This week, we got to review the article "As We May Think" by Vannevar Bush and I would love to start by highlighting this man's love of levers. Initially it was a matter of wholesome enjoyment but as the essay went on, it became akin to Philip K. Dicks interpretation of the internet in 1969 (with it being a series of pneumatic tubes). This ultimately led me to reflect on an overreaching reality for all of us and that is that even our wildest imaginations are limited. To illustrate this, when Bush is making unnervingly accurate predictions about future developments in technology, he keeps mentioning levers as a way of activating the device he is describing. It becomes clear he simply cannot fathom the idea of a touch screen; a technology we take for granted. When I stop to reflect on that, it's maddening to think there is a mechanism that will be developed in the next 100 years that I am literally unable to comprehend.

Moving away from levers, Bush goes onto present the limits of scientific reasoning by highlighting how boring playing cards would be if we only saw it as mathematical probability. This likening makes a profound point about the need for artists in a world that seems to mostly put value towards other titles such as Engineer or Scientist. Without artists or those who mentally occupy that mindset, we could not understand nature; we could not humanize or contextualize the knowledge we are learning. Yes, it is the Engineers and Mathematicians that provide us the tools to build a building, but it is the architect who realizes a more vintage design would look best against the river that runs through the property.

And finally, Bush highlights the need for quick and efficient means of storing information and knowledge, lest humans risk losing it much like Mendel's laws of genetics. And that it is not simply enough to store information, but to index it in a way that allows for it to be called up through association, a method preferred by the human mind.

Is Bush the Nostradamus of accessible data? Foreseeing not only the gaps in our learning process, but the solutions we ultimately implemented? Possibly. But we can't ignore that Bush does an amazing job of showing us not only the path that technology would need to grow in order for his vision of storage and indexing to become a reality, but also explaining that all of this knowledge would be nothing without artists there to contextualize it.

I love his forward-thinking inventiveness almost as much as he loves levers.