

# Le Lin CART351 Reflection 1

## As We May Think

### Vannevar Bush

In the article “As We May Think” by Dr. Vannevar Bush, originally published in *The Atlantic* in their July 1945 issue, Bush speculates on the possible futures and frontiers of technology which is focused on the whole of human knowledge, moving past science which has developed only for the sake of war.

A very relevant point that Bush addresses is the overwhelming amount of knowledge on our planet. I think there’s a point in everybody’s life where they come to the realization that they could never truly learn and understand all the information in the world - which increases exponentially everyday - “for we can enormously extend the record; yet even in its present bulk we can hardly consult it.” (Bush). But is the indexing of knowledge through technology a solace to this fact? I feel that for many, it isn’t. The fact that all of this data is so easily available to us (as Bush predicted) in actuality makes things more difficult to process. With so much knowledge is at your fingertips, where do you start? Now, what is your excuse to not go through all of it?

Bush’s vision is optimistic, and amazingly accurate, but he fails to predict - or chooses not to mention - that the benefits of new technology are not immune to being controlled by societal systematic powers. Just this past week, on Sunday September 2nd, Brazil’s National Museum was completely consumed by fire. Millions of artifacts and countless amounts of information were lost, many of which were not digitized due to underfunding and severe budget cuts from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (Yong).

“As We May Think” is a fascinating read in 2018, comparing Bush’s once very scientific speculations to our population’s common understanding of how technology functions today. We need to continue theorizing where science is going to bring us next, in order to keep pushing forward, but simultaneously realize that access to these advances is still behind locked doors for many.

Bush, Vannevar. “As We May Think.” *The Atlantic*, July 1945,  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1945/07/as-we-may-think/303881/>.

Yong, Ed. “What Was Lost in Brazil’s Devastating Museum Fire.” *The Atlantic*, 4 September 2018,  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2018/09/brazil-rio-de-janeiro-museum-fire/569299/>.