

When I started reading “As we May Think” I honestly didn’t expect much, as I had completely bypassed the sub-heading and went into it completely blind. However, as I kept reading about Dr. Vannevar Bush describing trailblazing and a hypothetical mechanical, tiny and portable library, I was stricken by how prophetic his words sounded. Of course, in 1945, all he could do was make an educated guess at what progresses in machinery, information compression and rapid selection could bring in the future, but he still basically hit the nail on the head. After all, this library that makes every doctor, scientist and worker’s jobs easier is pretty much the computer we are accustomed to today. I find the fact that he could speak of a machine that didn’t exist yet in such detail truly impressive.

While reading, I found Dr. Bush’s examples and analogies to be extremely easy to follow. For example, the line: “Having found one item, moreover, one has to emerge from the system and re-enter on a new path.” (6) is a great way to illustrate how much of a pain this rapid selection process is with their current technology. I immediately likened this example to fishing, where even if you rigged your line to instantly catch a fish, you still have to take the time to take your catch off the line and re-cast it. In other words, the current process would not eliminate everything that would make it lose time and thus cannot be the most efficient it could be.

Overall, I find that while he uses somewhat complicated vocabulary at times, it was never hard to understand.

Meanwhile, I also much liked reading his descriptions of mechanical advancements leading to his point in time. I tried to compare how the crude machinery from back then would fare in terms of advancements when placed against today’s technology. Needless to say, I thought we were in much different positions.