

Some Philosophical Thoughts on the Reliability of Information

Azaad Khan

MS Scholar of University of Peshawar at azaad11@gmail.com

Ahmad Ali Khan

MS Scholar of University of Peshawar at-khanali4636@gmail.com

Abstract

How can one determine whether or not the information obtained from print media sources such as newspapers, novels, and the internet is accurate? What methods are available for this examination? A vast variety of practical domains are encompassed by the field of library and information science. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that the study of the theory of knowledge in relation to eyewitness testimony, and more specifically the examination of the scholarly writings of David Hume and Alvin Goldman, can provide crucial insights in this particular circumstance. According to the findings of the current study, there are four essential aspects that must be taken into consideration when determining the reliability of information. These aspects are as follows: (i) the endorsement and plausibility of authoritative sources; (ii) the method in which information is presented; (iii) independent verification; and (iv) the coherence of the presentation. The purpose of this research is to evaluate the incorporation of philosophical disciplines into the instructional strategies utilized by information professionals, with the primary objective of enhancing students' capacity to exercise critical thinking when analyzing information. In general, this presentation includes a discussion of a wide variety of additional approaches that information professionals can and should utilize to assist users in determining the dependability of a certain source of information.

Keywords- Philosophical, Reliability of Information

Introduction

According to Floridi (2002), the topic of Library and Information Science (LIS) has been the subject of intensive research by academics for a considerable amount of time. The precise reference that you are looking for can be found on page 44 of Floridi (2002a). The objective of this research is to determine whether or not it is possible to use PI, which stands for preservation intentions, in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS) in order to overcome the difficulty of accurately evaluating data. This pertains to the strategies that individuals make use of in order to evaluate the

dependability of the information that is presented in a variety of different sorts of media. According to Alexander and Tate (1999) and Cooke (1999), library and information scientists place a higher priority on examining the integrity of information than they do on validating the veracity of the information. With regard to the conventional method of assessing the quality of information, accuracy is simply one of the many aspects that are taken into consideration. More information on this topic can be found in Cooke (1999) and Alexander and Tate (1999), namely on pages 11–13. Both of these books were published in 1999. Particularly in the fields of information science and librarianship, precision is an essential quality that distinguishes reliable sources from other types of sources. Please take into consideration the possibility of introducing more criteria in order to assess the quality of the content. We consider these sources of information to be the final authorities on truth, so it is of the utmost importance to us to locate sources of information that are accurate, impartial, and recently updated. Both the precision and the quality of the data are taken into consideration by these criteria in a general sense.

When it comes to the quality of information sources, librarians and information scientists have legitimate concerns that go beyond the simple question of having accurate information. The sources in question provide a number of challenges, including those pertaining to accessibility, relevancy, clarity, and simplicity of navigation. In addition to the field of game theory, the works of David Hume (1748–1777) and Alvin Goldman (1999, 2001) are the primary sources of inspiration that I draw upon. In addition, research has shown that while determining the dependability of information, there are four crucial aspects that must be recognized and taken into consideration.

There is a strong emphasis placed by Peter Hernon (1995, page 133) on the significance of verifying the correctness of facts or information before placing one's trust in it. A point for concern is the insufficient transmission of information that has to be addressed. The characteristics that have been mentioned are as follows: (i) the manner in which the information is presented; (ii) the existence of independent verification; (iii) the plausibility and support of the information; and (iv) the authority that is accountable for supplying the information. The purpose of this research is to shed light on the ways in which experts from a variety of academic subjects may enhance the capability of information professionals to educate the general public on the critical

evaluation of data sources. In addition, it is essential for information specialists to make use of a wide variety of important tactics in order to aid customers in independently verifying the accuracy of data. There are a variety of challenges that could arise as a result of providing erroneous information.

