

James Terault

04/04/25

Jesse Miller

ENG 110

Is Learning Becoming a Thing of the Past? How Technology is Stealing Our Need to Understand the World.

Picture this: You and a friend are having a conversation. At some point your friend says a sentence that, in your mind, doesn't make sense. Perhaps they used a word incorrectly in a sentence, saying "I hate this class so much, it invigorates me so much!" Then you're trying to point it out to them. You try desperately to make them understand what they just said was wrong, but to no avail, your friend is steadfast in their incorrectness. How do you resolve this issue? I have done the same as you were thinking many times; just Google it! My friend can refute my own knowledge as much as they'd like, but that of the internet? As funny as this situation may seem, it also offers up a strange realization; why do we trust the internet for information more than we trust ourselves? How many times have you used autocorrect while typing up an essay? How many times have you Googled a word that you were unsure of the actual meaning of? What does this reliance on technology to answer all our intellectual problems do to us? According to some, it just makes us stupider. Nicholas Carr, a journalist and writer who has published several books and articles on technology, culture, and business, wrote an article about this, called "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" Within this piece, he brings up this idea of "information vs. Wisdom", arguing that the internet can provide wordy answers, but it doesn't allow the reader the opportunity to really understand the topic. In a similar vein, Peyton Perkins and Tyler Pelletier agree with Carr. These two are students from the University of New England and are in an English Composition class with the amazing English professor, Professor Jesse Miller. In their pieces, "Where did we go wrong?" and "The Virus of Today" respectively, they talk about their experiences with technology and the ways in which they see the work it does but at the same time the amount of interaction we are losing as a society. This struggle to deal with how technology is beginning to control not only our social lives, but our intellectual ones as well affects all of us, young and old.

Technology has begun to become such an integrated part of our lives that the thought of ever changing away from it is becoming harder and harder to imagine. Perkins and Pelletier both recognize this fact, seeing the dangerous trend away from self-

Commented [KA1]: Good hook! I like the imagery.

Commented [KA2]: I can tell that this is your thesis! I think it has a great foundation. I would just recommend rewording this so that is easier to read and more clear.

Commented [KA3]: Good topic sentence!

sustainability that their parents once knew. For instance, Perkins states “Technology is something that has become essential to my lifestyle. It allows me to do schoolwork, do paperwork at my job, and see what my friends and acquaintances are up to” (PER). In every facet of her life, technology controls what she can and cannot do. From getting up in the morning to making it to work on time, we have to rely a lot on technology to do these things

for us. For Pelletier, the same is true, he notices that modern technology was made to make “the user’s life easier” (PEL), that this reliance on technology for information has “impacted brain function due to the easily accessible automation it provides.” People have begun to seemingly regress intellectually as technology allows our lives to be easier than ever before. For Pelletier, it is clear that the effects technology is having on the human mind is detrimental, and from Peyton’s examples it is easy to see this detriment in real time. I can still remember what life was like before I had access to technology, such as a phone or computer, as I’m sure both Pelletier and Peyton remember as well. Anytime you wanted to know something or learn something, the only way for us to go about it was to talk to someone or read a lengthy book. Now, we don’t even have to leave our rooms to learn how to do much. I could learn how to cook anything I wanted in mere seconds by looking up a tutorial, but I remember taking the time to ask my mom and dad how to cook things, and we got to make a whole night out of it. I can learn how to solve a math problem by asking my calculator to solve it for me, but I always found it easier to remember how to do on the test if instead I figured it out with the help of my teacher. Pelletier and Peyton, as well as I, have all grown up during this strange time, and the two writers seem to agree with each other that technology is such a part of our daily lives that the world we used to live in is disappearing every day just a little bit more.

Technology is having an even greater effect on our ability to truly digest information. For Carr and Pelletier, they can notice this, with this idea of “deep reading” seemingly being crushed under the technological weight of the modern day. For Carr, he notices the ways in which technology has changed the ways in which we read, stating

“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”(3).

According to Carr, the internet is a machine, one built on the aspects of giving the reader exactly what they want when they want it and as fast as possible. This seems to be true, as he later quotes the Google chief executive Eric Schmidt, who says “[Google is] a company that’s founded around the science of measurement [and it is striving to] systematize everything [it does]” (6). It would seem that Carr’s worries are well justified, as

Commented [KA4]: I like how you are putting the two student narratives in conversation with one another here.

Commented [KA5]: I like how you begin to add an “I” perspective here and situate yourself with Tyler and Peyton.

Commented [KA6]: What are the effects of this? Losing the experience? Think about adding a little phrase on the end of the last sentence that addresses this question.

Commented [KA7]: Think about somehow introducing this person/add more context when setting up this quote.

Commented [KA8]: I could be wrong, but I don’t think this is indented if this is a continuation of the same paragraph after the blocked quote. If you do want this to be a new paragraph, I recommend going back and adding a sentence or two after the blocked quote to wrap up that body paragraph.

the top head of the world's most influential technology company seems to be saying exactly what Carr is warning us about. Even Pelletier can see the effects this technological leap towards a perfectly efficient life is having on daily life, warning, "However, the 'make their life easier' aspect has caused humans to transition from robust thinkers to surface level thinkers who are reliant on the automation provided to them by their phones or computers." As technology becomes more and more available and allows for humans to put thinking in the backseat, the more it affects our ability to truly think for ourselves. Both Carr and Pelletier can see this reliance on technology firsthand and how it is affecting the people around them. Constantly people are sucked into their computers and allowing their minds to shut off so that the computer can do the talking for them.

Commented [KA9]: You do a great job putting Carr and Pelletier in conversation with one another. What about Peyton? Just try to make sure all voices are used about equally to receive full credit on the rubric.

Commented [KA10]: James, this is a great draft. You found great quotes from the three voices you selected and do a great job putting them in conversation with one another. Just make sure you use all people you chose pretty equally throughout your paper. Possibly try to put another quote from Peyton within your essay. In addition, I recommend you revisit your thesis and just reword it so that it is clear as possible. This will really help the reader follow along your essay better. All my other comments were pretty nitpicky and were regarding formatting. I think this essay will come together super well. Good job!

Terault 4

