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you “the link”, and
every time you see a
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You click too much,
read too little, and
remember even less.**



Magazine
for Comments
on the Web

Featuring "Is Google
Making Us Stupid?"
by Nicholas Carr

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“Is Google Making Us Stupid?” is a magazine article by technology writer Nicholas G. Carr. Carr highly criticizes the effect on cognition. His essay was extensively covered by the media and the blogosphere. Numerous responses to Carr’s argument have been published.

Is Stupid?: What the our brains” is a mag- nology writer Nicho- tical of the Internet’s It was published in the July/August 2008 edition of The Atlantic magazine as a six-page cover story. Carr’s main argument is that the Internet might have detrimental effects on cognition that diminish the capacity for concentration and contemplation. Despite the title, the article is not specifically targeted at Google, but more at the cognitive impact of the whole Internet and World Wide Web.

The ely discussed in the osphere, with reac- ment being polarised.

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Facebook: Carr was reluctant to endorse the company given his social views on its effects, but he still rated Facebook a buy. In the end, Carr believes the critical mass that Facebook has built around its platform is insurmountable, and that the company should see opportunities from its vast user base.

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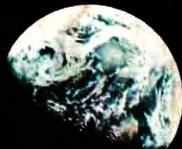
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Whole Earth Catalog

access to tools



[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/
Whole_Earth_Catalog
#Organization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whole_Earth_Catalog#Organization)

The Catalog used a broad definition of "tools." There were informative tools, such as books, maps, professional journals, courses, and classes. There were well-designed special-purpose utensils, including garden tools, carpenters' and masons' tools, welding equipment, chainsaws, fiberglass materials, tents, hiking shoes, and potters' wheels. There were even early synthesizers and personal computers.

press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/817415_chap4.html

He and others at PARC saw the Catalog as an information tool and, hence, as an analogue to the computer; at the same time, they saw it as a hyperlinked information system. In that sense, remembered Kay, "we thought of the Whole Earth Catalog as a print version of what the Internet was going to be."

**Useful as a tool,
Relevant to independent education,
High quality or low cost,
Not already common knowledge,
Easily available by mail.**

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki
/Whole_Internet
User's_Guide_and_Catalog](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whole_Internet_User's_Guide_and_Catalog)

The Whole Internet User's Guide & Catalog, by Ed Krol, was published in September 1992 by O'Reilly. The Los Angeles Times notes that the Whole Internet User's Guide and Catalog was the "first popular book about the medium" and "was later selected by the New York Public Library as one of the most significant books of the 20th century."

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki
/Whole_Earth_Catalog#Impact](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whole_Earth_Catalog#Impact)

Steve Jobs compared The Whole Earth Catalog to Internet search engine Google in his June 2005 Stanford University commencement speech.

"When I was young, there was an amazing publication called The Whole Earth Catalog, which was one of the bibles of my generation.... It was sort of like Google in paperback form, 35 years before Google came along. It was idealistic and overflowing with neat tools and great notions."

During the commencement speech, Jobs also quoted the farewell message placed on the back cover of the 1974 edition of the catalog: "Stay hungry, stay foolish."

Second Thoughts on Reading and Technology by Google's Eric Schmidt

Nicholas Carr - February 23, 2010
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I admit to having a bit of a personal interest in this, but I've been fascinated to see how the thinking of Eric Schmidt, Google's CEO, has evolved over the past few years on the question of the Net's effect on reading and cognition. Here are three quotes from Schmidt on the topic:

July 30, 2008: "I just got this in my in-box. Anybody read it? The Atlantic: 'Is Google Making Us Stupid?' I mean, we've got a problem if this is true, right? In the article, the author [Nick Carr] ... points out that deep reading is equal to deep thinking, and since we're not reading deep anymore, we're obviously not deep thinking. And what I was realizing in reading this – and I encourage you all to read it – is that this is exactly what people said when color television

arrived in my home in Virginia 40 years ago. This is also what people said 25 years ago when the MTV phenomenon occurred, about short attention spans and so forth. And I observe that we're smarter than ever. So the important point here is that [despite] all of these sort of histrionics about the role of information and other changes, society is enormously powerful, enormously capable of adapting to the threats."

[defiant children:
February 23, 2010 at 11:55 am](#)

Very worrying! Not only do we NOT read books anymore, but we cannot even have a proper conversation without being interrupted by a ridiculous ringtone on somebody's mobile!

[Bob McHenry:
February 23, 2010
at 1:11 pm](#)

I wonder if Mr. Schmidt had any actual evidence in July 2008 that "we're smarter than ever"? Or was that just the minor premise needed to arrive at a foreordained conclusion?

[Website Optimisation: March 3, 2010 at 9:30 am](#)

Interesting article. I think that the Internet as a whole is making the general population lazier. However, many inventions in the past have had the same effect, calculators being a prime example.

March 6, 2009: "I worry that the level of interrupt, the sort of overwhelming rapidity of information — and especially of stressful information — is in fact affecting cognition. It is in fact affecting deeper thinking. I still believe that sitting down and reading a book is the best way to really learn something. And I worry that we're losing that."

January 29, 2010: "The one thing that I do worry about is the question of 'deep reading.' As the world looks to these instantaneous devices ... you spend less time reading all forms of literature, books, magazines and so forth. That probably has an effect on cognition, probably has an effect on reading."

I'm glad Schmidt has continued to ponder this issue, and I salute him for having the courage to air his concerns publicly.

* * *

Nicholas Carr is a member of Britannica's Editorial Board of Advisors and author of the forthcoming book [The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains](#), available this spring. Posts from his blog "[Rough Type](#)" are occasionally cross-posted at the Britannica Blog.

Posted in Books, Science & Technology, Technology

15 Responses to

"Second Thoughts on Reading and Technology by Google's Eric Schmidt"

[MBA Prep:](#)
[February 25, 2010](#)
[at 3:15 pm](#)

Internet including
Google is very like
fast food: it is
convenient and thus
popular among the
majority. However, if
you eat only fast
food your health is
in great danger.

[Ramesh Raghuvanshi:](#)
[February 24, 2010 at 11:28 am](#)

Google is not alternative to book.
When first time I read the Dostoevsky's crime and punishment
I was so absorbed in that book
finishing it I loss myself. Google
never give us this kind of joy.

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Is Google Making Us Stupid? What the Internet is doing to our brains
By NICHOLAS CARR
Illustration by Guy Billout[SHARE](#)[facebook](#)[LinkedIn](#)[Twitter](#)[EMAIL](#)[PRINT](#)

IS GOOGLE STUPID?

Making Us

An illustration of a human brain where the internal structure is replaced by a grid of binary digits (0s and 1s) arranged in a hexagonal pattern.

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What the INTERNET is doing to our brains

by

NICHOLAS CARR

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THE MEASURE

ATLANTIC MAGAZINE

257 COMMENTS

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[kblog 1 year ago](#)

Articles with "I," "me," "I think," "to me," "I can feel it," "my skepticism," etc. are a warning to the reader. Whining and angst soon follow. Who wants to read a Woody Allen script? Give your reader content. Whine to your shrink.

5 people liked this.

[crowbargreen](#)
[1 year ago](#)

FYI: HAL is a murdering bastard, not a human-like nice guy. Did we watch the same movie?

[Will Blackler](#)
[1 year ago](#)

2 people liked this.

“Dave, stop. Stop you? Stop, Dave. Will you stop, Dave?” So the supercomputer HAL pleads with the implacable astronaut Dave Bowman in a famous and weirdly poignant scene toward the end of [Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey](#). Bowman, having nearly been sent to a deep-space death by the malfunctioning machine, is calmly, coldly disconnecting the memory circuits that control its artificial brain. “Dave, my mind is going,” HAL says, forlornly. “I can feel it. I can feel it.”

[... 1 year ago](#)

In general regard to the author's comments on HAL, I think it is interesting how the work of man is intended to express man. That is, the further we work towards expressing and defining our true nature, the farther we will pull away from it ourselves. The result I think is a series of perspectives one must obey and attempt to live humbly by. We are only individuals, despite our vast connectivity, so we must contribute as best we can by committing to our hearts. Hopefully this ball we've started rolling doesn't run right off the tracks. Even despite that, balance is always maintained, though it may not favor our human perspective.

[Edward Allen Thomas](#)
[1 year ago](#)

If you are scared of HAL, check out "The Lawnmower Man." 1 person liked this.

[imdb.com/title/tt0062622](#)

2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)
141 min · Adventure | Sci-Fi
6 April 1968 (USA)
8.4/10 from 194,360 users
Metascore: 86/100
Reviews: 1,433 user
195 critic

Mankind finds a mysterious, obviously artificial, artifact buried on the moon and, with the intelligent computer HAL, sets off on a quest.

