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# EDUCATIONAL PROCESS IN THE INTERNET: THE DIALECTIC OF KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION

## *PROCESSO EDUCACIONAL NA INTERNET: A DIALÉTICA DO CONHECIMENTO E DA INFORMAÇÃO*

## *EL PROCESO EDUCATIVO EN INTERNET: LA DIALÉCTICA DEL CONOCIMIENTO Y LA INFORMACIÓN*

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**ABSTRACT**: This article explores the problem of turning information users receive on the Internet into their knowledge. The work aims to find a priority factor that ensures a higher degree of accuracy in turning information from the Internet into human knowledge. It has been shown that the nature of the World Wide Web makes it somewhat difficult to translate information coming to a person into their knowledge. It is concluded that the condition for converting information received by the user on the Internet is the person's cognitive activity, conditioned by the development of their ideological and value sphere. If a cognizing person has sufficiently developed and stable values and attitudes, then they successfully realize themselves as a developing subject, an active participant in cognition. On the contrary, an insufficiently stable value and attitudinal sphere can lead to a passive perception of information by the individual, adaptation to reality, etc.

**KEYWORDS**: Knowledge. Information. Attitude.

***RESUMO***: *Este artigo explora o problema de transformar as informações que um usuário recebe na Internet em conhecimento. O trabalho visa encontrar um fator prioritário que garanta maior grau de precisão na transformação da informação da Internet em conhecimento humano. Foi demonstrado que a natureza da World Wide Web torna difícil traduzir as informações que chegam a uma pessoa em conhecimento. Conclui-se que a condição para a conversão da informação recebida pelo usuário na Internet é sua atividade*

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*cognitiva, condicionada, em primeiro lugar, pelo desenvolvimento de sua esfera ideológica e de valores. Se uma pessoa cognoscente tem valores e atitudes suficientemente desenvolvidos e estáveis, então ela se realiza com sucesso como um sujeito em desenvolvimento, um participante ativo na cognição. Ao contrário, um valor insuficientemente estável e uma esfera atitudinal podem levar a uma percepção passiva da informação pelo indivíduo, adaptação à realidade etc.*

***PALAVRAS-CHAVE**: Conhecimento. Informação. Atitude.*

***RESUMEN**: Este artículo explora el problema de convertir la información que un usuario recibe en Internet en conocimiento y tiene como objetivo encontrar un factor prioritario que garantice mayor grado de precisión en esta conversión. Se ha demostrado que la naturaleza de la World Wide Web hace que sea difícil traducir la información que llega a una persona en conocimiento. Se concluye que la condición para convertir la información que recibe el usuario en Internet es la actividad cognitiva de la persona, condicionada por el desarrollo de su ámbito ideológico y valorativo. Si una persona que conoce tiene valores y actitudes suficientemente desarrollados y estables, entonces se realiza con éxito como un sujeto en desarrollo, un participante activo en la cognición. Por el contrario, un ámbito valorativo y actitudinal insuficientemente estable puede llevar a una percepción pasiva de la información por parte del individuo, adaptación a la realidad, etc.*

***PALABRAS CLAVE**: Conocimiento. Información. Actitud.*

## Introduction

Interest in exploring the digital society is now considerable. There are objective reasons for that. A global transition to a digital or information society is underway. The world is witnessing an explosion of digital technology and there is a competition to see which countries lead the way to the digital society. Information technology is increasingly taking over domestic and public spaces. The majority of the world's population uses the Internet. Research in this area has become even more urgent with the coronavirus pandemic beginning in 2020, which has limited direct social contact and needed the development of information technology to replace it with greater or lesser success. For example, distance education delivered through the Internet. One important aspect of the issue is a study of the Internet's impact on a person's spiritual world.

