Analysis of “The myth of multitasking” and “Is Google making us stupid?”

Nicholas Carr is one of the renowned authors who received his MA in English and American Literature and Language from Harvard and was the executive editor of Harvard Business Review. One of the articles written by Carr for the Atlantic Monthly is “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” Carr argues how technology affects a person’s brain and thinking abilities. Christine Rosen, senior editor of The New Atlantis, completed her PhD in history from Emory University. Rosen’s essay “The Myth of Multitasking” was published in 2008 in the New Atlantis. Rosen persuades the readers how multitasking affects our efficiency as well as health. Carr and Rosen share similar perspective of how technology has an impact on its users, but both the authors’ style of presenting the ideas and arguments are different.

Both Carr and Rosen are concerned about how brain is disturbed because of technology. Carr (2008) states that because of continuously skimming through articles and finding the required information, our brain’s connection loses its ability to think and interpret the depth of the reading. It means that before people used to find information to understand the depth and gain vast knowledge but in present skimming is being done to complete the task, which moreover reduces a person’s mental ability and weakens the brain. Rosen (2008) explains that multitasking initiates the release of stress hormones and adrenaline that causes health problem and short-term memory loss. She tries to convince the readers to focus on one task at a time, which will not harm our brain. In order to appeal to logos, both the authors use different studies and experiments to support their argument. The tone used by them in presenting this argument was an objective tone. Rosen’s essay contains research of many psychologists and neurologists, which supports the argument on the basis of medical evidence such as the use of fMri to demonstrate the brain’s response. In contrast,
Carr’s essay had quotes of people who have experienced similar problems in reading and thinking abilities such as Scott Karp, a blogger, who has stopped reading books because of changes in reading habits. The readers would connect to Carr because of the facts shown by him proves that lots of people experience the same problem.

Carr and Rosen believe that focus and ability to think makes a person productive and efficient. Carr (2008) believes that concentration and contemplation lead to shaping the process of thought, but its only possible by giving undivided attention to only one thing at a time. Carr argues that the Internet tries to scatter readers’ attention by displaying advertisements and so on. He shares his own experience that Internet helps him to reach a wider database. Similarly, Rosen (2008) explains that workers who lose attention or get distracted face a lower IQ that becomes a disadvantage to the economy. She believes that we humans are made to focus to learn and to store information. In contrast, the modern world believes that people should operate like computer with high speed and efficiency. Carr uses ethos by including his own experience and how his reading abilities changed, which shows how much connected he is to the topic. He also uses pathos by creating a vivid image of how he was a scuba driver in the sea of words and now he is a guy on a jet ski. Likewise, Rosen appeals to the reader by using the example of low IQ that readers would give attention to. Carr reaches a wider audience comparatively to Rosen.

The authors feel that wisdom is an asset to humankind, so it should not be weakened. According to Carr (2008), “The kind of deep reading that a sequence of printed pages promotes is valuable not just for the knowledge from the words but for the intellectual vibrations set off within our own minds”(p.22). He means that we do not read just for knowledge but we read to strengthen our wisdom and mind. Rosen (2008) argues that doing work with the interstices of mind wandering may gain
information in culture but will also weaken in wisdom. She clarifies that multitasking causes a person to weaken his experience, insight, and common sense. Rosen is cautious in most of her writing by using words like may be, sometimes, might be, suggest, perhaps, and claim in her phrases. On the other hand, Carr has used less hedging, though the author has used logos in reference to the evidence by comparing printed pages and blogs. Carr changed the tone from subjective to objective as the essay continues, where as Rosen kept the tone of essay objective till the end of the essay. At the end of the essay, Carr’s and Rosen’s word choice was similar and coherent.

Both Carr and Rosen rely on logos, ethos and pathos heavily from beginning to the end of the essay. The logos consist of many researches of famous psychologists to support the arguments and demonstrate logical reasons to the readers. The authors use ethos to connect the readers to their viewpoints by using a suitable tone and appropriate structure. Carr’s pathos includes his experience to show a connection him to the topic. He tries to inspire the readers to bring a change. I feel that Carr’s essay inspire me to change because I have felt the same experiences as Carr felt. At the end, I conclude that both the authors have presented amazing arguments but Carr’s argument was to the point, simple and persuading to me.
References