Director: Stanley Kubrick
Writers: Stanley Kubrick
(screenplay), Arthur C. Clarke
(screenplay), and 1 more
credit
Stars: Keir Dullea, Gary
Lockwood and William
Sylvestor

I can feel it, too. Over the past few years I've had an uncomfortable sense that someone, or something, has been tinkering with my brain, remapping the neural circuitry, reprogramming the memory. My mind isn't going—so far as I can tell—but it's changing. I'm not thinking the way I used to think. I can feel it most strongly when I'm reading. Immersing myself in a book or a lengthy article used to be easy. My mind would get caught up in the narrative or the turns of the argument, and I'd spend hours strolling through long stretches of prose. That's rarely the case anymore. Now my concentration often starts to drift after two or three pages. I get fidgety, lose the thread, begin looking for something else to do. I feel as if I'm always dragging my wayward

"Kubrick's prophecy" is "dark" to me, in spite of my being both a believer in evolutionary theory and an atheist. While I agree with the basic idea that religion is a "quirk of our evolutionary present,"

I am still a humanist who is strongly attached to the idea that humans transcend the machines that they create. I do not subscribe to any determinism that suggests that the pervasiveness of the Internet (or any medium for that matter) dooms us human beings to "becoming more like it."

9 people liked this.

[Lenika Cruz](#)
[1 year ago](#)

In reply to [Edward Allen Thomas](#)
Instead, as we move beyond god, we will also move beyond such archaic value judgments as "Kubrick's dark prophecy..." (2nd to last line, above). Only those of simple minds who think that 'god' gives humans special dignity of some kind would call it "dark"; aren't we, after all, powerful, soulless apes anyway?

"Kubrick's prophecy" is "dark" to me, in spite of my being both a believer in evolutionary theory and an atheist. While I agree with the basic idea that religion is a "quirk of our evolutionary present,"

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2 people liked this.

[flbx](#) 11 months ago

It's funny how the author describes the problems reading a long text in this long article. I found myself having problems to finish it.
4 people liked this.

brain back to the text. The deep reading that used to come naturally has become a struggle.

I think I know what's going on. For more than a decade now, I've been spending a lot of time online, searching and surfing and sometimes adding to the great databases of the Internet. The Web has been a godsend to me as a writer. Research that once required days in the stacks or periodical rooms of libraries can now be done in minutes. A few Google searches, some quick clicks on hyperlinks, and I've got the telltale

fact or pithy quote I was after. Even when I'm not working, I'm as likely as not to be foraging in the Web's info-thickets'reading and writing e-mails, scanning headlines and blog posts, watching videos and listening to podcasts, or just tripping from link to link. (Unlike footnotes, to which they're sometimes likened, hyperlinks don't merely point to related works; they propel you toward them.)

For me, as for others, the Net is becoming a universal medium, the conduit for most of the information that flows through my eyes and ears and into my mind. The advantages of having immediate access to such an incredibly rich store of information are many, and they've been widely described and duly applauded. "The perfect recall of silicon memory," Wired's Clive Thompson [has written](#), "can be an enormous boon to thinking."

But that boon comes at a price.

So you have to forgive me if I have great skepticism towards this new allegation that search engines destroy memory. It seems like another attack by people fearful of change. My own personal view is that search engines train our memory to be more associative rather than rote.

The Internet is making us better people mentally.

[Natalia Nicholson](#)

4 months ago

I read the first four paragraphs and then promptly scrolled down to see how much longer the article was and which paragraphs I thought I could just skim over. I had to keep reminding myself ironically that I cannot skim read this text and I'm glad I didn't. I did, however become

fidgety and restless after paragraph seven.

[1 person liked this.](#)

[TheHervView](#) 1 year ago

One of my observations here is that this essay about reading is too long. Now I'm not really joking when I say that I started scanning after the first several paragraphs and didn't bother to read it to completion.

But, Dear Mr. Carr, it is not because of the Internet. It is because the article did not hold my attention once I understood the theme.

[41 people liked this.](#)

[wired.com/techbiz/people](#)
[/magazine/15-10/st_thompson](#)

[pranav](#) 1 year ago

Your Outboard Brain Knows All
By Clive Thompson – 08.25.07

We're running out of memory. I don't mean computer memory. That stuff's half-price at Costco these days. No, I'm talking about human memory, stored by the gray matter inside our heads. According to recent research, we're remembering fewer... and fewer basic facts these days... ...

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[Tim Borrego 10 months ago](#)

"The visual makes for the explicit, the uniform, and the sequential in painting, in poetry, in logic, history. The non-literate modes are implicit, simultaneous, and discontinuous whether in the primitive past or the electronic present..."
-Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*

[Chidi Burkey 1 year ago](#)

The medium is the message... to a large extent. I am coming to believe it. I feel very ambivalent about logging on these days, and wonder if I should give it up entirely for a time. Just losing a sense of myself in the present here and now. It's a little spooky.

19 people liked this.

[en.wikipedia.org](#)
[/wiki/Marshall_McLuhan](#)

[Lenika Cruz 1 year ago](#)
in reply to Jami Fahad Ali

"McLuhan" redirects here. For the son of Marshall McLuhan, see [Eric McLuhan](#).
Herbert Marshall McLuhan, CC (July 21, 1911 – December 31, 1980) was a Canadian educator, philosopher, and scholar—a professor of English literature, a literary critic, a rhetorician, and a communication theorist.

As the media theorist [Marshall McLuhan](#) pointed out in the 1960s, media are not just passive channels of information. They supply the stuff of thought, but they also shape the process of thought. And what the Net seems to be doing is chipping away my capacity for concentration and contemplation. My mind now expects to take in information the way the Net distributes it: in a swiftly moving stream of particles. Once I was a scuba diver in the sea of words. Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski.

[Charlie Bruns](#)
5 months ago

I think that it is difficult to deny that the media

through which information is communicated, be it speech or television or print, alters it in some way.

Our brains learn to anticipate the kinds of messages we receive depending on the medium used.

14 people liked this.

I'm not the only one. When I mention my troubles with reading to friends and acquaintances—literary types, most of them—many say they're having similar experiences. The more they use the Web, the more they have to fight to stay focused on long pieces of writing.

Some of the bloggers I follow have also begun mentioning the phenomenon. [Scott Karp](#), who writes a [blog about online media](#), recently confessed that he has stopped reading books altogether. "I was a lit major in college, and used to be [a] voracious book reader," he wrote. "What happened?" He speculates on the answer: "What if I do all my reading on the web not so much because the way I read has changed, i.e. I'm just seeking convenience, but because the way I THINK has changed?"

[publishing2.com](#)

Publishing 2.0 is a blog about how technology is transforming media, news, and journalism.

Don't be threatened by change. The internet has made so much information available. It drives people to try to inhale it all. What a wonderful dilemma. Relax and enjoy the new world.

[lабофнс.typepad.com](#)
Presented by the Pathology Education Consortium

[Bruce Friedman](#), who blogs regularly about the use of computers in medicine, also has described how the Internet has altered his mental habits. "I now have almost totally lost the ability to read and absorb

	<p>a longish article on the web or in print," he wrote earlier this year. A pathologist who has long been on the faculty of the University of Michigan Medical School, Friedman elaborated on his comment in a telephone conversation with me. His thinking, he said, has taken on a "staccato" quality, reflecting the way he quickly scans short passages of text from many sources online.</p>	<p><u>Vicjoe 1 year ago</u> <u>Lina Natukrnica 4 months ago</u></p> <p>I have three children and each of them has a different approach to reading. So very different. I'm pretty certain that, if I had more children, I'd discover even more different approaches to reading. The one that uses the Internet the most, also read the most books.</p> <p>Anything really worth reading got read, every word, and recommended to others.</p> <p>26 people liked this.</p>	<p>The likely reality is that there are many Internets, just as there are many different kinds of book shops and libraries, representing different depths of thought, levels of specialization, the catering to particular tastes and interests. If more and more Web content is coming to resemble "sound bytes" that is because of people as selectors who drive what is most popular and likely to be listed first in search engine results.</p>	<p><u>To the question in the title "Is Google Making Us Stupid" I'd have to reverse that to ask "Are We Making Google Stupid?"</u></p> <p>Despite pretentious rhetoric by Google's founders that a sophisticated search is something that approaches "artificial intelligence" (as something more powerful than the mere intelligence of we apes-with-brains), Eric Schmidt nevertheless revealed the true dynamic when he said "[Google] understands exactly what you mean and gives you back exactly what you want." Right, garbage in, garbage out. The essence of the growth of intelligence and hence greater knowledge lies in the struggle, the ambiguity, the paradoxes; the impossible-to-shorten deep analyses; it is in wrestling with these challenges that our intellectual capacity grows, by learning to cope with the grey areas of thought that are the essence of critical thinking. Schmidt's rendering suggests an underlying domination of the need for instant gratification, that what you get from the Web is no more than what you started out with if you have the expectation that it should all be quick, easy and succinct.</p>	<p><u>To the question in the title "Is Google Making Us Stupid" I'd have to reverse that to ask "Are We Making Google Stupid?"</u></p> <p>It may well be a vicious cycle, but I think it starts with a more general dumbing down that was underway long before networked computers dominated education. To explain that would be an essay in itself I regret to say. The Internet/Web and what it has become is not a cause of changes in the depth of thought, rather a result of larger changes in hyper-competitive, community-less, insecure, driven, mass society. The Internet is just a reflection (and also an acceleration of) deeper changes in the way human character is formed by the master trends that have come to dominate our now-dying civilization. We were all set up for this mediocritization (a major concern of Nietzsche's) starting with the mass syndication of newspapers, the one-way dictat of TV, particularly advertising and again concentration of information in corporate hands with an agenda, and the accompanying trend towards oligarchy in nominally democratic societies. We have been conditioned to operate this way, shallowly, and the evolution of the Internet just reflects this larger trend of alienation.</p>
	<p>Daryl Stripe 1 year ago <u>in reply to johnnier</u></p> <p>When I was a child there was no Internet in my world, and I spent a lot of time in libraries. I opened far more books than I ever finished. I skimmed across the books in the library, the same way people today skim across web content.</p> <p>26 people liked this.</p>	<p>I have three children and each of them has a different approach to reading. So very different. I'm pretty certain that, if I had more children, I'd discover even more different approaches to reading. The one that uses the Internet the most, also read the most books.</p> <p>Anything really worth reading got read, every word, and recommended to others.</p> <p>26 people liked this.</p>	<p><u>Vicjoe 1 year ago in reply to Vicjoe</u></p> <p>I don't know why my post appears here twice, my error somehow in signing up, my apologies.</p> <p>3 people liked this.</p>	<p><u>Nobby Nobbs 1 year ago in reply to Vicjoe</u></p> <p>Vicjoe, I completely agree with your point about how new knowledge is gained; through deep analysis of the grey areas of thought and have found this to be particularly possible through deep discussion with someone on a very specific subject, going deeper and deeper, and off on more and more tangents until you end up finding what you both agree is a satisfying explanation(s), or possible explanation(s) for something on an almost completely different subject to the one you started on.</p> <p>5 people liked this.</p>	<p><u>Vicjoe 1 year ago in reply to Vicjoe</u></p> <p>I don't know why my post appears here twice, my error somehow in signing up, my apologies.</p> <p>3 people liked this.</p>