For example, in the United States psychologists and biologists, doctors and educators are studying various aspects of the Internet impact on people's spiritual world (CARR, 2010; CASTELLS, 2001; JACKSON, 2009; KURZWEIL, 2012; PALFREY; GASSER, 2008; SHIRKY, 2010; SMALL; VORGAN, 2008). Usually, researchers investigate specific scientific problems related to the impact of the Internet on people's spiritual world, such as

Internet addiction or Internet education (including such currently fashionable trend as gamification) (ÇEKER; ÖZDAMH, 2017; ELLIS; MCALEER; SZAKAS, 2015). In doing so, as specialists in the private sciences, they usually draw specific scientific conclusions. However, there is also a need for broader, theoretical reflection within the topic. However, the researches aimed at the philosophical generalization of the Internet impact on the human spiritual world is still rare (EMEL'YANENKO; VETOSHKO; MALINNIKOV; ZOLOTAREV; MATAKOV, 2018). Much more often there are papers devoted to particular issues—primarily to the study of a number of features of net thinking (clip-likeness, multitasking and other features, peculiarities and distinctive features) (FIRAT, 2013; LOHR, 2007; ROSEN, 2007). However, the problem has not yet been sufficiently explored and requires, among other things, philosophical reflection.

The relevance of the problem of the Internet impact on the human spiritual world determines the significance of one of its important aspects. It is an issue of the adequate understanding by users of the Internet information, the conditions for its successful transformation into knowledge. Nowadays, the average person usually has some Internet-connected gadget, and people no longer have to make an effort to find the information they want. All you have to do is make a search query and the information you need will be available almost immediately. On the one hand, it is very convenient to master the information you need without much effort. However, on the other hand, some questions arise: does the use of the information capacity of the Internet cause a decrease in our own cognitive activity and even intellectual capacity? Hasn't one become accustomed to using ready-made information (which, moreover, is not always correct), or hasn't one forgotten how to cognize oneself? Can the information that is always available to us on the Internet actually be considered as knowledge that belongs to us?

**Research methods**

In this paper, the authors take a dialectical approach to understanding the problem of how people adequately perceive information with help of digital technologies and how it is turned into knowledge. First of all, the issue of the relationship between knowledge and information in the digital society is considered on the basis of methodological principles of development and the relationship of the problem to other social issues. Within this approach, the study applies the basic logical techniques of cognition—analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, generalization, comparison, etc. The methodological principles used are as follows: ascending from the abstract to the concrete, the unity of historical and logical approaches to the problem.

Given the limited scope of the research article, as well as yet little interest in the issue and its lack of depth, the authors proceed as follows. In the first stage of the research on the dialectic of knowledge and information on the Internet in the emerging digital society, a secondary analysis of philosophical and other research literature can be used as the main cognitive technique. The reason for this is that a certain amount of information and opinion on the problem has already been accumulated, but there is a lack of philosophical reflection on the material. At the same time, when analyzing sources and research literature on the topic, the authors introduce an element of methodological novelty, as they rely on a methodological approach such as values and worldview analysis.

The aim of this paper is to identify the most important factor determining the adequacy of converting the information a user receives online into their knowledge. Within the framework of achieving the above objective, the urgency of the problem is substantiated, an analysis of sources and literature on the topic is carried out, the role of objective and subjective factors determining the process of translation of information coming to a person into their knowledge, primarily, the nature of the World Wide Web and the cognitive activity of the subject, determined by their value and attitudinal qualities, is shown.

