

Emma Vasey, David Yoo, Jocelyn Vasey

Alexa Garvoille

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Hey Alexa, We Can Think for Ourselves

Technology has rapidly taken over the world. It has allowed people to have a question of theirs answered within the course of seconds. Although some may say technology has made people unable to comprehend problems on their own, they are wrong. Students, teachers, children, and adults use technology to simplify and quicken their process of solving problems; however, they still find solutions by using their own brains. Because technology generally does not stand in for human thinking, the ability of humans to **think** for themselves will not **deteriorate** as a result of **reliance** on **technology**.

Granted, relying on technology to solve some kinds of problems can reduce humans' opportunities to exercise specific kinds of thinking, even if it is not standing in for human thought itself. For example, Google Maps and other GPS-based apps can be useful when a visitor is lost in a foreign city, but a reliance on GPS can also deteriorate some thinking skills. A person's sense of direction and memory of landmarks may be impaired when relying on directions from GPS. In this case, technology may have reduced the opportunity to exercise navigation skills, but it has not directly deteriorated this ability in humans.

Technology, for instance, cannot **solve personal problems** in the same way it can more basic ones. Dating advice and the complexity that comes with it is a prime example of a personal problem that technology cannot solve. While a troubled relationship could theoretically be

solved through the internet by connecting with an expert who then gives advice, the person with the problems still has to act on that advice in real life. Dating comes with complications, one that technology cannot fix and solve. In an example of dumping a boyfriend, one could easily fix it via text, where it's simpler, quicker, and a natural barrier so no emotion would be shown through the confrontation. This is a weak approach to human communication; technology made people weaker because humans couldn't face their own problems. Using technology is useful for getting simple, easy, and more basic problems whereas personal problems are more of an issue.

Overall, the inability to **think for oneself** comes not from the technology itself, like the internet, but from a **hivemind** which exists outside of technology. A prime example of this influence from a hivemind is social media, as people are quick to blame websites like Twitter or Facebook for encouraging a lack of independent thought. There are people who write accusations, regardless of validity, against high-profile celebrities, which then jumpstarts campaigns both for and against the accusations. These actions divide a diverse population of individuals into two different hiveminds, or groups of people with essentially only one thought process. However, it is not the fault of the websites that function as mere platforms; rather the blame goes to people using technology to try to bolster their opinions and sway others to those opinions. Such accusations and divisions don't stem from Facebook or the Internet, but from campaigns and events that occur in the real world. There are ways for such opinions to spread that don't require the usage of technology, like through people spreading their messages on the corners of streets, or through everyday gossip within social groups from teenagers to businessmen. Technology simply makes divisions and biases that occur in the real world more accessible and widely known. This hivemind mentality stems from biased people coming

together and convincing others to join them, not from the tools of technology being used to grow the hivemind. Technology hasn't harmed the ability for people to think for themselves as this harm actually stems from other people, online or offline.

Additionally, people can use **technology** to help extend their **independent thinking** on any topic **they may have chosen**. For instance by using the internet, people are able to obtain information from millions of sources on any topic they want based off of their own independent interests. For example, one person may be traveling to the city of Abernathy, Texas and they might not know a lot about it. But by using the internet they are able to achieve as much information as they want about Abernathy, Texas. When that person searches up Abernathy, Texas on the internet they have to evaluate all the information and find the most credible source. Looking up a question may seem simple but it actually requires a lot of analysis and thinking to find the answer. By using technology people are able to get more usage out of their brains than just sitting and wondering. By relying on technology people are able to think more, not less, and increase their knowledge on whatever they may want to know.

Despite the increase in human reliance on technology, this increase will not lead to a decrease in human independent thought. While technology may decrease opportunities to exercise certain kinds of thinking by being able to supply answers, technology cannot answer all of the problems one may have, such as emotional or relationship problems, while also being able to help extend personal thinking on chosen topics instead of diminish them. On top of this, instances where technology can diminish independent thought are more due to the other people using technology to create hivemind mentalities than technology itself. Technology may have taken over the world, but it has not taken over our brains.