observed these greetings with mournful and solemn interest and silent approval. The aunt spoke to each of them in the same words, about their health and her own, and the health of Her Majesty, who, thank God, was better today." And each visitor, though politeness prevented his showing impatience, left the old woman with a sense of relief at having performed a vexatious duty and did not return to her the whole evening.

The young Princess Bolkonskaya had brought some work in a gold-embroidered velvet bag. Her pretty little up-tilip, on which a delicate dark shade was just perceptible, was too short for her teeth, but it filled all of her white teeth trilled with moss and ivy, with a gleam of white shoulders, glossy hair, and sparkling diamonds, she passed between the men who made way for her, not looking at any of them but with a thoroughly attractive woman, her defect—the shortness of her upper lip and her half-open mouth—seemed to be her own special and peculiar form of beauty. Everyone brightened at the sight of this pretty young woman, soon to become a mother, so full of life and health, and carrying her burden so lightly. Old men and dull desirous young ones who looked at her, after being in her company and talking to her a little while, felt as if they too were becoming like her, full of life and health. All who talked to her, and even the maid-servants, told her how well she was, as she said, suffering from a cold, had a cough for some days. She was, as she said, suffering only by the cold.

"And why are children born to such men? If you were not a father yourself, I tell you, if you don't tell me that this means war, if you still try to defend the infants and horrors perpetrated by that Antichrist—I really believe he is Antichrist—I will have nothing more to do with you and you are no longer my friend, no longer one of my family!" he said at last. "You know I did all a father could for their education, and they both have turned out fools.

Hippolyte is at least a quiet fool, but Anatole is an active one. That is the only difference between them." He said this smiling, but how do you do! I see I have frightened him!

"Come over here, Hélène, dear," said Anna Pavlovna to the beautiful young princess who was sitting some way off, the center of another group.

The princess smiled. She rose with the same unchanged smile with which she had first entered the room—the smile of a perfectly beautiful woman. With a slight rustle of her white dress trimmed with moss and ivy, with a gleam of white shoulders, glossy hair, and sparkling diamonds, she passed between the men who made way for her, not looking at any of them but with a thoroughly attractive woman, her defect—the shortness of her upper lip and her half-open mouth—seemed to be her own special and peculiar form of beauty. Everyone brightened at the sight of this pretty young woman, soon to become a mother, so full of life and health, and carrying her burden so lightly. Old men and dull desirous young ones who looked at her, after being in her company and talking to her a little while, felt as if they too were becoming like her, full of life and health. All who talked to her, and even the maid-servants, told her how well she was, as she said, suffering from a cold, had a cough for some days. She was, as she said, suffering only by the cold.

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ing us" Russia alone must save Europe. Our gracious sovereign recognizes his high vocation and will be true to it. That is the one thing I have in my heart. I can't help it...England with her commercial spirit will not and cannot understand the Emperor Alexander's fitness of soul. She has refused to evacuate Malta. She wanted to find, and still seeks, some secret motive in our actions. What answer did Novosil'ev give? None. The English are not understood and cannot understand a trap. I have faith only in God and the lofty destiny of our adored monarch. He will save Europe!"

"Attendes," said Anna Pavlova, reflecting. "Till speak to Lise, young Bolkski's wife, this very evening, and with the familiarity and ease peculiar to him, he raised the maid of honor's hand to his lips,

kissed it, and swung it to and fro as lie lay back in his armchair, looking in another direction.

"I am a brother; think you know him, he married Lise Meinen lately. Is he not a good and wonderful sovereign who has performed the able's plan splendidly?"

"He will fulfill it," said Anna Pavlova with a smile.

"And having got rid of that young man who did not know how to behave, she resumed her duties as hostess and continued to listen and watch ready to help at any point where the conversation might happen to flag. As the foreman of a spinning mill, when he has set the girls to work, he gives round and notices here a spindle that has stopped or there one that creaks or makes more noise than it should, and hastens to check the machine or set it in proper motion, so Anna Pavlova moved about her drawing room, approaching now a stool, now a too-tidy group, and add a word or slight rearrangement kept the conversational machine in full swing, and the ladies looked agitated.

With the familiarity and ease peculiar to him, he raised the maid of honor's hand to his lips, and swung it to and fro as Anna Pavlova sat by his side, looking at him with a smile. "I am a brother; think you know him, he married Lise Meinen lately. Is he not a good and wonderful sovereign who has performed the able's plan splendidly?"

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"I think," said the prince with a smile, "that if you had been sent instead of our dear Wintzingrode you would have captured the King of Prussia's consent by assault. You are so eloquent. Will you give me a cup of tea?"

"In a moment. A propos," she added, becoming calm again, "I am expecting two very interesting men tonight, le Vicomte de Morenart and the son connected with the Montoneys through the Rohans, one of the best French families. He is one of the genuine enigmas, the good ones. And also the Abbe Maro. Do you know that profound thinker?"

"He has been received by the Emperor. Had you heard?"

"I shall be delighted to meet them," said the prince. "But tell me," he added with studied carelessness as if it had only just occurred to him, "that the question he was about to ask was the chief motive of your visit; is it true that the Dowager Empress wants Baron Funke to appoint first secretary at Vienna?" The baron by all accounts is a poor creature."

Prince Vasili wished to obtain this post for his son, but others were trying through the Dowager Empress, Maria Fedorovna to secure it for the baron. Anna Pavlova almost closed her eyes to indicate that neither she nor anyone else had a right to criticize what the Empress desired or was pleased with.

"Baron Funke has been recommended to the Dowager Empress by her sister," was all she said, in a dry and mournful tone. "As she named the Empress, Anna Pavlova's face suddenly assumed an expression of profound and sincere devotion and respect mingled with sadness, and this occurred every time she mentioned him, so she said:

"Now about your family. Do you know that since your daughter came out everyone has been enraptured by her? They say she is amazingly beautiful."

The prince bowed to signify his respect and gratitude.

"I often think," she continued after a short pause, drawing nearer to the prince and smiling merrily at him as if to show that political and social topics were ended and the time had come for intimate conversation—

"How evidently he belongs to the best society," said she to a third; and the vicomte bowed and smiled courteously in token of his willingness to comply. Anna Pavlova arranged a group round him, inviting everyone to listen to his tale.

"The vicomte knew the due person," whispered Anna Pavlova to one of the guests. "The vicomte is a wonderful raconteur," said she to another.

"How evidently he belongs to the best society," said she to a third; and the vicomte was served up to the company in the choicest and most abundant style, like a well-garnished joint of roast beef on a hot dish.

speaking to him, and now he continued to speak to another who wished to get away. With his head bent, and his big feet spread apart, he began explaining his reasons for thinking the able's plan splendidly. All the role on earth, and he is so virtuous and noble that God will not forsake him. He will fulfill it," said Anna Pavlova with a smile.

"Listen, dear Anne," said the prince, "and having got rid of that young man who did not know how to behave, she resumed her duties as hostess and continued to listen and watch ready to help at any point where the conversation might happen to flag.

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tone which showed that he only understood the meaning of his words after he had uttered them. He spoke with such self-confidence that his hearers could not be sure whether what he said was very witty or very stupid. He was dressed in a dark green dress coat, knee breeches of the color of dymple effage, as he hurried after her into the anteroom. "I can't remain any longer in Petersburgh. Tell what news, may take back to my poor boy."