It is possible for even the most trustworthy sources of information to contain imperfections. The Chicago Tribune came to the incorrect conclusion that Dewey had emerged triumphant over Truman in the 1948 presidential election. This conclusion was reached in a hasty and insufficiently researched manner. According to Frické (1997, page 887), there was an incident in which Dan Rather made a statement that was not accurate regarding the connection between the gunshot wound that John Hinkley sustained and the death of James Brady. When it comes to the publication of content on the internet, there is no editorial supervision, which means that a considerable amount of erroneous material will eventually be publicly available. The findings of previous academic studies (Impicciatore et al., 1997; Connell & Tipple, 1999; Berland et al., 2001) indicate that digital platforms are responsible for the dissemination of a substantial volume of material that is considered to be erroneous. Because it typically results in confusion and misunderstanding on the part of users, the existence of erroneous information constitutes a substantial barrier. In addition to non-epistemic hazards, it is essential to take them into consideration.

When presented with an adequate amount of information, human beings have the capacity to make decisions that are in their interest. Individuals' physical and financial well-being can be negatively impacted by the dissemination of misleading or inaccurate information (Fowler et al., 2001; Kiley, 2002). This is a potential consequence of the dissemination of such information. Certain individuals may have a predisposition for excessive self-assurance, while others may have a tendency toward excessive prudence. This is in addition to the complexities that have been discussed previously. It is possible that some individuals, motivated by the fear of being deceived, will choose to disregard significant information, even if it appears to be reliable.

Wachbroit (2000) contends that the presence of inaccurate information in sources does not necessarily result in results that are undesired. As long as they are able to differentiate between real events and fiction that they have made up, people will continue to be honest. During the course of his research, Cerf (2002) discovered that individuals frequently have difficulty distinguishing between genuine knowledge and

content that is creative. There is a significant result that pertains to the usability of contemporary web design tools, which make it possible for individuals with less technical competence to construct websites. According to Silberg et al. (1997, page 1244), individuals have the potential to use a computer to connect to the Internet and simultaneously serve as an author, editor, and publisher. This is true regardless of whether or not they choose to maintain their anonymity. There is a possibility that both novice and experienced users of the internet will have trouble discerning between content that is beneficial and content that is harmful.

As a result, it is essential for individuals to possess the ability to differentiate between sources that are reputable and those that are not reliable. To put it another way, it is of the utmost importance to devise a process that is capable of determining the accuracy of the data. The massive spreading of false information on the internet is the principal source of concern at this time. In order to ensure that the information obtained from internet sources is accurate, the primary objective of this research is to investigate several approaches that can be utilized to check authenticity. On the other hand, the processes that were discussed before can be utilized to validate the correctness of data obtained from any point of origin. An examination of the degree to which the theoretical framework that has been constructed by academic research in witness epistemology aligns with the efforts that have been made to correct faulty knowledge will be presented in the following sections. The existing theoretical framework elucidates the fundamental presumptions that underpin these rules and offers suggestions for ways in which they could be improved. Furthermore, a conceptual framework has the ability to improve the application and diffusion of these concepts, which is a significant advantage.

It is of the utmost importance to acknowledge of the fact that the problem of incorrect information existed prior to its current investigation. The challenges that individuals confront are not limited to those that have been stated above; there are many others that are comparable to them. As long as citizens do not develop the ability to distinguish between real and fabricated dollars, the problem of counterfeit currency will continue to exist (Bureau of Engraving and Printing, 2002). Customers must be able to differentiate between items that are of higher and lower quality in order to address the issue of low-quality products (Baird et al., 1994, pp. 122-125). This is necessary in order to address the problem of low-quality products. This study

highlights the practical value of applying methodologies that were first created to solve problems that are not connected to the problem of erroneous information in order to address the problem of accurate information.

The process of generating viewpoints or arriving at conclusions through the use of extensive scientific inquiry and data that can be verified is what is meant by the concept of evidence-based beliefs. This would be the text. The larger process of authenticating documentary evidence includes a specific step that involves verifying the testimony of one or more witnesses. For the time being, let's concentrate on the height of the Eiffel Tower, precisely measured in meters. In order to obtain precise measurements of the Eiffel Tower, only a very small number of people possess the equipment and professional competence required. The remaining members of society will be required to acquire this information by conducting research on the internet or reading. When we have proof that can be verified from a book or website, we often consider it to be credible and trustworthy, and as a result, we put our faith in their credibility and reliability.