**Results and discussion**

There is a widespread view that internet technology has a negative impact on a person's spiritual world. In support of this, there is usually a fair amount of vivid and convincing reasoning and arguments. Thus, Yeliakov (2011) believes that they can cause simplification of thinking, lead to the loss of creative abilities, and even bring the human intellect closer to "the intellect of zombies or highly developed intellectual robots" (p. 71). According to a study of 660 volunteers by Canadian researchers at the University of Waterloo, gadget enthusiasts have 5–7% lower cognitive skills than people who make little or no use of modern technology. However, some reduction in mental capacity was observed only for logical tasks and had no effect on vocational skills. In our view, this conclusion could be formulated more explicitly. If information is available on the Internet and can be found very quickly, many people simply do not aim to memorize much (and why, indeed, should they?). As a result, they train their brains less, taking information readily available as a given rather than filtering it through the mind (BARR; PENNYCOOK; STOLZ; FUGELSANG, 2015). It is also important that they do not criticize this information, but simply believe it. Carr (2012) points out that the Internet is noticeably changing people's minds. For example, they lose the ability to comprehend lengthy texts in a coherent manner, find it difficult to identify the main ideas in them, and often uncritically connect dissimilar pieces of information if they are taken from different sources. Such actors often have a need to constantly receive new information, which they do not have time for and often do not strive to comprehend.

At the same time, most experts assess the impact of internet technology on human cognition as generally positive, finding various valid arguments as well (ASEEVA, 2012; SHAPOVALOVA, 2015a, 2015b). The introduction of these technologies into people's lives, they argue, contributes to solving the pressing problems of modern society. About 95% of teenagers and 85% of adults are known to use the Internet. Every seventh person is *glued* to social media every day; as of 2019, the number of Internet users was around 3 billion, which is almost half of all people on Earth (POLZAVSVRED, ca. 2021). According to a study on the analysis of social activity depending on Internet use (using materials from Belgorod city), young people remain socially active despite the constant use of social networks; 64% of young people surveyed would like to participate in public and political life, 11% would like to take part in political rallies or demonstrations, 38.2% in sports or cultural events, 15% in volunteer and charitable activities. Interesting is the fact that among all the young people

surveyed, 97% use the Internet every day and are constantly in touch with friends and acquaintances on social media (ASEEVA, 2012).

Katrechko (2003) writes that the Internet will lead to "positive global transformations in personality through a qualitative transformation of cognitive and communicative activity" (p. 232). According to Ioyleva (2014), working on the Internet increases the activity of the cognitive subject, because he uses a variety of information sources, gets acquainted with debatable points of view. The World Wide Web develops connections between people by widening the circle of potential communicative partners, developing the experience of social contacts. Due to cognitive activity on the Internet, the development of "cognitive actions within the framework of traditional activities" and personal growth of a person are stimulated (IOYLEVA, 2014, p. 37, our translation). Luchinkina (2016, p. 315, our translation) believes that when communicating on the Web, "a new type of knowledge emerges because of the large number of people involved in solving problems: the Internet stores every word, generating new knowledge in real time […], [as a result] "the boundary between the individual and the supra-individual becomes blurred". According to Ioyleva (2014, p. 39, our translation), the World Wide Web leads to radical shifts in consciousness, its transition to "postconsciousness", and this makes it possible "to talk not only about its transformation, but also about the overcoming of individual consciousness by new supraindividual structures".

It is true that these points of view require some development, generalization and addition. First of all, the Internet does not generate knowledge, but information, as it includes only the objectified results (and more or less adequate ones) of the intellectual activity of its users. Furthermore, it is also clear that all of these *supraindividual structures* do not exist outside the consciousness of those or other very specific individuals. They are not at all the same as information that exists only in an objectified form, in this very case, recorded on servers. The Internet contains information, but not knowledge, and this information still needs to be turned into people's knowledge. In this connection, it is also clear that there is no *collective brain* for social consciousness, but that there are knowledge and beliefs, principles and ideals common to many people, which can (but only conventionally, due to their existence *through* the consciousness of specific people) be called its *supraindividual* level.

The process of turning human knowledge into information presented on Internet resources is not straightforward or problem-free either. For example, knowledge needs to be adequately objectified in a text which, on the Internet, has certain requirements, often different from the standard requirements of, say, science. In Wikipedia, for example, it takes

the form of hypertext. In our view, this makes it difficult for the authors to express their own opinion, as it makes it more difficult for them to express themselves coherently in this way. As a matter of fact, the same Wikipedia does not welcome the expression of *one's own* opinion. Naturally, the constant hyperlinks also divert the reader's attention away from the author's central idea. In addition, anyone can edit the content of an article on Wikipedia, and it is not the opinion of an expert in a particular field that counts, but the support of the *majority* of authors. In other words, the scientific validity of the content of this Internet resource is questioned.

