How Google Affects the Modern World

"Is Google Making Us Stupid?" by Nicholas Carr examines our increasing reliance on technology and the effects it has had on the intellectual abilities of people today. It argues that technology has detracted from our intelligence by changing how we think and allowing our intellectual skills to atrophy. It is undeniable that computers and the Internet have affected such changes on our society, but Carr is wrong in assuming these changes to be destructive. Our technology is so readily available and effective that it is a part of our everyday lives which makes us more productive than we have ever been.

With Google, we can find out any fact on demand, effectively removing most of our need to remember things. However, this is by no means an impairment; we have no need to remember arbitrary factoids because our computers can remember them for us. Our smartphones are with us everywhere we go, all the time. Admittedly they require electricity and cellular service to work properly, but any person who is deprived of these commodities on a regular basis is clearly not emerged enough into the cyber world to be reliant on technology. This combination of a human being to make intelligent decisions and a smartphone or search engine to remember things and process simple information is the perfect fusion between man and machine. Although we may not memorize as much, the unceasing assistance we receive from our technology renders this fact inconsequential. The wealth of information at one's fingertips allows for more informed thoughts at higher speeds almost all the time.

This in depth reliance on computers causes changes in people's minds as the brain adapts to the constant use of search engines. People quickly glance through the search page to determine which search result is most relevant and then only scan the selected webpage for the desired information. As individuals use search engines more, their minds become more tuned to this technique of quick scanning. This crucial skill allows a person to extract key information from a document without wasting time reading unnecessary filler. Although this may not provide for an immersive reading experience, it enables one to understand core meanings more thoroughly. It may seem counterintuitive that reading less deeply could provide a better understanding of a work, but by ignoring the fluff and concentrating on the meat of an article, you can more effectively analyze the part that matters.

Our technology, as Nicholas Carr argues, has taken over our intellectual pursuits and reengineered our thought process. The effects of this are that we can recall facts we would never have been able to remember without information technology, gather information and produce ideas more quickly, and extract the meanings of documents more effectively. The easily accessible information provided by today's technology allows us to perform at high levels that we have never before been able to achieve. Google is not making us stupid; Google is making us more productive.