

What is Information?

I. What is information?

- A. Knowledge: justified, true, belief?
- B. Ideas: representations in the brain or mind?
- C. Facts: mind/brain independent?
- D. Information is intangible — it does not take up space, information is not physical
 - 1. This view begs the question against materialists and physicalists who argue that only one type of “stuff” exists — material, extended, physical objects. Thus, if ideas exist at all on this view, they must be physical and material. Maybe an idea just is a specific brain state that each of us can approximate.
- E. Types not tokens: ideas are said to be types or universals that range over numerous tokens or specific items. The concept “furniture” is a type while this chair (the one I am sitting in) is a token of the type.
- F. Non-rivalrous: holding or controlling ideas and information does not exclude others from controlling the ideas or information in question. We can each use it to better our lives.

II. How do we obtain information — how is it acquired?

- A. Process in the brain: when something is demonstrated or when we “grasp” an idea our brain changes states. When we come to know or understand a process occurs in the grey matter.
- B. Process in the mind: when something is demonstrated or when we “grasp” an idea our minds changes states. When we come to know or understand a process occurs in our non-physical mind
- C. Innate Knowledge: Some have argued that we each have “hard wired” into our brain or mind certain sorts of information or ideas. Descartes talked of a “clear and distinct idea of God” while Chomsky may talk of the rules of language being innate.

III. Where does information come from?

- A. A Priori: knowledge and information that exists prior to and independent of experience
— e.g. deductive logic, math.
- B. A Posteriori: knowledge and information that exists after and is dependent on experience
— e.g. the mass of an object, exit polls.
- C. Created v. Discovered
 - 1. Discovered information: information that exists prior to and independent of our looking or searching. E.g. genetic code.
 - 2. Created information: information that we create through innovation or simple daily activity. E.g. a poem, what I did yesterday.

IV. Objective and Subjective Information

- A. Objective Information: information that exists independently of our perceptions, hopes, desires, and information gathering abilities. E.g. $1+1=2$, adult humans have more mass than frogs.
- B. Subjective Information: information that exists and is dependent on our perceptions, hopes, desires, and information gathering abilities. E.g. ?