

The latest brain hack to get ahead in Silicon Valley

Posted on 05/14/2018

Eager to keep up with the pace of change, some Silicon Valley researchers are embracing a grade-school technique to enhance their cognition and memory.

Michael Nielsen, a research fellow at Y Combinator Research, a division of Silicon Valley's top startup accelerator, took to Twitter recently to explain his approach: flashcards. To comprehend fast changing fields such as machine learning (or ones that escaped him such as the command line for the operating system UNIX), he relies on breaking down new fields into the key bits of information, the smaller the better. Over time, he then arranges these facts and concepts into a hierarchy of knowledge that he eventually commits to memory.

"I've memorized about 9,000 cards, over 2 years," he wrote in a thread making the rounds in Silicon Valley. "The single biggest change is that memory is no longer a haphazard event, to be left to chance. Rather, I can guarantee I will remember something, with minimal effort: it makes memory a choice."

This being Silicon Valley, the "cards" are not paper. They are digital cards created with the software Anki (myriad other systems exist as well). Andrej Karpathy, director of artificial intelligence at Tesla, picked up on Michael's thread, and writes he is using the same technique to recall facts from books. Others in Silicon Valley joined the Twitter thread to express their enthusiasm.

To read more: <https://qz.com/1200506/the-latest-brain-hack-to-get-ahead-in-silicon-valley-flashcards/> ↗

To read about one adult education teacher's use of flashcards in her Clinical Medical Assistant classes, read this article in our latest OTAN Newsletter: <https://www.otan.us/training/pdfs/newsltr2018/spring201718.pdf>

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