Although Prince Vasili listened reluctantly and very politely to the elderly lady, even betraying some impatience, she gave him an intriguing and appealing smile, and took his hand that he might not go away.

"What would it cost you to say a word to the Emperor, and then he would be transferred to the Guards at once?" said she.

"Believe me, Princess, I am ready to do all I can," answered Prince Vasili. "But it is difficult for me to ask the Emperor. I should advise you to appeal to Runyantsev through Prince Goltsi."

The elderly lady was a Princess Dribetskaya, belonging to one of the best families in Russia but she was poor, and having long been out of society had lost her former influential connections. She had now come to Petersburgh to procure an appointment in the Guards for her only son. It was, in fact, solely to meet Prince Vasili that she had obtained an invitation to Anna Pavlova's reception and had sat listening to the vicomte's words. Frightened her; an embittered look clouded her once handsome face, but only for a moment; then she smiled again and clutched Prince Vasili's arm more tightly.

"Listen to me, Prince," said she. "I have never yet asked you for anything and I never will again, nor have I ever reminded you of my father's friendship for you; but now I entreat you for God's sake to do this for my son—and I shall always regard you as a benefactor," she added hurriedly. "No don't be angry, but promise I have asked Goltsi and he has refused. Be kindhearted man you always were," she said, trying to smile though tears were in her eyes.

"Papa, we shall be," said Princess Helene, turning her beautiful head and looking over her classically molded shoulders as she stood waiting by the door.

Influence in society, however, is a capital which has to be econimized if it is lost. Prince Vasili knew this, and having once realized that if he asked on behalf of all who begged of him, he would soon be unable to ask for himself, he became chary of using his influence. But in Princess Dribetskaya's case he, after her second appeal, something like quams of conscience. She had reminded him of what was quite true; he had been indebted to her father for the first steps in his career. Moreover, he could see by her manners that she was one of those women—mostly mothers—who, having once made up their minds, will not rest until they have gained their end, and are prepared if necessary to go on insisting day after day, and hour after hour, and even to make scenes. This last consideration moved him.

"My dear Anna Mikhaylovna," said he with his usual family air and weariness of one, "it's almost impossible for me to do what you ask but to prove my devotion to you and how I respect your father's memory, I will do the impossible—your son shall be transferred to the Guards. Here is my hand on it. Are you satisfied?"

"My dear benefactor! This is what I expected from you—I knew your kindness!" He turned to go.

"Wait—a word when he has been transferred to the Guards. He will be a good man with Michael Iarionovich Kuznetsov... recommend Boris to him as adjutant. Then I shall be at rest, and then..."

Prince Vasili smiled.

[Danill Leiderman 1 year ago](#)

This is pseudoscientific drivel. Some people incidentally say that they "no longer" read Tolstoy. Apparently, the internet stole the Russian classics.

[Dunsinster 1 year ago](#)

Right as I was getting to that part my mind was starting to tell me "This article is too long just skim it" but after reading this line, and realizing I was thinking the exact same thing I decided to read the full article. I am very glad I did.

11 people liked this.

[Saloni Handa 1 year ago](#)

four paragraphs is too much to absorb. I skim it.

[Steven Taylor 1 year ago](#)

I read until I reached this "...we still await the long-term neurological and psychological experiments that will provide a definitive picture of how internet use affects cognition..."

I'll give this idea some credit when someone has some real data. Not some silly experiment about college students doing papers for their class. I'm sure that no one would argue that an experiment limited to a certain age group, social standing, and location is no evidence at all.

4 people liked this.

[Will Harvey 1 year ago](#)

That article was so long.... I couldn't finish reading it!!

Too long.

Didn't read.

4 people liked this.

[simpilo 1 year ago](#)

ducted by scholars

On a friend's recommendation, I googled for this article and just read the first couple paragraphs. It's way too long. But in general I agree.

3 people liked this.

from University College London, suggests that we may well be in the midst of a sea change in the way we read and think. As part of the five-year research program, the scholars examined computer logs documenting the behavior of visitors to two popular research sites, one operated by the British Library and one by a U.K. educational consortium, that provide access to journal articles, e-books, and other sources of written information. They found that people using the sites exhibited "a

form of skimming activity," hopping from one source to another and rarely returning to any source they'd already visited. They typically read no more than one or two pages of an article or book before they would "bounce" out to another site. Sometimes they'd save a long article, but there's no evidence that they ever went back and actually read it.

[Trevor 1 year ago](#)

Jeez - who has time to read all that!

Ha ha. I skimmed the article because I have 13 other google windows open at the same time.....

14 people liked this.

4 people liked this.

[alistair 1 year ago](#)

Well. I skim read this, so I reckon I've got the message.

online in the traditional sense; indeed there are signs that new forms of "reading" are emerging as users "power browse" horizontally through titles, contents pages and abstracts going for quick wins. It almost seems that they go online to avoid reading in the traditional sense.

[caterpillar 1 year ago](#)

Find press and policy information about the British Library, including contracts, press releases and related multimedia content. Make requests, such as applications for filming. These pages are updated daily.

[ionnewbury 1 year ago](#)

written information. They found that people using the sites exhibited "a

form of skimming activity," hopping from one source to

another and rarely returning to any source they'd already visited. They

typically read no more than one or two pages of an article or book before

they would "bounce" out to another site. Sometimes they'd save a long

article, but there's no evidence that they ever went back and actually read

it.

The authors of the study report: *It is clear that users are not reading*

online in the traditional sense; indeed there are signs that new forms of "reading" are emerging as users

"power browse" horizontally through titles, contents pages and abstracts going for quick wins. It almost

seems that they go online to avoid reading in the traditional sense.

Thanks to the ubiquity of text on the Internet, not to mention the popularity of text-messaging on cell phones, we may well be reading more today than we did in the 1970s or 1980s, when television was our medium of choice. But it's a different kind of reading, and behind it lies a different kind of thinking—perhaps even a new sense of the self. “We are not only what we read,” says

[Susie Bright 1 year ago](#)

I worried that I, too, was losing my book-reading brain cells from overexposure to the Net. Then I realized, I just hadn't found a good book lately. When I finally found one to my liking, I was completely absorbed, just as I was as a child.

Reading on one's browser allows for “better” skimming and more discrimination, because it's faster to scroll than turn pages. You find out more quickly what holds your interest. That has nothing to do with the medium and everything to do with the writer. Did you make it to the end of this? :)

44 people liked this.

Maryanne Wolf, a developmental psychologist at Tufts University and the author of [Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain](#). “We are how we read.” Wolf worries that the style of reading promoted by the Net, a style that puts “efficiency” and “immediacy” above all else, may be weakening our capacity for the kind of deep reading that emerged when an earlier technology, the printing press, made long and complex works of prose commonplace. When we read online, she says, we tend to become “mere decoders of information.” Our ability to interpret text, to make the rich mental connections that form when we read deeply and without distraction, remains largely disengaged.

amazon.com/exec/obidos/ISBN=0060186399/theatlanticmonthA/ref=nosim/

Proust and the Squid:
The Story and Science
of the Reading Brain
(Hardcover)
Maryanne Wolf (Author)

4.2 out of 5 stars

65 customer reviews

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Reading, explains Wolf, is not an in-

stinctive skill for human beings. It's not etched into our genes the way speech is. We have to teach our minds how to translate the symbolic characters we see into the language we understand. And the media or other technologies we use in learning and practicing the craft of reading play an important part in shaping the neural circuits inside our brains. Experiments demonstrate that readers of ideograms, such as the Chinese, develop a mental circuitry for reading that is very dif-

[Bilimca 1 year ago](#)

What worries me here is that the inference being drawn is that this is bad thing which will all end in tears. In my view it is too easy to see ‘different’ as ‘worse.’ Maybe, just maybe, we don't now have time for traditional, more linear learning and that the old ways will not equip the new generation for future challenges. So rather than make us worse the new learning modes just might make us ‘better,’ and certainly more relevant.

[And we should punish GOOGLE.](#)

[Nicolas should make an apology for the comment regarding Great GOOGLE.](#)

[Thread Bear](#)
[6 months ago](#)

[1 person liked this.](#)

[Me like donuts](#)

Christine Grace
1 year ago

One day I took a long hike in nature, then realized on what a crystal clear recollection I had of how I have spent months, for hours and hours each day on the internet. And have only vague memory on what I did each day, as all the days spent in the virtual world collided together in my memory as one singular event. Which made me stand back and ask myself "What did I DO all year? Its like my brain was shut down on auto pilot the whole year! My brain was turned off. I wasted my whole year!"

Marius Amado-Alves
4 months ago

One thing puzzles me about this article.

The author states he is losing ability to concentrate on long or sophisticated literature.

But clearly the author is a learned person, notably one that reads a lot. Books. Or is Nietzsche correspondence on Wikipedia now? Well, such type of person does not loose the aforementioned ability. Sorry, they just don't. Even if they cruise the Web a lot. Let me honestly enlist myself as a learned person that cruises the web a lot. I do not experience any lost of the ability to read long, difficult texts. Then, why should the author?