To date, a number of authors have outlined ways to explore such an aspect of the Internet's impact on human consciousness as the complex process of turning information from the World Wide Web into people's knowledge. This has been done in a number of educational publications (ANTONOVA, 2018; BUTAKOVA, 2019). However, experts have expressed some concern that when information is turned into knowledge, it tends to be severely distorted and even quite often inadequately perceived (LAVROV, 2003; MESHCHERYAKOV, 2010). The most promising approach for development seems to be taking into account both the positive impact of information technology on the spiritual world and the recognition of certain dangers. As rightly pointed out by Nikitina (2016, p. 32, our translation), "Information society technologies that enhance human intellectual capabilities have simultaneously become a test for the established ways of forming intelligence and subjectivity as a feature of human activity". All researchers agree that the conversion of Internet information to human knowledge is a complex and contradictory process. In order to deepen the understanding of the problem, a systemic approach to it is needed. In this case, the process of transforming information from the Internet into people's knowledge should be seen as that depending on several components—the nature of the World Wide Web, the characteristics of the individual, as well as the social environment in which they live. Surely, this is a general pattern. However, it is clear that a detailed study of special features of converting information into people's knowledge is relevant in the information society conditions.

As a machine, the computer is not a subject of cognition. This technical system can, of course, determine (by means of some software or other) how much information it holds. However, we are talking about information, not computer knowledge. The machine has no personal relationship to this information, it doesn't care how much or little it *knows*. The information encrypted on the media has no meaning for the computer as it has no personality.

The machine does not have a subjective image that reflects reality and is formed by human interaction with the objective world through activity, including cognitive one. At the same time, it is clear that the same information can be important for the cognitive subject using the computer as a cognitive tool (naturally, if the information becomes an element of their subjective world, it will be turned into their knowledge). However, can the user's input in the search bar of a question of interest be called cognitive activity? Can passive absorption of information obtained through Internet searches be considered as such activity? It probably cannot.

Indeed, cognition is not a passive reflection of reality, but an *active* and socially conditioned process of grasping the world, accumulating and making sense of data about it that are derived from human interaction with the surrounding reality. This process takes place by projecting the knowable reality into our consciousness (subjectivation), during which the basic patterns of existence and development of the cognition object, its basic properties, etc., are revealed. The result of the cognitive process is therefore not information, but *knowledge*, which subjectively belongs to the individual rather than being in any objectified form. In our view, the concepts of cognition and cognitive activity should be combined. It should also be borne in mind that human cognition has the following attributes. Firstly, it is not a passive and unchanging relationship with reality, but an *active and potentially creative process* characterized by a certain activity of the individual. Secondly, it is not inherent in simply accepting it as given, but in *making sense* of the information received through some form of logical operation (analysis and synthesis, comparison and abstraction, etc.). Thirdly, cognition involves the *experience* of human interaction with the environment. Finally, fourthly, some *patterns emerge* from the primary data obtained.

As a result, it is abundantly clear that knowledge is fundamentally distinct from information. As mentioned above, knowledge is the main result of cognition. In our view, it is also very important that this result should not be presented in the form of chaotic images of reality, but in the form of *systematization of both human cognitive activity* itself and its results. Herewith, given that *knowledge* is derived from the category *to know*, the logical conclusion is that in this case the definition is preceded by "experience as a result of action" (INFORMATION…, 2013, para. 11, our translation). Knowledge is not the simple acceptance of information as given, but as comprehension, an active process of reflection and subjective fixation of the properties of an object in the human mind. In other words, knowledge cannot be obtained without prior action constituting practical experience. On the contrary, it is

possible to obtain information in this case. Naturally, *prior action* can be the mental activity of a person to comprehend and analyse the content of the information available to the subject through its existence on a particular material medium.

