

Noah Kesler

Professor Jesse Miller

English 110

22 April 2025

Title

Four hours. That's how long it's taken me to come up with this sentence, which is a stupid and embarrassing amount of time just to think of this mediocre hook to a paper. I blame social media, the internet, and myself of course. Those 4 hours were wasted scrolling through Instagram because I no longer possess the thinking ability or attention span to sit at my desk without my phone and do work like a functional human being. Unfortunately, I know for a fact that I'm not the only one who struggles with this loss of deep thinking. With the recent rise of advancements in modern technology tons of people go through the same struggle of being unable to think deeply or accomplish work without the looming and evergrowing urge to pick up their phone consuming them. The loss of deep thinking and inability to accomplish work was written about by American Journalist/Author and Harvard graduate, Nicholas Carr in his writing *Is Google Making Us Stupid?* Where He explores the mental effects that the online world is having on people. On a similar note, Mae Buchanan a freshman at the University of New England wrote "Technology's Effect on our Deeper Thinking" Analyzing the effects social media has on our deeper thinking. Another similar writing by Natalie Bell also a freshman at the University of New England, in her writing "The Powers and Drawbacks of Technology", she too discusses the negative effects of technology. From what I've experienced and from what I've heard from peers, I believe that technology has stunted our ability to think deeply or accomplish work.

Commented [FS1]: Strong hook. Very personal and invites the reader in

Commented [FS2]: This sentence is a little lengthy and could be more concise

Commented [FS3]: This introduction sounds very similar to the one you used to introduce Mae. I suggest finding another wording so your writing doesn't become repetitive

Commented [FS4]: Good introduction to your thesis, but the actual thesis statement is quite simple. I would expand on this thought, maybe you have more complicated feelings about this phenomenon? Or maybe more insight as to why technology causes this behavior?

The way we take in information and process it is different for everyone, whether it's our ability to read and absorb the information or our ability to pick out misinformation from real information online. On the topic of reading Carr writes about a study conducted by University College London focused on the "study of online research habits" The scholars examined computer logs and documented the behavior of the visitors on two popular research websites. The first site is run by the British Library, and the second site is run by a U.K. educational consortium. Both sites give access to e-books, journal articles, and many other sources of written information. Carr writes:

"They found that people using websites 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."⁽³⁾

While the study comes across as a little creepy to me, by which I mean tracking people's activity on websites and recording it. The study shows concrete evidence of people being unable to hold their attention on one thing long enough to obtain any information but whatever is shallow and right on the surface. Skimming shows either our inability or unwillingness to think deeper so we (as said by Carr) "bounce" from place to place, one paragraph to the next, one article to another, only grazing the information and never pulling any real value from it. Possibly from the sheer laziness that the internet has inflicted upon us by giving us everything we want, the second we want it without needing to do in-depth searches or work for it. On the very same topic of skimming articles Bell writes, "Since I have nonstop access to Internet, I can access anything. I need to at any given point. When getting assigned readings for homework, I have found myself skimming over the passages to get it done faster. Nothing makes me not able to retain all the

Commented [FS5]: This sentence feels out of place. I would either expand on it later in your analysis or get rid of it, as it distracts from the point you are trying to make.

Commented [FS6]: The phrasing of "thing" takes away from the formality of your writing. Try finding a more specific word.

Commented [FS7]: This sentence is very long, and then sets up a sentence fragment afterwards. I would find a way to break this up to make the paragraph flow better

information I was supposed to causing me to take more time and reread the assignment.”(Bell). I too can relate to this experience. Tons of my time has been spent “reading” and skimming and rereading assigned articles, more time than I’d like to admit. Time that could be used to do other things. Yet, I sit there looking over the same words for what feels like forever just trying to think deep enough to grasp a hint of information or meaning from the page. Shifting topics a little bit, Buchanan takes a different approach to shallow thinking. She talks about how people are taking the information they find online at face value, rather than looking deeper into it to learn whether or not the information is true or not, stating:

“With the influx of social media this can be seen better than ever before. And the main transition we are seeing is people going from deep thinking to shallow thinking.

Everywhere you look, there are gossip websites that portray themselves as news sites.

And many people fail to see this and end up believing what these sites post.”(Buchanan).

People have all of this information and “news” being fed to them from social media and see no reason to do any work to look deeper into the topic to find out if what they are finding is true. In their defense, I wouldn’t either. If these “news” and “facts” are being shown to me with minimal to no effort on my part, then there's no reason for me to go out of my way to do extra work or use extra brain power to fact-check or rationalize it. When I can take it at face value and probably find out if it is true or not at some point in the future. Our inability to read without skimming or our ignorance to not think deeper to see past the facade of false information given to us by the internet and social media are prime examples of technology stunting some of our most important and necessary mental abilities.

