

Week 4 Reflection

Is Google making us stupid?

As I read Nicholas Carr's thoughts on Google making us stupid and his book entitled *You are not a gadget*, I'm conscious of the place that technology has in my life up until now. I would not regard myself as a Luddite I'm no different from my friends and colleagues. From time to time I browse the net if I want to buy something, look for some piece of information or send emails etc. I haven't encountered behaviour such as trolls and I am happy to get lost in the pages of a book. Is all that about to change as I engage more with technology while progressing through the Msc? I've noticed that I do behave in a similar way to that described in the article when researching, I skim and jump from one journal to another but once downloaded I read and reread the journal sometimes printing it off to highlight and notate. Recently it was pointed out to me that time has speeded up, what used to take hours can now be completed in minutes for example to generate a number of copies of this article could take hours of handwriting or even typing. Now I can print multiple copies or I can photocopy it multiple times in minutes. A trip from America to Europe used to take weeks by boat now it takes hours by plane. Google has done the same for us, what would have taken days to locate in a library is at our finger tips in minutes – with so much information we have to change the way we deal with it or get completely lost and achieve nothing. I compared myself to my friends and colleagues with regard to my use of technology but I find that chatting to younger colleagues they too act in a similar way to the way I do, preferring to surf to find what they want but then downloading and printing what they want to read in greater detail. So I tend to agree with Carr when he refers to Wolfe who suggests that when we read on line we become mere decoders of information.

As Carr has asked the question is Google making us stupid, I'm reminded of a discussion with some training colleagues. The discussion centred around the question of if there was a need to provide the same level of information to trainees now that insurance premium calculations had moved from a manual process to a computerised one. One side argued that without the same level of information trainees would not understand the computerised process that was occurring; the other argued that there was no need to bombard trainees with information about a process that they would never have to perform manually again. Time has progressed and it has been found that there is a need to reduce the level of information on premium calculations and use the time for other more important requirements. This has not gone unnoticed, with some training colleagues bemoaning the fact that employees these days don't have the same level of understanding or knowledge when it comes to calculating premiums. An argument perhaps that technology in their eyes has made employees more stupid.