As you know, information is a message about something, some specific data. For the person receiving or using some information, there is no direct and unambiguous link to the user's direct experience, which is the perceived result of the subject's practical activity. It should be specially emphasised that in this case information does not represent human knowledge *itself*, but essentially just a message that *someone else*'s knowledge exists in minds of some other people (or a set of some objectified information about knowledge acquired by some other subject of cognition). So that this information becomes precisely the Internet user's knowledge, the user needs to *test* the information received in practice and *understand* the results of this testing (INFORMATION…, 2013). It is not, for sure, necessarily a question of direct practical activity; it is usually sufficient to use one's own life experience, comparison with what one already knows, and a healthy doubt based on one's life worldview values.

Let us try to define the specifics of the cognitive process of an Internet user. On the one hand, there is a subject of knowledge, i.e., a person wishing to acquire knowledge. On the other hand, there is an information source, namely a computer, through which we can conduct a search engine query. If search engines are used to answer primitive questions, there is not much of a problem. The Internet user, at the same time as a subject of knowledge, instantly finds the necessary information (e.g., what is the speed of light). However, the user makes no particular effort, either practical or cognitive, in obtaining such information. This raises the question of whether this kind of information acquisition can be considered a valid cognitive process.

If more complex information is required, representing the illumination and substance of an issue, problems arise. First of all, there is no guarantee that the information found on the Web adequately reflects reality. The very nature of the Internet is such that it is seen as a *free opinion zone*. There is no requirement for the content of materials on Internet resources to be reviewed by academics or experts for scientific and argumentative value. This is why so-called fake, distorted or false information can also be posted on the Web. Experts point out that special programmes (filters) are used on the Internet to essentially impose certain information on the user. Any search engine is programmed to give the user query results in a certain sequence. Usually, a person is first familiar with the first results, and most of the time it doesn't come to the next ones. Importantly, this sequence can be determined both by the

user's previous requests (i.e., their interests) and by certain priorities laid by the authors of the search engine (economic, ideological, political). It is obvious that using filters encourages a user to pay closer attention to certain pieces of information and to disregard other Internet publications (PARISER, 2012).

However, that is not all. Often the information that a user requests on the Web is presented in a fundamentally new way, which in the pre-Internet era would have caused the reader surprise, at the very least. This is not the usual text in a newspaper, magazine or book, which has a certain structure and logic of the deployment of the thought they want to convey to the reader. This is so-called hypertext, consisting of completely unorganized information. Hypertext does not have a clear and defined structure. Its composition is simplified drastically and reduced to a listing of facts and opinions, information about personalities and quotations. However, these characteristics of hypertext are not considered to be a disadvantage at all. On the contrary, they are seen as a positive factor as they provide a new approach to reading and human reception of information. First of all, it makes it possible to turn a hypertext reading from an author–reader dialogue (which is characteristic of a conventional text) into a polylogue, that is, a conversation between a reader and many authors. The logic of hypertext is that both authorship and theme often become secondary in it. The Internet user starts reading material on a topic of their interest. However, hypertext allows them (and in fact nudges them) to easily move on to another topic, then turn to a third topic, and so on. Potentially, the process of *jumping* from one topic to another could go on indefinitely. The hypertext situation does not seem to be conducive to thoughtful and deep, comprehensive reflection on a single, specific problem.

