

With the Dems bashing Senator McCain for not being computer literate, the question is raised. Is it a good thing, bad thing or meaningless that the President is computer illiterate.?

I believe that Senator McCain could still be an effective leader and President without being computer literate, but he would be far less effective, and there could be real potential risk in future issues of national security.

If you don't use computer technology, you have to communicate by phone, meeting or paper. All of which require multi step processes. What could be resolved with a quick Txt message or email, requires an intermediary. Multiplied by untold number of such events on a daily basis, and there is a question of productivity. Does a more productive candidate make for a better President ?

On the same subject, some would argue that by using any form of messaging, there is the opportunity for hacking. My response: If they can hack the President's messaging, they can hack his phone and the devices of all of those around him who do use technology. Others would argue that it leaves a paper trail, which Presidents would prefer not to do. I would argue, that this issue has been addressed many times, making it a non issue.

My personal fear about a non computer literate President comes down to national security. I don't care whether or not he surfs the internet, uses social networking , reads blogs, listens to podcasts, prefers Mac or Windows or knows how to download. All of that is easy enough to grasp without actually doing it yourself.

National Security is something completely different.

No candidate is going to fully understand all the technology involved in protecting the country on our digital front. They aren't going to understand the who, what, hows and where of what is involved in protecting everything digital in this country. This country is already under continuous attacks from hackers around the world. So it's not a new issue.

However, I do think a candidate that has not adopted any level of digital lifestyle will have a harder time understanding the relative importance of protecting digital connectivity and assets vs physical assets.

It will be hard for him to understand what happens to US productivity when US connectivity assets are put at risk or not well protected.

It may be hard for him to understand the impact of doing the same to an opposing **developed** country we may find ourselves at odds with. That there may be more value in a digital assault than a traditional military one.

While our current conflicts are with those short of electricity, let alone technology, that will not always be the case. China and Russia have the power to pose a greater threat than anything we are fighting today.

It may be hard for him to understand the impact of the corruption of data on the viability of our financial system. That bad data being introduced into our banking system could create a far greater nightmare than a Russian warship off the coast of Alaska. That our ability to introduce misinformation into an enemy superpower financial system could hurt them worse than one more missile pointed their way.

More importantly, it may be more difficult for him to grasp that hacking supremacy could instill a greater fear in a developed country than more potent weaponry. Taking down, and keeping down a financial system by a hacker can revert a country from developed to barbaric in weeks.

The Commander in Chief of our great country will have to make choices on where to deploy and invest in weapons, hard assets and most importantly, intellectual capital. If heaven forbid, a decision has to be made as to which is more important, protecting a data center or a factory. Will Senator McCain fully understand the importance of one vs the other ? Should investments be made in bombers or software ?

In our current conflicts we have been short of intellectual capital in the form of, among other things, language translators. Could we find ourselves in future conflicts short of the technological intellectual property needed ?

Will either candidate understand the need to build digital infrastructure around the world that can give us pre-emptive and reactive support for the digital battles that will inevitably be fought ? That an impenetrable NATO datacenter fully peered and connected can be more important than an airstrip ? That protecting fiber can be as important as protecting a pipeline ? That a battalion of hackers, platooned around the world, can create the ultimate Shock and Awe ?

I'm not saying that Senator McCain can't overcome these issues. Hiring the right technical advisors won't be easy, but it's certainly attainable. Hopefully, in response to the democrats' assertions, he will let us know who his advisors are and how they feel about these issues.

Only then will I personally be able to overcome the base issue. If he personally feels that technology is not important to his way of life, he may assign the same relative importance to it in his decision making as Commander in Chief. That could impact our national security.