Commented [FS8]: While adding your personal experience is a good supplement, I would focus more on connecting Carr and Bell in your writing more. As this connection and conversation between them is getting lost.

Commented [FS9]: Instead of using all three authors in your paragraphs, pick two that are in conversation most about your topic, and then really focus most of that paragraph on connecting both authors

Commented [FS10]: The wording on this sentence is a little redundant

When we use the internet Carr brings up a point about our tendencies when reading online by stating, “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.”(3). I’ve noticed this, not just with reading online but just whenever I’m using my phone or scrolling through Instagram with no specific reason or purpose to be on it (which is a majority of the time) I mindlessly float around from one app to another or one reel to the next not absorbing anything not learning, I’m just there, existing. Just as before Carr and Bell share very similar views regarding the topic of technology. On the topic of reading online Bell writes:

“not retaining all the information on a reading and then have a negative effect on how I process the reading as well as how I interpret it. Interpreting the reading is one major step in reading as well. If you don’t understand the main point or even topic of the essay, did you even retain anything that the article was about”(Bell)

This part is still a work in progress I ran out of time

On the other hand, Buchanan talks about many rumors that are spread around social media because of people’s shallow thinking, she writes:

“All of which is a result of shallow thinking. The information that we consume on the daily needs to be processed quickly in order for us to comprehend the hundreds of videos. And post we scroll through on the daily. And with the fast consumption of Information people are also quick to comment, repost and share.”(Buchanan)

She argues that all of the hundreds of videos that we consume have caused us to “jump to conclusions” very quickly because all this information is being fed to us quickly, only allowing

Commented [FS11]: Add a topic sentence here before going right into the introduction of your quote

Commented [FS12]: Keep your citation consistent. Last name and page number if applicable

Commented [FS13]: This is a great way to condense your paragraphs down. Instead of introducing another quote form Bell where she echoes Carr’s sentiment, you can allude to her agreeing with him. This will help you place them in conversation better

Commented [FS14]: This transition gives the wrong impression about what you plan on discussing. The quote you use does not refute Carr or Bell, just adds a different perspective

Commented [FS15]: This part of the quote is unnecessary to include if you already mention it in the introduction to the quote

our brain to process the big ideas before getting bored and moving on. I agree if some of us would just slow down and take time to process things on a deeper level we'd be able to better rationalize, understand, and absorb information.

All in all, our constant use of social media, phones, and the internet has stunted our ability to think deeply or accomplish work, by giving us quick bursts of information, removing the necessity of doing work to look it up. Causing our ability to focus on one thing at a time to be significantly worse, than it used to be, so now we no longer have the attention span to successfully or productively read important articles or books and learn from them. It's as though technology is doing the thinking and work for us, but in a way that hurts us rather than helps us.

*

Commented [FS16]: Missing the connection of this point to Bell and Carr

Commented [FS17]: This transition into the conclusion is unnecessary, can be omitted

Commented [FS18]: Expand on this point, give the reader something to think about coming away from your essay

Commented [FS19]: Local Concerns:
Your sentences have good ideas, but they're getting lost due to them being every lengthy. You can put more trust in the reader to grasp your ideas, or add an extra sentence to further explain yourself instead of trying to combine your thoughts AND your clarifications into one sentence.

The language you use tends to be unspecific and make sit hard for the reader to visualize what "things" our talking about

Make sure your citations are consistent throughout There are some places where your sentences get a little choppy and interrupts the flow that you have.

Make sure when you go back and edit you read these portion out loud to see where the flow stops

Make sure your topic sentences are 1) specific to the part of your thesis that you are addressing and 2) a general introduction to all of the areas that you plan to discuss

Global Concerns:

- Your thesis is very broad and general, it does not unify the sources that you discuss. It more so feels like your summarizing rather than digging deep and connecting the three texts

- You're starting to work towards connecting the ideas in your texts, but you're not all the way there. I would focus more on explaining how your texts fit with each other/where they clash, and maybe dig even deeper as to why they clash. You start to do this a little in your second paragraph, but there needs to be more

- You use a lot of your own experience in your analysis which is good, it starts to get predictable after a while. This is especially true when you also use your personal experience in the intro. There is a time and a place for adding personal anecdotes, but you need to rely less on them and add more deep analysis of your quotes and placing them in conversation

- Your conclusion is functioning as more of a summary and less as a way to provide your reader with a long-lasting statement. If you could have people learn one thing from your essay, what would it be? Then focus the last part of your conclusion on that