Is it possible for an Internet user to be truly cognitively active, in the context of the hypertextual nature of Internet materials and difficulty of verifying information? Yes, it is, but under certain conditions. Researchers rightly point out that it is the presence of an active subject that is a condition for a person not to become "the sum of technologies" (NIKITINA, 2016, p. 33, our translation). The main function of such a subject is to bring together all the information coming to them from various sources and "turn it into the knowledge necessary to ensure successful goal-setting activity" (NIKITINA, 2016, p. 33, our translation). What are the conditions for human cognitive activity on the Internet? Firstly, they must possess a certain level of erudition regarding the question, for which they have searched the World Wide Web. Secondly, they must understand, at least to some extent, the place and role of the question of interest in people's knowledge of the world. Thirdly, they must have a sufficiently

stable worldview to form their own personal attitude towards the information received. Finally, fourthly (and this is one of the most important conditions!), the user must have the will and desire to comprehend the question, rather than take the query result as ready-made. It is under these conditions that information from the World Wide Web will turn into the subject's knowledge. It is understandable why people seldom *analyse* the information they receive from the Internet, and why there is often no reflection in their minds on the data taken from the Web. Most people simply do not have all these prerequisites for such an attitude towards information from the Internet. As a result, the World Wide Web offers no less opportunity to manipulate public opinion than traditional media (press, television, radio).

In this regard, we should note the special role of worldview in the cognitive process of the Internet user. It is the instability of personal values and attitudes (views and beliefs, ideals and principles) that leads to an uncritical attitude to the facts, information, quotations, etc. provided on the Internet. However, as already mentioned, information on the Web is usually not reviewed or verified by anyone for its correspondence to reality. However, this situation is not seen as a danger, but rather as a great achievement of the Internet. The argument is that if there is freedom to disseminate information on the Web, no one (say, the government) can be a monopolist in its dissemination. Unfortunately, however, the problem is not just one of information monopoly.

It seems that there is another reason why fewer people are filtering the information they receive online. This is the increasing uniformity of contemporary culture, despite, would it seem, the possibility of a wide data choice in the information environment. One gradually gets used to the fact that *most other people are also* looking for an answer to roughly the same question on the Internet (and it is told to them by their browser's search engine!). It turns out that other people will have about *the same information* as we do. Search engines (e.g., the most common Google) have certain algorithms when it comes to prioritising results for queries. In other words, on the one hand, there is a paradox situation where with the seeming diversity of information there is actually an imposition of a certain most common opinion, as they usually say, a *trend*. People are becoming more and more used to the fact that in today's information environment there is simply not much point in *our own* criticism and questioning. On the other hand, the existence of such a situation encourages the parties concerned (and the interest may be economic, political, etc.) to consciously create certain *trends*…

If the user's interaction with reality is reduced to a blue computer screen, the subject of cognition often has serious problems. The development of information technology means

that logical operations are no longer a matter for human being alone. They are objectified in a variety of increasingly complex programmes. A good chess programme leaves almost no chance for the strongest grandmasters to win. Intellectual labour is being supplanted by increasingly sophisticated programmes. This process is one of the reasons why the cognitive activity of the cognitive subject is decreasing. In fact, there is a tendency for a certain simplification of human thought processes, such as a weakening of memory and an increase in distracted attention. Indeed, why bother, thinking, concentrating on considering a problem when you can take the information as it comes? The Internet is increasingly resembling an external device that is *connected* to our spiritual world. Often the result of a user's search on the Web is only the acquisition of information, not knowledge. Moreover, this information is immediately forgotten, though perhaps the knowledge of where to find it still remains. However, the real benefit will be incomparably less than having specific own knowledge of the problem, expressed in a subjective way. It is this very knowledge, and only this, that belongs to the subject in its entirety. Life very often leaves neither time nor opportunity for a person to look at the answer to a question on the Internet if at this very moment we are unable to answer it based on our own knowledge.

The situation is different when a person in the Internet environment acts as an active subject of knowledge and critical thinking is important for them. Such a cognizing person, after searching for the right information on the Internet, does not stop in the learning process. They are not prepared to simply accept information taken from the Web. Criticism and the need for verification are hallmarks of their spiritual world. Such a person continues to analyse information from the Web, compares different sources, recalls the knowledge he previously acquired in the course of socialization, education above all, and uses common sense considerations to assess it. As a result, the subject of cognition verifies the information on the basis of the whole system of their own knowledge already in place. Naturally, in this case, knowledge is acquired that will actually belong to the subject of cognition, rather than simply information that they will be able to use much less effectively (often without understanding its meaning).