Sometime in 1882, Friedrich Nietzsche bought a typewriter—a Malling-Hansen Writing Ball, to be precise. His vision was failing, and keeping his eyes focused on a page had become exhausting and painful, often bringing on crushing headaches. He had been forced to curtail his writing, and he feared that he would soon have to give it up. The typewriter rescued him, at least for a time. Once he had mastered touch-typing, he was able to write with his eyes closed, using only the tips of his fingers. Words could once again flow from his mind to the page.

But the machine had a subtler effect on his work. One of Nietzsche's friends, a composer, noticed a change in the style of his writing. His already terse prose had become even tighter, more telegraphic. “Perhaps you will through this instrument even take to a new idiom,” the friend wrote in a letter, noting that, in his own work, his “thoughts” in music and language often depend on the quality of pen and paper.”

ferent from the circuitry found in those of an alphabet. The variations extend across those that govern such essential cognitive interpretation of visual and auditory stimuli. We woven by our use of the Net will be different books and other printed works.

Sometime in 1882, Friedrich Nietzsche bought a typewriter—a Malling-Hansen Writing Ball, to be precise. His vision was failing, and keeping his eyes focused on a page had become exhausting and painful, often bringing on crushing headaches. He had been forced to curtail his writing, and he feared that he would soon have to give it up. The typewriter rescued him, at least for a time. Once he had mastered touch-typing, he was able to write with his eyes closed, using only the tips of his fingers. Words could once again flow from his mind to the page.

Also see: Living With a Computer

(July 1982) “The process works this way. When I sit down to write a letter or start the first draft of an article, I simply type on the keyboard and the words appear on the screen...” By James Fallows

“‘You are right,’ Nietzsche replied, ‘our writing equipment takes part in the forming of our thoughts.’”
ir.ago Under the sway of the machine, writes the German media scholar Friedrich A. Kittler, Nietzsche’s article, *Die Brüder*, “changed from arguments to aphorisms, from thoughts to puns, from rhetoric to telegram style.”

Vicjoe 1 year ago

Nietzsche is mentioned in the article, specifically about how his resort to a typewriter somehow diluted his prose "from arguments to aphorisms, from thoughts to puns, from rhetoric to telegram style." The opposite is equally possible, namely that the "tyranny of text," that is particularly reinforced by manual writing with pen and paper, is loosened up a bit with the quicker flow and greater ease of correction using a keyboard, so that aphorisms, puns and pungent telegraph conclusions better express what Nietzsche wanted to say all along, more spontaneous, more representative of synthesis of thought, more immediately evocative.

Technologies involved
Focus Group discussions Online tools

the adult mind “is very plastic.” Nerve cells routinely break old connections and form new ones. “The brain,” according to Olds, “has the ability to reprogram itself on the fly, altering the way it fits into the world.”

"has the ability to reprogram itself on the fly, altering the way it functions."

—The brain, according to Olds,
connections and form new ones.

or tweeter?
3 people liked this.

As we use what the sociologist Daniel Bell has called our “intellectual technologies”—the tools that extend our mental rather than our physical capacities—we inevitably begin to take on the qualities of those technologies. The mechanical clock, which came into common use in the 14th century, provides a compelling example. In *Technics and Civilization*, the historian and cultural critic Lewis Mumford described how the clock “disassociated time from human events and helped create

[Lewis Mumford](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Lewis_Mumford&oldid=7950000) (October 19, 1895 – January 26, 1990) was an American historian, philosopher of technology, and influential literary critic. Particularly noted for his study of cities and urban architecture, he had a broad career as the belief in an independent world of mathematics – namely measurable sequences.” The “abstract frame-work of divided time” became “the point of reference for both action and thought.”

1 person liked this

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lewis_Mumford

Lewis Mumford (October 19, 1895 – January 26, 1990) was an American historian, philosopher of technology, and influential literary critic. Particularly noted for his study of cities and urban architecture, he had a broad career as a writer. Mumford was influenced by the work of Scottish theorist Sir Patrick Geddes. Mumford was also a contemporary and friend of Frank Lloyd Wright, Clarence Stein, Frederick Osborn, Edmund N. Bacon, and Vannevar Bush.

What a thoughtful article.
Loved it.

Work or divided time became the point of reference for both action and thought.”

The clock's methodical ticking helped bring into being the scientific mind and the scientific man. But it also took something away. As the late MIT computer scientist [Joseph Weizenbaum](#) observed in his 1976 book, Computer Power and Human Reason: From Judgment to Calculation, the conception of the world that emerged from the widespread instruments "remains an impoverished version of the older a rejection of those direct experiences that formed the basis constituted, the old reality." In deciding when to eat, to rise, we stopped listening to our senses and clock.

This article is so dumb. Everyone's brain is constantly working. The only way you can possibly stay stagnant and not learn something is if you practice the same thing that you're already good at over and over again. Like basic addition. You can solve that with 100% efficiency. Once you do something you've never done before, like google a piece of information you didn't know, you're rewriting your neurons. That is learning. Even if it's stupid pop trivia. It's still learning. If anything, having access to an infinite amount of new experiences, through the Internet is going to improve intelligence.

Polak10 6 months ago
in reply to Joe Jamsky

Joe, what are you talking about? If i get you, learning occurs when you "...rewrite your neurons???"

My friend all i can say is that Google has definitely damned you!

1 person liked this.

The process of adapting to new intellectual technologies is reflected in the changing metaphors we use to explain ourselves to ourselves. When the mechanical clock arrived, people began thinking of their brains as operating "like clockwork." Today, in the age of software, we have come to think of them as operating "like computers." But the changes, neuroscience tells us, go much deeper than metaphor. Thanks to our brain's plasticity, the adaptation occurs also at a biological level.

The Internet promises to have particularly far-reaching effects on cognition. In a [paper](#) published in 1936, the British mathematician [Alan Turing](#) proved that a digital computer, which at the time existed only as a

"Turing" redirects here. For other uses, see [Turing \(disambiguation\)](#).
Alan Mathison Turing, OBE, FRS (23 June 1912 – 7 June 1954), was an English mathematician, cryptanalyst, and computer scientist. He was highly influential in the development of computer science, providing a formalisation of the concepts of "algorithm" and "computation" with the Turing machine, which played a significant role in the creation of the modern computer. Turing is widely considered to be the father of computer science and artificial intelligence. He was stockily built, had a high-pitched voice, and was talkative, witty, and somewhat donnish.

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alan_Turing](#)

[thoenet.biographies/papers/turing_on-computabilium-numbers-1936.pdf](#)

ON COMPUTABLE NUMBERS, WITH AN APPLICATION TO THE Entscheidungs-PROBLEM BY A. M. TURING
[Received 28 May, 1936.—Read 12 November, 1936.]

Charity A. 1 year ago
Well, anyone who made it through that pretty long text obviously hasn't lost the

and our clock, our printing press and our typewriter, our calculator and our telephone, and our radio and TV.

capacity to deep read

and concentrate. :) Interesting arguments, don't agree with all of them though.

Christine Grace
1 year ago
13 people liked this.

This article speaks volumes to me and relation to my life. As someone with Attention Deficit Disorder, being able to concentrate and focus on one task, on one goal is a constant struggle that seems to always, constantly slip away from me and through my grip.

21 people liked this.

When the Net absorbs a medium, that medium is re-created in the Net's image. It injects the medium's content with hyperlinks, blinking ads, and other digital gewgaws, and it surrounds the content with the content of all the other media it has absorbed. A new e-mail message, for instance, may announce its arrival as we're glancing over the latest headlines at a newspaper's site. The result is to scatter our attention and diffuse our concentration.

The Net's influence doesn't end at the edges of a computer screen, either. As people's minds become attuned to the crazy quilt of Internet media, traditional media have to adapt to the audience's new expectations. Television programs add text crawls and pop-up ads, and magazines and newspapers shorten their articles, introduce capsule summaries, and crowd their pages with easy-to-browse info-snippets. When, in March of this year, The New York Times decided to devote the second and third pages of every edition to article abstracts, its design director, Tom Bodkin, explained that the "shortcuts" would give harried readers a day's news, sparing them the "less efficient" method of ac-

pages and reading the articles. Old media have little choice

Change Can Be Painful, but This One Shouldn't Hurt
Published: April 6, 2008
(Page 2 of 2)

Never has a communications system played so many roles in our lives—or exerted such broad influence over our thoughts—as the Internet does today. Yet, for all that's been written about the Net, there's been little consideration of how, exactly, it's programming us. The Net's intellectual ethic remains obscure.

James Dykes 1 year ago
I'm finding myself remembering where to find the information and how to find it, rather than remembering the information itself.

centrois 1 year ago
In reply to James Dykes
Sounds good to me.
What's wrong with that?
2 people liked this.

[kmchaitk 1 year ago in reply to belhambone](#)

Google and internet, together with all media, promote another type of knowledge, which is not a real knowledge, but tries to substitute all knowledge. It is the illusion of knowledge by information. I will give you an example: I opened the page about F.W. Taylor on Wikipedia, to see if it is the same Taylor of the series expansion. The first paragraph was stating that Taylor "was an American mechanical engineer who sought to improve industrial efficiency. He is regarded as the father of scientific management and was one of the first management consultants." Words between underscores are links.

