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There’s no doubt about it, today, we have the world at our fingertips. At this very moment, we are living in an age with contemporary and complex technological innovations. At this point in time, not only is the technology that connects us to the world in our homes, but it’s everywhere- in our pockets and in our ears and even worn on our wrists. We’re living in a new time, a new time that is different than any other generation has experienced. It’s called the information age. To many, the technological advances we have today are seen as disruptive and as if they are leading to people becoming more stupid and losing intelligence. Mark Bauerlein refers to the current time as “the paradox of the Dumbest Generation”, as a result of schooling being “so accessible, diversion so easy, and liberties so copious” (Bauerlein 167). That’s where he’s mistaken.

The world at our fingertips is not one of information, but of misinformation. On the contrary to what Bauerlein says, news and education is not as readily available to us as some may think. “Fake news is nothing new” but with our access to social media and the internet, “bogus stories can reach more people more quickly” than they ever have before (Kiely). In their article published on factcheck.org, Eugene Kiely and Lori Robertson write in regards to the amount of distorted and untrue information being thrown at internet users every time they log on. Despite “fake news” being around since the beginning of time, it is now starting to affect us more and more. While we have the world sitting inside our pockets, that world is one filled tons of misinformation.

With the floods of misinformation on the internet, we have to sift through an enormous sandbox of information just to find what’s authentic and valid. In order to find valid information, we have to research. While researching for the truth, people come across and read many different sources filled with a wide variety of information. They have to actively decide whether this information is false so that they can press ‘esc’ in order to regain ‘ctrl’. Reading and comprehending all of this information definitely does not make us more dumb. In fact, it does the opposite of that. Reading has multiple “intellectual benefits” including an expansion of vocabulary, improving communication skills, developing analytical skills and boosting memory (“Does Reading”).

With all the reading and comprehending internet users must do in order to find legitimate news and information, we’re apprehending these new skills at the same time. We are not in an age of information, rather misinformation. We are not becoming “the Dumbest Generation”, rather one of the smartest ones.

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