

INFORMATION IS POWER

HOW TO
BECOME
AN AGILE
LEARNER
AND
NAVIGATE
INFO
OVERLOAD

BY PUJAN ROKA

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The way we communicate and exchange information with each other has gone through significant evolution since the days of our ancestors.

In the age of hunters and gatherers, information was shared by the use of symbols and signs, such as beacons from reflective objects or smoke. Transfer of information over long distance was challenging, if not impossible. People had to travel long distance to transfer information from one place to the other. If travel was problematic, information would be contained within limited space or location and it would never get disseminated.

As the world progressed into the Agricultural Age, people learned to use animals to travel; the transfer of information thrived along with long distance travel. Water transportation further helped in moving information from places to places.

The Industrial Age revolutionized the way people communicated with each other and transferred information. The revolution in communications came shortly after the understanding of the science of electromagnetism.

Electromagnetism laid the foundation for modern communications, which started with Samuel Morse's electrical telegraph. Shortly after Morse's invention, Alexander Bell invented the first telephone that transferred voice in the form of electrical signals. These inventions paved the way for wireless telegraphy that later enabled radios and television.

The next transformation came with the Information Age – the age of computers and the Internet. Information and messages could be transferred around the world in matter of seconds, if not less. News and events could be broadcast around the world in real time. People could share email and audio-visual messages in real time.

Computers and the Internet have brought a wealth of information and power to our fingertips. They have provided us liberty and freedom to learn about virtually anything imaginable. Take webmd.com for example; you could diagnose and identify treatment options for some illnesses. When your car breaks down, you could browse hundreds of web sites that help you to diagnose the problem



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WHO ARE AGILE LEARNERS?

- Those who believe that change is inevitable and that continuous learning is the only way to stay abreast of changes. When confronted with new challenges, they are equipped with the latest news, information, and facts to tackle any situation.
- They are passionate and open-minded to learn new things, so they are curious and imaginative.
- They do not hesitate to question facts and data, so they do not get disillusioned with unrealistic circumstances.
- They are open to new tools and technologies and consider them important to enhance and enrich their lives.
- They think out-of-the-box and in terms of big picture.
- They are conscious of community and the interactions in that community.

and provide instructions to fix it yourself. Social network web sites, such as Facebook, have re-united millions of friends and families. Anyone with a digital camera and Internet access could turn into a citizen journalist and report on news that is inaccessible to the traditional media.

Easier access to information and knowledge has given rise to a new generation of people who thrive on real time learning. We gain information and knowledge as things happen around us. This is also the basis of 'Agile Learning.'


Tools and technologies are vital to Agile Learning. In the advanced Information Age, computerized electronic gadgets will become pervasive utilities. Although we could equally argue that they would be unnecessary dependency, they will be important to our productivity – as individuals and as a society. Popularly called 'pervasive computing', this new set of technologies will become mainstream and get assimilated in our every day lives. Consider computerized appliances that are automated for our use: home lights and ovens that can be managed remotely; computerized refrigerators that can detect food levels and order them from the nearest grocery store as needed.

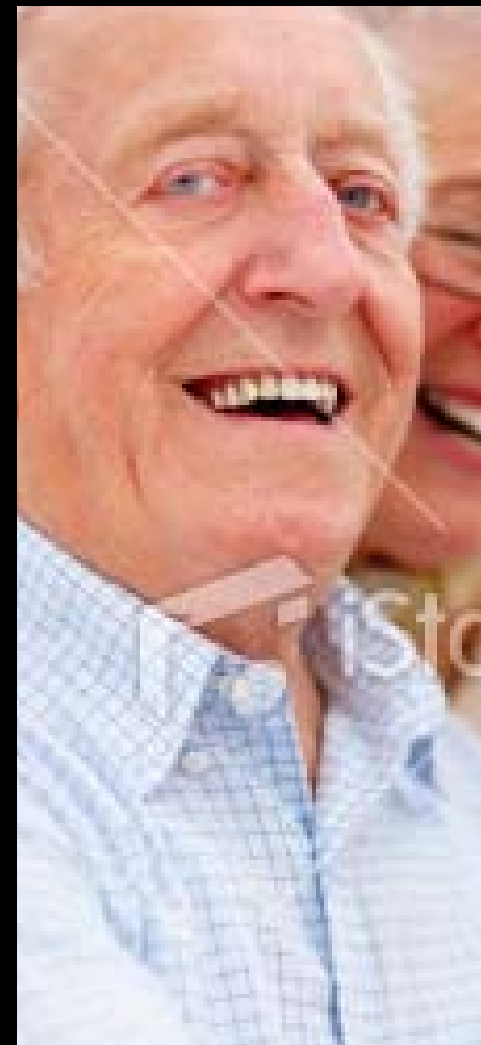
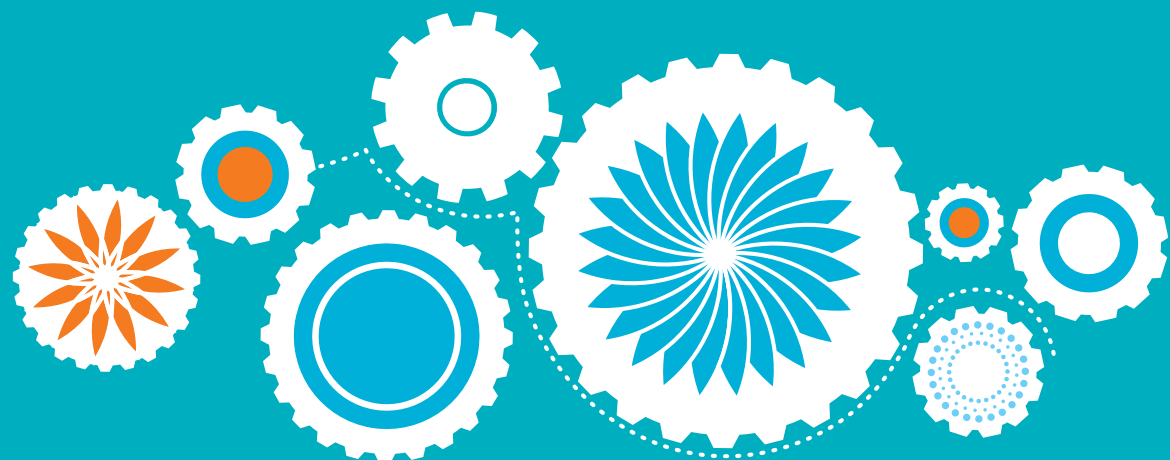
In the world of computer science, automation and simulation of human type of intelligence using machines and computers is referred to as artificial intelligence. As advanced gadgets and appliances become

common, artificial intelligence will also become pervasive. We will rely on this intelligence with or without asking for it.

HOW ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IS ALREADY A PART OF OUR LIVES

- If you have been buying books and merchandize from amazon.com, your buying history and behavior are already analyzed by complex computer algorithms. Based on this intelligence, amazon.com can recommend you other merchandize that you are likely to buy.
- A modern phone can detect its geographical location. Based on this intelligence, merchants can notify the phone user of promotions and discounts in a particular location. Or, if you get lost or get into an accident, rescue workers can detect your location using this intelligence.
- Google search creates its search result and the corresponding advertisements based on your location and the search criteria.

As illustrated by these examples, we have very little choice not to accept and adapt these new utilities, and by doing so, we become agile learners. We make ourselves knowledgeable and competitive. In the age of advance tools and technologies, agile learning may not only be the path of knowledge and information, but it may very well be the path of our survival. If information is power, then agile learning is the path to that information and power. 



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