[121 people liked this.](#)[Bembquist 1 year ago](#)

Excellent article. The depressing feature of the comments so far is how many people don't seem to have any appreciation for reading except as a way to garner the barest facts, the shallowest of arguments. The words "o.k. o.k....let it already" are probably on more peoples lips today than ever before. I think there is a sadness in watching the world change that is inevitable when your youth is behind you. What was exciting for Taylor was probably miserable for anyone watching their own lives and work being dismissed with contempt as out of date. What I notice about the interweb is how much crap there is to wade through in order to get any substance, maybe this is what is making people so impatient.

[29 people liked this.](#)

About the same time that Nietzsche started using his typewriter, an earnest young man named [Frederick Winslow Taylor](#) carried a stopwatch into the Midvale Steel plant in Philadelphia and began a historic series of experiments

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Winslow_Taylor

[Frederick Winslow Taylor](#)

(March 20, 1856 – March 21, 1915) was an American mechanical engineer who sought to improve industrial efficiency. He is regarded as the father of scientific management and was one of the first management consultants. Taylor was one of the intellectual leaders of the Efficiency Movement and his ideas, broadly conceived, were highly influential in the Progressive Era.

then testing different ways of performing each one, Taylor created a set of precise instructions—an “algorithm,” we might say today—for how each worker should work. Midvale’s employees grumbled about the strict new regime, claiming that it turned them into little more than automatons, but the factory’s productivity soared.

More than a hundred years after the invention of the steam engine, the Industrial Revolution had at last found its philosophy and its philosopher. Taylor’s tight industrial choreography—his “system,” as he liked to call it—was embraced by manufacturers throughout the country and, in time, around the world. Seeking maximum speed, maximum efficiency, and maximum output, factory owners used time-and-motion studies to organize their work and configure the jobs of their workers. The goal, as Taylor defined it in his celebrated [1911 treatise, "The Principles of Scientific Management"](#), was to identify and adopt, for every job,

elritchpress.org/fwlt.htm

[stopwatch](#)

the “one best method” of work and thereby to effect “the

[Principles of Scientific Management \(1911\)](#)

[by Frederick Winslow Taylor, M.E., Sc. D.](#)

[INTRODUCTION](#)

[PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, \[note A\] in his address to the Governors at the White House prophetically remarked that "The conservation of our national resources is only preliminary to the larger question of national efficiency."](#)

gradual substitution of science for rule of thumb throughout the mechanic arts.” Once his system was applied to all acts of manual labor, Taylor assured his followers, it would bring about a restructuring not only of industry but of society, creating a utopia of perfect efficiency. “In the past the man has been first,” he declared: “in the future the system must be first.”

Taylor's system is still very much with us; it remains the ethic of industrial manufacturing. And now, thanks to the growing power that computer engineers and software coders wield over our intellectual lives, Taylor's ethic is beginning to govern the realm of the mind as well. The Internet is a machine designed for the efficient and automated collection, transmission, and manipulation of information, and its legions of programmers are intent on finding the "one best method"—the perfect algorithm—to carry out every mental movement of what we've come to describe as "knowledge work."

BiiMCA 1 year ago

Google CEO Eric Schmidt says its mission is 'to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful.' Therefore information is a commodity like other commodities to be mined and processed efficiently. 'The more pieces of information we can "access" and the faster we can extract their gist the more productive we become as thinkers.' And consider the Wikimedia Foundation's mission: 'Imagine a world in which every single human being can freely share in the sum of all knowledge.'

So rather than hang onto dreams about the good old days when the summers were hotter and the grass greener perhaps we should allow this generation to dip in and out, parallel process, snack, multi-task, skim and power browse; it might just save us all.

1 person liked this.

Institutional Analysis

It's a brilliant article. The part where you said how clocks now decides our routine and "in the past the man has been first," "in the future the system must be first," makes so much sense to me. I think we are heading into a new direction. Socrates remodeled the development of writing. He emphasized how writing will make us forgetful. I think the direction in which we are moving will make reading obsolete. We are moving in the direction of YouTubes and Dailymotions. For the most it takes to read your article, most of the people will quit as you said after 1st paragraph or 2nd. But the video of same length would certainly get millions view. Just make sure you put glitz in it. Kudos on this writing.

35 people liked this

time it takes to read your article, most of the people will quit as you said after 1st paragraph or 2nd. But the video of same length would certainly get millions view. Just make sure you put **gizmo** in it. Kudos on this writing.

I fully agree with this and with Socrates too. It is my dream and my desire that one day a full scale terrorist attack will completely destroy Googleplex to their latest brick.

The article is great, however Google is just incredible, simple said...

Parent dating blog
1 year ago

The article is great; however I fully agree with this and with Socrates

**Google is just
incredible,
simple said...**

kmchaitk 1 year ago in reply to belhambone

Google gives you "THE LINK", and every time you see a link, you tend to click. You click too much, read too little, and remember even less.

The company has declared that its mission is “to organize the world’s information and make it universally accessible and useful.” It seeks to develop “the perfect search engine,” which it defines as something that “understands exactly what you mean and gives you back exactly what you want.” In Google’s view, information is a kind of commodity, a utilitarian resource that can be mined and processed with industrial efficiency. The more pieces of information we can “access” and the faster we can extract their gist, the more productive we become as thinkers.

[Jacobensis 1 year ago](#)
[In reply to kmchaitk](#)

This phrase, “You click too much, read too little, and remember even less,” is very true. When looking at the history of communication and how information and knowledge has been transferred and passed on through the ages, the internet has truly revolutionized everything beyond our ability to control it or ourselves.

Eventually you run out of time and close all tabs. All you accomplish is an impressive page full of bookmarked pages. Other types of media are even worse: they select the links for you. This is the case of the news you watch on television.

8 people liked this. 121 people liked this.

Where does it end? Sergey Brin and Larry Page, the gifted young men who founded Google while pursuing doctoral degrees in computer science at Stanford, speak frequently of their desire to turn their search engine into an artificial intelligence, a HAL-like machine that might be connected directly to our brains. “The ultimate search engine is something as smart as people—or smarter,” Page said in a speech a few years back. “For us, working on search is a way to work on artificial intelligence.” In a [2004 interview with Newsweek](#), Brin said, “Certainly if you had all the world’s information directly attached to your brain, or an artificial brain that was smarter than your brain, you’d be better off.” Last year, Page told a convention of scientists that Google is “really trying to build artificial intelligence and to do it on a large scale.” Such an ambition is a natural one, even an admirable one, for a pair of math whizzes with vast quantities of cash at their disposal and a small army of computer scientists in their employ. A fundamentally scientific enterprise, Google

[thedailybeast.com/news-week/2004/03/29/all-eyes-on-google.html](#)

PAGE NOT FOUND

The page you requested cannot be found. You might like to try:
[Homepage»](#)
[Today's Cheatsheet»](#)
[Latest Articles»](#)
[Contact Us»](#)

Jennifer Nielsen 1 year ago

I relate to this a lot.
(I'm a physics major
who just graduated
summa cum laude
and I'm also, oddly
enough, a literary/
writer type.) I find the
general trend towards
automated
intelligence somewhat
disturbing and find
myself googling in
place of generating
original thought too
often for my own
taste. I first started
thinking about it when
I was out at Kitt Peak
Arizona without
wireless internet for a
week; I was actually
thinking, freely, again.

20 people liked this.

is motivated by a desire to use technology, in Eric Schmidt's words, "to solve problems that have never been solved before," and artificial intelligence is the hardest problem out there. Why wouldn't Brin and Page want to be the ones to crack it? Still, their easy assumption that we'd all "be better off" if our brains were supplemented, or even replaced, by an artificial intelligence is unsettling. It suggests a belief that intelligence is the output of a mechanical process, a series of discrete steps that can be isolated, measured, and optimized. In Google's world, the world we enter when we go online, there's little place for the fuzziness of contemplation. Ambiguity is not an opening for insight but a bug to be fixed. The human brain is just an outdated computer that needs a faster processor and a bigger hard drive.

The idea that our minds should operate as high-speed data-process-ing machines is not only built into the workings of the Internet, it is the network's reigning business model as well. The faster we surf across the Web—the more links we click and pages we

Katie Geisinger 1 year ago

As we move from specialization to generalizations, it becomes necessary to teach kids to how to deal with the wide range of problems they will have to address in the "real world". However, human intelligence is limited. The creators of Google have realized this limitation and they believe that they can create a well-rounded individual by "adding on" to the brain's capacity for knowledge. You learn exactly what it is necessary to learn so that you can move on to the next problem. There is no time for anything more than that.

8 people liked this.

Natalia Nicholson 4 months ago

I found the statement that Page made about Google trying to create artificial intelligence on a large scale very striking. Many people feign "facts" that they have read online, but can offer no further insight to these facts as they generally didn't read any further to really understand the topic. Is this artificial intelligence or just ignorance?

I found the statement that Page made about Google trying to create artificial intelligence on a large scale very striking. Many people feign "facts" that they have read online, but can offer no further insight to these facts as they generally didn't read any further to really understand the topic. Is this artificial intelligence or just ignorance?

1 person liked this.

8 people liked this.

their economic interest to drive us to distraction.

[albab1 1 year ago](#)

How may I submit a short story to the magazine?

