



The Dumbest Generation: How the Digital Age Stupefies Young Americans and Jeopardizes Our Future(Or, Don 't Trust Anyone Under 30)

By Mark Bauerlein

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This shocking, surprisingly entertaining romp into the intellectual nether regions of today's underthirty set reveals the disturbing and, ultimately, incontrovertible truth: cyberculture is turning us into a society of know-nothings.

The Dumbest Generation is a dire report on the intellectual life of young adults and a timely warning of its impact on American democracy and culture.

For decades, concern has been brewing about the dumbed-down popular culture available to young people and the impact it has on their futures. But at the dawn of the digital age, many thought they saw an answer: the internet, email, blogs, and interactive and hyper-realistic video games promised to yield a generation of sharper, more aware, and intellectually sophisticated children. The terms “information superhighway” and “knowledge economy” entered the lexicon, and we assumed that teens would use their knowledge and understanding of technology to set themselves apart as the vanguards of this new digital era.

That was the promise. But the enlightenment didn’t happen. The technology that was supposed to make young adults more aware, diversify their tastes, and improve their verbal skills has had the opposite effect. According to recent reports from the National Endowment for the Arts, most young people in the United States do not read literature, visit museums, or vote. They cannot explain basic scientific methods, recount basic American history, name their local political representatives, or locate Iraq or Israel on a map. **The Dumbest Generation: How the Digital Age Stupefies Young Americans and Jeopardizes Our Future** is a startling examination of the intellectual life of young adults and a timely warning of its impact on American culture and democracy.

Over the last few decades, how we view adolescence itself has changed, growing from a pitstop on the road to adulthood to its own space in society, wholly separate from adult life. This change in adolescent culture has gone hand in hand with an insidious infantilization of our culture at large; as adolescents continue to disengage from the adult world, they have built their own, acquiring more spending money, steering classrooms and culture towards their own needs and interests, and now using the technology once promoted as the greatest hope for their futures to indulge in diversions, from MySpace to multiplayer video games, 24/7.

Can a nation continue to enjoy political and economic predominance if its citizens refuse to grow up? Drawing upon exhaustive research, personal anecdotes, and historical and social analysis, **The Dumbest Generation** presents a portrait of the young American mind at this critical juncture, and lays out a compelling vision of how we might address its deficiencies. **The Dumbest Generation** pulls no punches as it reveals the true cost of the digital age—and our last chance to fix it.

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Editorial Review

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It's an irony so commonplace it's become almost trite: despite the information superhighway, despite a world of knowledge at their fingertips, the younger generation today is less informed, less literate, and more self-absorbed than any that has preceded it. But why? According to the author, an English professor at Emory University, there are plenty of reasons. The immediacy and intimacy of social-networking sites have focused young people's Internet use on themselves and their friends. The material they're studying in school (such as the Civil War or *The Great Gatsby*) seems boring because it isn't happening right this second and isn't about them. They're using the Internet not as a learning tool but as a communications tool: instant messaging, e-mail, chat, blogs. And the language of Internet communication, with its peculiar spelling, grammar, and punctuation, actually encourages illiteracy by making it socially acceptable. It wouldn't be going too far to call this book the *Why Johnny Can't Read* for the digital age. Some will disagree vehemently; others will nod sagely, muttering that they knew it all along. --David Pitt

Review

"If you're the parent of someone under 20 and read only one non-fiction book this fall, make it this one. Bauerlein's simple but jarring thesis is that technology and the digital culture it has created are not broadening the horizon of the younger generation; they are narrowing it to a self-absorbed social universe that blocks out virtually everything else."

-Don Campbell, *USA Today*

"An urgent and pragmatic book on the very dark topic of the virtual end of reading among the young."

-Harold Bloom

"Never have American students had it so easy, and never have they achieved less. . . . Mr. Bauerlein delivers this bad news in a surprisingly brisk and engaging fashion, blowing holes in a lot of conventional educational wisdom."

-Charles McGrath, *The New York Times*

"It wouldn't be going too far to call this book the *Why Johnny Can't Read* for the digital age."

-Booklist

"Throughout *The Dumbest Generation*, there are . . . keen insights into how the new digital world really is changing the way young people engage with information and the obstacles they face in integrating any of it meaningfully. These are insights that educators, parents, and other adults ignore at their peril."

-Lee Drutman, *Los Angeles Times*

About the Author

Mark Bauerlein is a professor of English at Emory University and has worked as a director of Research and Analysis at the National Endowment for the Arts, where he oversaw studies about culture and American life. He lives with his family in Atlanta.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

William Emmer:

Book is definitely written, printed, or highlighted for everything. You can realize everything you want by a book. Book has a different type. We all know that that book is important thing to bring us around the world. Beside that you can your reading talent was fluently. A guide The Dumbest Generation: How the Digital Age Stupefies Young Americans and Jeopardizes Our Future(Or, Don 't Trust Anyone Under 30) will make you to become smarter. You can feel far more confidence if you can know about every little thing. But some of you think that will open or reading the book make you bored. It is far from make you fun. Why they could be thought like that? Have you searching for best book or ideal book with you?

Shawn Jones:

As people who live in the modest era should be update about what going on or details even knowledge to make these keep up with the era which is always change and progress. Some of you maybe can update themselves by reading books. It is a good choice for you personally but the problems coming to a person is you don't know what type you should start with. This The Dumbest Generation: How the Digital Age Stupefies Young Americans and Jeopardizes Our Future(Or, Don 't Trust Anyone Under 30) is our recommendation so you keep up with the world. Why, because this book serves what you want and want in this era.

John Carroll:

This The Dumbest Generation: How the Digital Age Stupefies Young Americans and Jeopardizes Our Future(Or, Don 't Trust Anyone Under 30) is great publication for you because the content that is full of information for you who have always deal with world and possess to make decision every minute. This book reveal it info accurately using great coordinate word or we can state no rambling sentences inside it. So if you are read the idea hurriedly you can have whole facts in it. Doesn't mean it only will give you straight forward sentences but hard core information with beautiful delivering sentences. Having The Dumbest Generation: How the Digital Age Stupefies Young Americans and Jeopardizes Our Future(Or, Don 't Trust Anyone Under 30) in your hand like getting the world in your arm, details in it is not ridiculous just one. We can say that no book that offer you world with ten or fifteen moment right but this reserve already do that. So , this can be good reading book. Hello Mr. and Mrs. active do you still doubt in which?

Cecilia Moore:

As a student exactly feel bored for you to reading. If their teacher asked them to go to the library or even make summary for some reserve, they are complained. Just minor students that has reading's internal or real their interest. They just do what the instructor want, like asked to go to the library. They go to there but nothing reading really. Any students feel that reading is not important, boring along with can't see colorful photos on there. Yeah, it is being complicated. Book is very important for yourself. As we know that on this age, many ways to get whatever we would like. Likewise word says, many ways to reach Chinese's country.

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