For the reason that a significant portion of our information about the world originates from sources that are not direct, witness epistemology is an extremely important field of study (Lipton, 1998, page 2). The argument that witness and spectator evidence is highly relevant, vital, and essential for thinking in the context of human existence is presented by Hume (1748/1977, page 74). The majority of the information that we get from other people comes from written sources, which include things like books, newspapers, and websites. In the sphere of traditional epistemology, the investigation of the epistemology of witness, as articulated by Goldman (1999, page 4), has not been subjected to a comprehensive examination. Giedymin (1963), Hardwig (1985), Coady (1992), Lipton (1998), Goldman (1999, pp. 103–130), and Goldman (2001) are just few of the authors that have contributed to the academic discourse on this subject. However, there has been a substantial amount of scholarly discussion on this subject. It is possible to trace the roots of this academic field all the way back to ancient Greece. Plato's philosophical work "The Republic," which was written in 380 BC/2002, page 170d, investigates the extent to which an individual's claim of knowledge can be demonstrated to be true. David Hume's "An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding," which was first published in 1748, was a key exploration of the epistemology of witness. It had a profound impact on future thought when it was

reissued in 1977. Within the chapter that is named "Of Miracles," Hume presents a comprehensive framework that enables the evaluation of the dependability of specific pieces of evidence. The sixth rationale is that this particular framework is appropriate for assessing the accuracy and honesty of data that has been acquired in the past. When confronted with the assertion that an individual has personally witnessed the resurrection of a deceased person, Hume (1748/1977, page 77) immediately evaluates the likelihood that the purported witness was either wrong or purposely misleading, rather than taking into consideration the possibility that the event genuinely took place.

A website's claim regarding the efficacy and safety of a certain prescription for a child with a fever can be evaluated using Hume's approach, which was first designed for analyzing accounts of miraculous healings. However, this methodology can also be applied to evaluate the accuracy of the claim. In order to arrive at the most rational interpretation, it is essential to carry out a thorough analysis of all the evidence that is at one's disposal, which should certainly include comments from witnesses. It is usual practice to use the phrase "inference to the best explanation" when attempting to articulate this particular strategy. For the purpose of determining whether or not scientific assertions are true, philosophers frequently use the methodology described in this statement. On the other hand, it is vital to keep in mind that this method can also be utilized to assess the dependability of witnesses (Lipton, 1998, page 27). Which of the following is the most compelling argument in support of the website's assertion that this treatment is risk-free and yields positive outcomes? Which of the following is more likely to endorse an ineffective treatment: the pharmaceutical company that sponsors the website or the author's lack of relevant medical experience? Does the medication have a greater propensity to generate the therapeutic benefits that are intended in experiments conducted on human subjects?

According to Hume (1748/1977, page 73), a sensible person "adjusts their beliefs based on the available evidence," which is a process that goes beyond just determining the most likely course of action. When there is a higher amount of evidence supporting a statement in comparison to the evidence that contradicts it, it is more rational to believe the statement to be true (Hume, 1748/1977, pp. 73-74). In order to ascertain the degree of confidence that one has in the veracity of a statement, it is necessary to compare the significance that is placed on the evidence that substantiates the

statement's accuracy with the evidence that substantiates its untruth. Hume (1748/1977, page 74) asserts that ambiguity occurs when one is confronted with a scenario in which fifty trials support one side of the argument while one hundred experiments support the other side. On the other hand, a conclusion can be called extremely trustworthy when one hundred research continuously yield the same results and there is no outlier present.

Through the work that he did, Hume established a precedent by introducing the idea of worth. The reliability of a certain source can be determined using a variety of approaches, according to his suggestions. The process of establishing norms includes a number of other aspects, one of which is the creation of a set of criteria for evaluating digital information in print form. Several recent research in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS) have investigated the ways in which individuals judge the credibility and dependability of online sources. These studies were carried out by Wathen and Burkell (2002), Eysenbach and Kohler (2002), Rieh (2002), and Fogg et al. (2001), among others. One can observe a significant disparity between the manner in which individuals perceive trustworthiness and the manner in which they evaluate the dependability of information found on the internet. The degree to which readers believe that authors are trustworthy is inextricably linked to the authors' capacity to convince others of their points of view.