1 person liked this.

[Parasites 11 months ago](#)

I use Google only for what I really need - and nothing else. tapeworms in humans

2 people liked this.

[David 9 months ago](#)

I wonder how much this is only relevant to people from Generation X (and earlier). It doesn't feel like Generation Y is affected the same way at all there are several examples of this, Belhamboe being the most recent post following that line)

1 person liked this.

Spell checkers will destroy our ability to spell?

Typewriters will destroy our ability to write cursive?

Calculators will destroy our ability to do basic math?

The funny thing is that for me it has been completely wrong.

My spelling improved after I used spell checking. My basic math skills improved after I started using calculators.

Maybe I'm just a worrywart. Just as there's a tendency to glorify technological progress, there's a countercurrent to expect the worst of every new tool or machine. In Plato's [Phaedrus](#), Socrates bemoaned the development of writing. He feared that, as people came to rely on the written word as a substitute for the knowledge they used to carry inside their heads, they would, in the words of one of the dialogue's characters, "cease to exercise their memory and become 'forgetful.' And because they would be able to "receive a quantity of information without proper instruction," they would "be thought very knowledgeable when they are for the most part quite ignorant." They would be filled with the conceit of wisdom instead of real wisdom." Socrates wasn't wrong—the new technology did often have the effects he feared—but he was shortsighted. He couldn't foresee the many ways that writing and reading would serve to spread information, spur fresh ideas, and expand human knowledge (if not wisdom). The arrival of Gutenberg's printing press, in the 15th century, set off another round of teeth gnashing. The Italian humanist Hieronimo Squarcialfico warning men "less studious" and weakening their minds. Others argued that cheaply printed books and broadsheets would undermine religious authority, demean the work of scholars and scribes, and spread sedition and debauchery. As New York University professor [Clay Shirky](#) notes, "Most of the arguments made against the printing press were correct, even prescient." But, again, the doomsayers were unable to imagine the myriad blessings that the printed word would deliver.

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clay_Shirky](#)

Clay Shirky (born 1964) is an American writer, consultant and teacher on the social and economic effects of Internet technologies. He has a joint appointment at New York University (NYU) as a Distinguished Writer in Residence at the Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute and Assistant Arts Professor in the New Media focused graduate interactive telecommunications Program (ITP). His courses address, among other things, the interrelated effects of the topology of social networks and technological networks, how our networks shape culture and vice-versa.

So, yes, you should be skeptical of my skepticism. Perhaps those who dismiss critics of the Internet as Luddites or nostalgists will be proved correct, and from our hyperactive, data-stoked minds will spring a golden age of intellectual discovery and universal wisdom. Then again, the Net isn't the alphabet, and although it may replace the printing press, it produces something altogether different. The kind of deep reading that a sequence of printed pages promotes is valuable not just for the knowledge we acquire from the author's words but for the intellectual vibrations those words set off within our own minds. In the quiet

*—Vandashethar M. Valarai
Two years ago*

Absolutely engrossing! I was so sorry that I wasn't one of those skeptics who thought of us digging our graves over due to our relying too much on technology and handing over our lives in the hands of 'machines'.
*—Chopra Carr...I thank you...
A person liked this.*

Chandrashekhar M Vairale
1 year ago

Absolutely engrossing! I was so happy that I wasn't one of those skeptics who thought of us digging our graves deeper due to our relying too much on technology and handing over our lives in the hands of... machines.

Nicholas Carr... I thank you...

1 person liked this.

spaces opened up by the sustained, undistracted reading of a book, or by any other act of contemplation, for that matter, we make our own associations, draw our own inferences and analogies, foster our own ideas. Deep reading, as Maryanne Wolf argues, is indistinguishable from deep thinking.

If we lose those quiet spaces, or fill them up with «content,» we will sacrifice something important not only in our selves but in our culture. In a [recent essay](#), the playwright **Richard Foreman** eloquently

edge.org/3rd_culture/foreman05/

But today, I see within us all (myself included) the replacement of complex inner density with a new kind of self-evolving under the pressure of information overload and the technology of the "instantly available". A new self needs to contain less and less of inner repertoire of dense cultural inheritance—as we all become "pancaucasian"—spread wide and thin as we connect with that vast network of information accessed by the mere touch of a button.

(1) The first stage of the process is the replacement of complex inner density with a new kind of self—evolving under the influence of external factors. This stage is characterized by the fact that the individual's behavior is no longer determined by his past experience, but by his present situation. He tends not to see past Friday night!!

Index | year ago

Let's admit it my friends...
We lost it. Our patience.
I mean think about it. It's
one thing if it was only
reading but to honest how
many of you consider a 10
minutes video on YouTube
to be too long? Scary no?

one thing if it was only reading but be honest how many of you consider a 10 minutes video on YouTube to be too long? Scary no?

Kyle Train 1 year ago

In many ways our mind isn't being challenged enough.... because we have a Brain tool...the computer. What are tools for...to make things easier...but over time we become subconscious... spoiled...and when you are using tools for physical needs that's one thing. But when you us tools for complex mental ability and situations that might not be the best idea in the long run. But yet America in many ways is a teenage Country... we tend not to see past Friday night!!

[en.wikipedia.org/
wiki/Richard_Fore-
man](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Foreman)

In many ways our mind isn't being challenged enough... because we have a Brain tool...the computer. What are tools for...to make things easier....but over time we become subconsciously spoiled...and when you are using tools for physical needs that's one thing. But when you us tools for complex mental ability and situations that might not be the best idea in the long run. But yet America in many ways is a teenage Country...we tend not to see past Friday night!!

Page 29 — [Next Page](#) »

As we are drained of our “inner repertory of dense cultural inheritance,” Foreman concluded, we risk turning into “pancake people”—spread wide and thin as we connect with that vast network of information accessed by the mere touch of a button.”

I’m haunted by that scene in 2001. What makes it so poignant, and so weird, is the computer’s emotional response to the disassembly of its mind: its despair as one circuit after another goes dark, its childlike pleading with the astronaut—“I can feel it. I can feel it. I’m afraid”—and its final reversion to what can only be called a state of innocence. HAL’s outpouring of feeling contrasts with the emotionlessness that characterizes the human figures in the film, who go about their business with an almost robotic efficiency. Their thoughts and actions feel scripted, as if they’re following the steps of an algorithm. In the world of 2001, people have become so machine-like that the most human character turns out to be a machine. That’s the essence of Kubrick’s dark prophecy: as we come to rely on computers to mediate our understanding of the world, it is our own intelligence that flattens into artificial intelligence.

[adspar 11 months ago in reply to Kevin Kennedy](#)

Overheard centuries ago:
“as we come to rely on books to mediate
the oral narratives they depended on to
pass information and create knowledge
and they would be left with statements
set in stone for future reference, forever
hampering freedom of thought.

And it happened.
And it also didn’t “really” happen.

1 person liked this.

[Jeff Ryan](#) 10 months ago

Ironically you may not be able to read such a long article, the internet doesn't seem to have kept you from writing an enormous article! This long of a read was torturous to those of us that have the very condition you write about!

3 people liked this.

[Josue Alcaraz](#) 10 months ago

Point proven buddy but the sad things its that its to late to took back your article is to long, and like you just said your article now in days must be shorter in order for others to actually read

3 people liked this.

[Kevin Schumacher](#)
10 months ago

This article is ironic.

5 people liked this.

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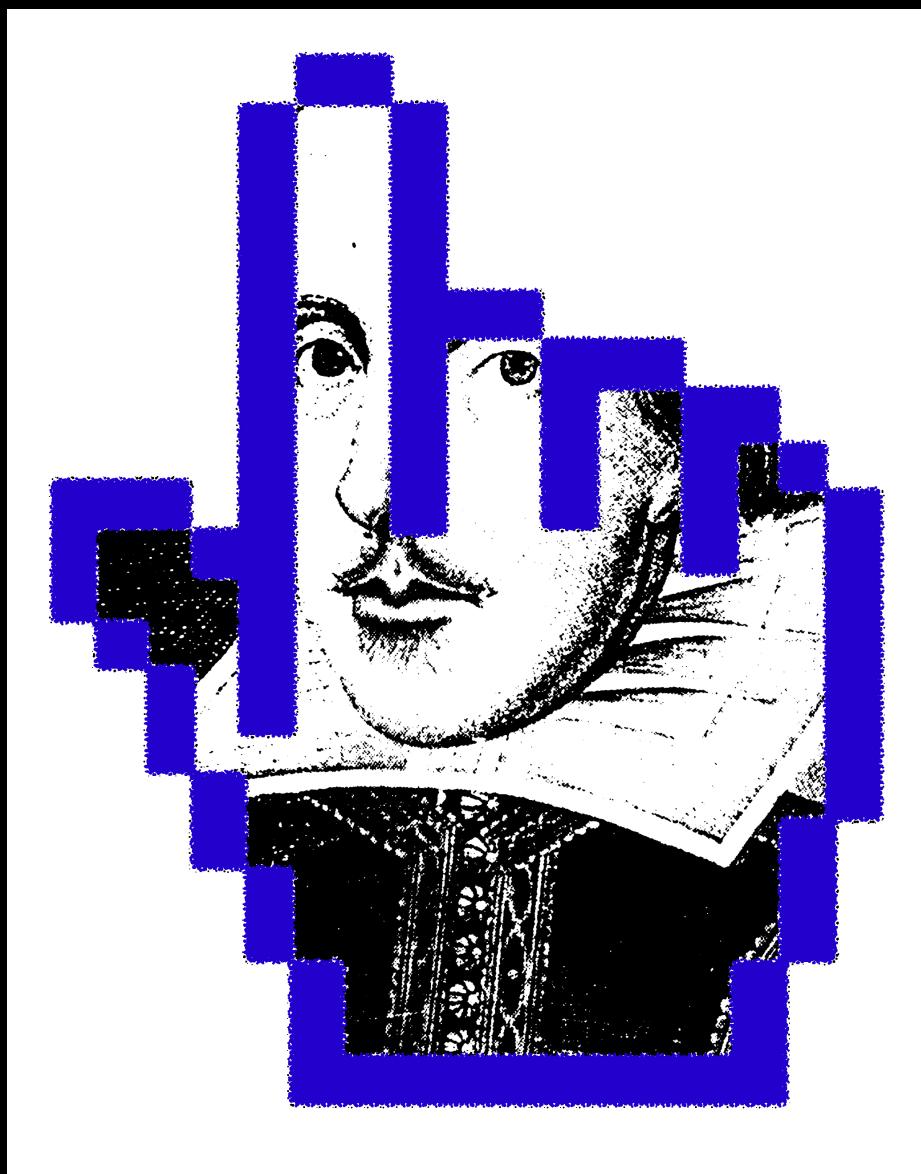
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This Post has Been Declared a Link-free Zone



