Technology and its impact on our Lives

(Where is your introduction? This seems like a summary paragraph of Carr.)

The 21st century has welcomed a new era of reading where people from all over the world can access different sources of information from the click of a button, following a link or even from the comfort of their smartphones due to the worldwide evolution of technology. In the 90s and 80s, people would get immersed in reading long articles and books strolling through different stretches of prose without breaking a sweat. Nicolas Carr clearly laments this disappointing fact. He alludes the new era of reading and information gathering is ‘changing’ his brain, not necessarily destroying it. He confesses that he ‘does not think the way he used to’ and this fact is greatly demonstrated when he reads. He confesses that his concentration drifts after two or three pages of reading any literary piece of work. He attributes this new-found limitation in concentration to the ease with which one can gather a colossal amount of information compressed in the form of a few webpages, landing pages and hyperlinks. For almost a decade now, most of us spend time surfing the net, and the internet has made it easier for us to take less time to conduct researches that would have carried more time before to do in the library can now happen in a few minutes or hours.

This advantage creates more time for the numerous practices we have all day from our text message chats, sending emails, going through different social media platforms and the likes. The internet has become the medium through which pieces of information flow through from the sources to our eyes all the way to our minds. With less time, people spend on books, the art of reading and writing is slowly diminishing. An excellent example of this scenario is the existence if limited character space in most of the social media platforms and the continued use of abbreviations while communicating. However, the use of these abbreviations does not mean that the average youth does not have their fair share of writing. This difference exists because there is a record that this generation writes fairly more than other age that has been there because of the numerous chats and communication people have through the internet.

(How is Thompson connected to Carr?)Clive Thompson(To this point, you have only discussed Carr without integrating any other sources.) states at the beginning of every school year, you will come around pundits fretting about how kids today cannot write. He writes the reason for this is, social media platforms like Facebook, power point presentations and Twitter have replaced well-crafted essays, and texting reduces formal language to what professor John Sutherland describes as bleak, sad shorthand. However, some people, like Andrea Lunsford, are of the opinion that the internet is a literacy revolution, saying that technology is not destroying the human ability to read and write but pushing the strength in other positive directions. According to Andrea Lunsford, a writing and rhetoric professor at the Stanford University, she believes that the advancement of technology is pushing the human ability to read and write in more positive directions. As per the results of a study she conducted from 2001 to 2006, most of the writing sample she collected from her students shows that the youth of today write more than the people who are from the previous generation. Unlike their predecessors who did most of their writing in the classroom, the majority of literature that approximately 40% of the population does nowadays happens outside classrooms. This difference is because in the past people did not write much outside the school unless it was homework or one had a job requiring them to produce text virtually.

However, there is still a group of people who feel that technology advancement does affect the way we write, but affects how we express ourselves to each other on different issues. Form her study between 2001 and 2006, Andrea Lunsford found out that in the past one could differentiate between a formal letter sent to a teacher and a simple message sent to a friend. This difference was visible as one could see the formality used in addressing the main points in the letter to the teacher, and there was no formal arrangement of main points on the message to a friend since the writers had their way of putting across the main points without having to follow a given formality necessarily. Andrea believes that students nowadays do not put the same emphasis in writing formal letters as before. As much as the idea is not as bad as it looks, the students nowadays have managed to acquire a way of adding the man points to the narrative and keeping the essays as impressive as they can. However, Andrea believes teachers should be in a position to teach the students when and where the line between informal and formal writing happens to depend on the audience. Andrea describes the nature of the audience, which has the ability to scrutinize and assess information in real time, about real life issues as the major cause of the diminishing ‘efforts students put in writing formal letters. Which, according to her, is a revolution of writing and reading, as opposed to destruction of the same, as the people who disagree with her tend to think.

According to one Nicholas Carr in his article “is Google making us stupid?” he believes that he does not seem to be thinking in the same way he used to before. As he states in his article, he used to be a deep reader, and he would spend hours reading long articles and books, and this would catch up his mind in the narrative and prose helping him understand the turns of the arguments even better. But ever since the era of Google, he now lost his concentration way easily after reading about two to three pages. Nicolas believes that the use of the internet has affected his mental habits since he is no longer able to read and absorb long articles either in print form or online. Bruce Friedman, a local medicine blogger, explained Nicolas’s situation as his brain resulting to scanning only short text passages from numerous sources. Results from a recent study by scholars from the University College London shows that most people who source their reading material online tend to have more of a skimming technique while reading. The study also goes on to report that the above individuals cannot read more than two pages without moving to other sources or sites for more information. Some are even recorded saving long articles and never referring to them again in the future. A quote from the report indicates that “It is clear that computer users today 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”. (Again, you are summarizing Carr without a connection to any other author/claim.)

According to Ally Julseth, the best explanation to why people nowadays had developed the skimming activity when reading is the fact that people tend to read more today than in the past when the television was the only entertainment medium of choice. With this new kind of reading, Ally asserts that our minds get exposed to a new way of thinking, and it is because of this that people tend to put efficiency before anything else. Wolf, a psychologist at Tufts University, believes that reading online makes us merely decoders of information and our ability to interpret text from some of the mental connections we make while engaged in in-depth reading will remain disengaged. Wolf explains that for us to improve on how our minds translate these symbolic characters into a language, we can easily understand. In so doing the brain will be able to take control of some cognitive factors including memory, and the mind’s ability to respond to visual and audio stimuli.

(This paragraph is your first attempt at synthesis. The majority of your paper should be done in a similar way.)It is accurate technology has its impact on our lives, and the above examples are some of how advancing technology impacts our reading capabilities differently. There are both positive and negative effects brought about by the impact of technology advancement with the positive being the internet being a source of accessing information faster and more efficient than the traditional library. And, as Ally Julseth suggests, the internet has made it possible for people to read and write more than people did earlier on. Some of the negative impacts of the internet, according to Nicolas Carr involve the detachment of people from in-depth reading and resulting to skimming through which reduces the memory capacity of people. Because of this, there is a need for the relevant bodies to work on setting up rules on gearing the advancement of technology in improving the reading and writing culture. Also, people should also work hard to make sure that the new reading techniques do not deprive them of their traditional reading skills which allowed for total understanding and interpretation of written text.

Work Cited

Carr, Nicholas. Is Google making us stupid? What the Internet is doing to our brains. Vol. 1. July, 2008.

Thompson, Clive. "Clive Thompson on the new literacy." Wired magazine 17.9 (2009): 17-09.