One of the secondary goals of education according to the Humean philosophy is the cultivation of genuine beliefs. Evidence from the real world ought to be consistent with these beliefs. According to philosophers, those who are looking for information are generally in agreement with Goldman's position, which is described in his book from 1999, page 3. It is the number that is being referred to here. John Locke (1690/1975, page 697) emphasizes that in order to build conceptions that are valid, it is necessary to carefully evaluate our thoughts after taking into account the knowledge that we already possess.

When it comes to the underlying incentives that motivate people to search for information, however, librarians and information scientists have a different perspective than this technique (Fallis, 2000, p. 314) These individuals have a different point of view than this strategy. According to the theory put forth by Jesse Shera (1970, page 97), disinformation continues to be considered information that is considered to be worthy of attention and conscious awareness. On the other hand, numerous

specialists in the field of library and information science, such as Frické (1997, page 887), Meola (2000, page 174), and Doyle (2001, pages 62-63), have observed that people frequently have a strong tendency to obtain unbiased perspectives when they are looking for information. It is necessary for a student who is conducting research for an academic paper about the Eiffel Tower to have an exact measurement of the tower's height. She is aggressively seeking knowledge and truth. Oftentimes, when one of their children is ill, parents contemplate how they can supply aid. It is prudent to avoid spending time on checking the veracity of information unless doing so would help in the goal of acquiring the truth.

Nevertheless, it should not be assumed that the main reason knowledge seekers are driven is to seek the truth (Goldman, 1999, p. 26). Walter Kaufmann (1977, pp. 47-83) is an academic who supports the view that reading provides benefits that go beyond simply gaining factual knowledge through processes like comprehending. Enormous thirteen. While it may not be our major goal, establishing honest beliefs is typically a critical step in accomplishing this secondary target (Bruce, 2000, p. 109). It is vital to note that although our fundamental goal is to obtain true opinions, we are equally concerned with concerns that transcend beyond the correctness of the data.

Occasionally, erroneous conclusions may arise due to inaccurate or inadequate data. Consequently, we continue to be diligent in ensuring that the data is thorough (Frické, 1997; Fallis & Frické, 2002, pp. 74-75). On the other hand, the main emphasis of this investigation is the approach employed to determine the accuracy and reliability of the acquired data.

The input language, labeled as "469," is insufficiently particular and hence cannot be restated as: "Who are the individuals who provide testimony as witnesses?" The significance of confirming information by referring to the primary source is underscored by both librarians and researchers. Authority refers to the legitimate power or control that institutions or individuals possess to distribute limited resources in order to assure the accuracy of data. Cooke (1999, pp. 58-60), Alexander and Tate (1999, p. 11), and Wilson (1983) all stress the importance of confirming the reliability of information sources. It is necessary to assess the "character... of the witnesses," as stated by Hume (1748/1977, p. 75).

The philosophical concept of basing a conviction on the authority of the source is referred to as "appeal to authority." This idea is often considered incorrect in beginning

logic texts. Salmon (1995, p. 105) and Goldman (2001, p. 88) present evidence that demonstrates the lack of validity in certain appeals to authority. Seeking medical advice from television is an example of the logical error known as appealing to authority. The number 15 comes before 16 in the sequence. When the information source is considered reputable and has knowledge in the relevant field, it is permissible to rely on their authority. Jerzy Giedymin (1963, pp. 288–289) outlines two main approaches to assess the reliability of an information source. The primary focus should be on determining the level of historical coherence and precision demonstrated by this specific source of information. According to Hume (1748/1977, p.73), individuals with a history of accuracy are more likely to be correct at present. Moreover, do you have any basis to doubt the reliability of this source in delivering accurate information about this specific case? Frequently, reputable guidelines for evaluating information suggest that users carefully examine the source for any obvious biases that may be evident.

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