http://observersroom.designobserver.com/media/images/Links_525.jpg

Top Google image search results for "links" (with a tip of the hat to Rob Walker)

Design Observer front page picture of "The Links" by Anne at ilike.org.uk

One of the simple satisfactions of writing online is putting in links, though I didn't always see it that way. When I started blogging on Design Observer in 2003 I viewed the links as a bit of a chore and my earliest posts don't contain many. We had yet to semi-automate the process and it was time-consuming and fiddly work.

MBA Prep:
[February 25, 2010 at 3:15 pm](#)

Internet including Google is very like fast food: it is convenient and thus popular among the majority. However, if you eat only fast food your health is in great danger.

[Public Art](#)
[Religion](#)
[Reputations](#)
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More than this, though, I thought that links would be a distraction from writing I hoped would be interesting enough in its own right to hold the reader's attention.

But that was a long time ago and I soon came round. Today, when working on a post, I look forward to planting links that will shoot their tendrils outwards from the text. I want the links to be truly useful and I spend time trying to pick good ones. I work on the basis of an idealized image of a super-motivated reader who will be so committed to the subject that she will want to pursue every lead I can offer. In reality, this extra production effort is not such a stretch. I always gained a similar satisfaction from providing endnotes with proper citations in my books. I don't expect everything I read to be written in an academic manner, but still I hate it when book authors withhold their sources. I don't entirely trust this reticence and as a reader I feel cheated; the writers are denying me the chance to check things for myself and pursue new directions.

My most obsessively intensive linkfest came in 2008 in the two-part dia-

logue about film that I conducted for Design Observer with my friend and colleague Adrian Shaughnessy. That 9,000-word text contains around 175 links and the project amounted to weeks of work. Of course, digital is not forever, and some of these carefully garnered and inserted links are already dead. If you like cinema, though, give those posts a look — there is still a dense network of information to be found there.

I could have made that task a breeze for you by supplying a couple of links. I wanted to. But this post, as I gave fair warning in the title, is a link-free zone so if you really want to see that dialogue you will have to search "We Found It at the Movies" Part I and Part II. But stop! Don't do it now. I'd much prefer you to keep on reading. You can always look them up later. The signs are that many of us struggle these days to read in a concerted, attentive and linear fashion. In *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*, Nicholas Carr argues that we have become incredibly adept at flitting from one thing to another, filtering, selecting and absorbing lit-

Ramesh Raghuvanshi:
[February 24, 2010 at 11:28 am](#)

[Google is not alternative to book. When first time I read the Dostoevsky's crime and punishment I was so absorbed in that book finishing it I loss myself. Google never give us this kind of joy.](#)

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tle bursts of information as we go. The screen environment, with its many competing nodes of interest, encourages this kind of scanning and scavenging, and we readily embrace every kind of electronic information source, priding ourselves on our quicksilver modern ability to multi-task.

But the part of our brain that used to be good at concentrating on a single activity for hours at a time 10 or 20 years ago, allowing us to follow intricate arguments in a long book, no longer works so well, according to Carr and the sources he cites. (He also has interesting things to say about the brain's plasticity.) Today, we feel constantly distracted. There are always so many other things we could be looking at or checking. Lengthy, linear texts now seem like a very long-winded way of absorbing information that could surely be delivered much quicker. An amusing numbered list would be perfect. Just give us the bullet points. The paradox of the ebook is that it is sold as, and offers, a book-like experience

with even more scope for distraction: simply click on this word in the middle of the paragraph you are reading to break off and watch a film. And it isn't only books that are causing problems. I'm always amazed by the number of young people, mem-

[namhenderson](#)
11.07.11 at 09:47

this is totally me. I can write on a screen but for reading anything longer than a few pages i tend to print out, as un-green as that might be, even an issue for others at work, who also do this.

It is one of the reasons I decided to subscribe to the Sunday NYT edition. that and the new digital wall..

bers of the digital generation, who tell me they can't possibly read on a computer screen. Carr talks about the F-shaped reading pattern revealed by eye-tracking studies. The eye sweeps across the top part of the reading material and then it moves down and does the same thing again. After that is just tails off feebly down the left side. A bit of scanning is still going on, but reading has stopped. Any second now the fidgety, reluctant viewer will probably zip off to an ad, check out a tweet, or click on a link. Jakob Nielsen has a whole web page on this, complete with eye-tracking heat maps, which I'm sorry to say I can't link to here. Still with me? Great! Let's stick it to those F-shaped "reading" patterns. I appreciate your unusually dogged

[Public Art](#)
[Religion](#)
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powers of persistence, but I also don't want to exhaust your patience, so I'll cut to the chase, which is actually a dilemma. I love the possibilities of the medium and I want my texts to join hands in friendship with the infinity of other interlinked texts, rather than just floating in isolation. So rest assured that next time I post normal service will be resumed: there will be many salient links. Nevertheless, it seems to be asking a lot of you, the beleaguered online reader, to deal with both a longish essay and an in-built link-athon while also monitoring a plethora of other inputs. (Incidentally, you have to admire our sister channel, Places. Everything they publish is uncompromisingly huge.) Maybe providing too many pathways is just self-defeating now. That's enough speculation, though. What's your own experience of reading on screen?

[COMMENTS \(7\)](#) [JUMP TO MOST RECENT >>](#)
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I think the distraction may have less to do with in-line links and more to do with the design of the website. News related sites and popular blogs, often tend to have excessive contextual promotions for 'related content' along with distracting animated banner ads, tag clouds, pagination etc.

[Tushar Gupte](#)
11.04.11 at 04:45

much of a chore to open not, argues the V&A's exhibition about postmodern much of a chore to open not, argues the V&A's exhibition about postmodern
a link in another tab to we are all postmodern now.
read later. And actually,
I'd say the opposite is true. If an online piece We Look at Corrosive Images?
of text fails to provide a violent photographs of war do to us as viewers?
decent (and intelligent)
set of links, I'll feel 12.11
cheated, as if the writer kmajer and the Graphic Uncanny
is hogging his sources.: Surrealism and Graphic Design opens at the K
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Rick Poynor
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Rick Poynor is a writer, critic, lecturer and curator, specialising in media and visual culture. He founded Eye, co-founded Designers and Friends and contributes columns to Eye and Print. His latest book is Surrealism and Graphic Design.

[More Bio >>](#)

[Alistair Hall](#)
11.03.11 at 05:18

If the writing is good enough, I pay attention

[IT BLOG POSTS](#)

While travelling recently, I read Bram Stoker's Dracula on my iPhone. While missing the joy of having the book as an object - of having a visual thing y Shelf: Continuum's 33 1/3 Series which would absorb my memory of the 3 books about classic albums are a perfect example of a story, a thing which I could then stick can help focus an editorial idea. on a shelf at home - I think I enjoyed the narrative just as much on screen as I would have on the page.

[On Display: The Kirkland Museum](#)

If I had to pick just one Denver museum to revisit, it would be the Kirkland Museum of Fine & Decorative Art. As for being distracted by links? Well, we're all grown ups, well used to having to focus while other things beg

for our attention. I don't find it too [We Ever Stop Being Postmodern?](#)

much of a chore to open not, argues the V&A's exhibition about postmodern

a link in another tab to we are all postmodern now.

read later. And actually,

I'd say the opposite is

true. If an online piece We Look at Corrosive Images?

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cheated, as if the writer kmajer and the Graphic Uncanny

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Lisa Rost
York University Toronto
December 2011

Editorial Design
Paul Sych