

devolving rewiring agility plasticity notoriously stretch

Learning in the age of the goldfish

1. forgetful goldfish have **an attention span** of about 9 seconds. That's not surprising, right? How big could their brains be? Amazingly though, a recent study by Microsoft Corp. now shows that the human race's attention span is even worse than that of a goldfish, performing at around 8 seconds. This is down from a previous of 12 seconds which means our attention spans are getting collectively shorter.

Many have questioned what the decline of the attention span means. Are we **getting dumb**? Is the human race 2. thanks to mobile phones and the Internet? The goldfish comparisons certainly seem to imply so. But that's not really the case. We're just thinking differently.

«We're seeing a 3. of the human brain» — Danah Boyd, Microsoft Research

With the decline of attention has come the rise of multitasking. 74 % of millennials use their mobile phone whilst watching TV. When Mozilla **released statistics on** Firefox in 2010, they revealed that the average user had 4 **tabs** open at a time. It wouldn't be a 4. to assume that that number has risen in the last 12 years. In a time of hyperconnection and **an overload in stimuli**, we're learning to switch our attention rapidly from stimulus to stimulus. «The amazing 5. of the brain **is nowhere as evident as** in the rapid adaptations humans are making in response to our **unprecedented access** to electronic information» — Susan Price, TEDx organiser. It may be that long-form attention is decreasing simply because we don't need it anymore — in the age of the goldfish, where people can **access information** at an instance, we're **seeing a change in** the skills necessary to learn. «Digital 6. is now a basic skill for everyone» — Susan Crawford, Harvard University

The fall of the human attention span isn't a decline in the way we learn. It's a revolution.