligence really is.

Intelligence, as defined by Merriam Webster, is the ability to learn or understand or to deal with new or trying situations. Therefore intelligence is not the process of receiving information, but the application of the knowledge. It is much easier to receive and process information with Google than with a book because Google offers opportunities to narrow down your search as much as you want to find the exact answer. Of course the instantaneousness of the Googled results is a huge bonus, as opposed to having to flip through multiple pages in multiple books. But on top of that, Google can offer you any of the information you could ever want or need.

In school, a student is given textbooks that have the information you need for a class. However, often times there is something in that textbook that the student does not understand because it may not defined in a way that the student understands. Without the help of quick information off of Google that student would have to go to a library to search for the right book on that information, or he/she could choose to not look into it. Google has given people a way to access information that can help aid in the process of learning. Google isn’t actually making us stupid, but helping us understand anything that we require to learn by analyzing. Once a person has searched the term or phrase that needs to be unsurfaced, that person would understand what they wanted to find but then it would lead to research afterwards, in order to thoroughly understand the topic. In addition to aiding in fully understanding topics, Google can also help people who learn in a nontraditional way.

Some people have said that they have shortened attention spans to paper books, with many reporting that they used to be able to read a novel in one sitting, and now cannot focus for more than 5 pages. While this change is definitely dramatic, it does not impact intelligence. This is very similar to a condition known as Attention Deficit Disorder, or ADD. A person with ADD could have trouble learning in a traditional manner but this does not directly correlate to intelligence level. Learning is not a one way road, because everyone learns differently. With Google, one just has to make a quick search to find the information that could help he/she learn in a way that works for him/her.

With that being said, Google does not make us “stupid”. Google offers us a straight- forward, efficient method of acquiring information, far superior to using physical books.