In the second case, the Internet user is more independent in their knowledge of reality. They act as an active subject of cognition and activity. At the same time, it is clear that all of this contributes to the overall development of the individual. Thus, it is cognitive *activity* that *leads a person to knowledge as to more or less* adequate subjective images of *reality.* In the case of mindless memorization, *information* is not sufficiently subjectivised, that is, more or

less adequately transformed into a subjective image of a person's spiritual world. This is because the information is not properly understood or analysed in light of prior knowledge.

At a higher level of human development as a personality, there is also greater scope for analysing and making sense of the information received and turning it into knowledge. A person's cognitive activity is best revealed by the development and sustainability of their values and attitudes (beliefs, ideals, principles).

Is it always necessary to turn information into knowledge? Of course, not. There is a lot of information that is not important to a person. You can find it in the handbook or on the Internet. However, everything has its measure. Information that is important to a person, constantly needed in their life, is best turned into knowledge (otherwise, is it really important?). However, people do not always distinguish between important information and unimportant information, and both the former and the latter can easily be found on the Web. Internet users are usually well aware of where the information they need can be found. They can find it within seconds. They believe they *possess* the information. So maybe possessing information in this very sense is easier and more convenient? There is no extra effort, no time wasted, and no useless memory load (after all, one forgets all the time anyway). We believe that this point of view is wrong and, in some ways, even dangerous to the spiritual development of human beings. First of all, a person's ability to distinguish between primary and secondary information is reduced, and the attitude becomes superficial. In addition, with this approach, the subject follows the path of less and less training in memorizing, analysing, synthesizing, comparing, systematizing, etc. It is a well-known idea of G. Hegel that a person is just the result of their own *labour*. Continuing with his idea, one could say that a person as a spiritual being is the result of their *intellectual labour*. Will one's spiritual world develop if one does not work intellectually, taking ready-made *information*? The answer is obviously no.

Of course, in a contest of erudition between a machine and a human, the computer will easily beat the erudite at the expense of a great amount of information. However, a machine cannot turn information into knowledge, it cannot subjectivise it. Programmes cannot yet be transformed into elements of the spiritual world of the active cognizing subject. The computer lacks self-awareness, reflection, creative imagination, critical thinking, feelings, emotions, selectivity… Very importantly, the machine has no value and attitudinal foundations of personality, no beliefs and ideals, no values and principles. The computer has no subjective reality, no spiritual world of its own, as there is no personality within.

In this regard, a human being is fundamentally different from a computer. If *they do not assimilate* knowledge, *stopping at the level of disposal* of information, they have nothing to convert into *their* world view, their *subjective attitude* towards reality will gradually disappear. In this case, there would actually be a degradation of the subject's sphere of values, which determines its spiritual essence. As a result, they will eventually have to live not according to their own beliefs, ideals and principles, but to be content with someone else's ready-made subjective attitude to the world, imposed in this case through a blue computer screen… Therefore, in their cognitive activity, a person must rely on what the computer does not have (*its own attitude* to information) and not hope that, if necessary, they will find an answer to any question on the Internet.

## Final considerations

The information obtained on the Internet is converted into knowledge in the most adequate form by a person on the basis of their own active cognitive activity, if they have the intellectual and volitional capacity (including value and attitudinal qualities) to verify Web information. Developing one's own attitude towards information is only possible through active, not always easy and pleasant (and often very difficult) cognitive activity. A prerequisite for such activity is the presence of more or less developed values and attitudes, thanks to which one determines the direction, aims and tasks of *cognition* (and not just the *information acquisition*). In a developed information environment, people have great opportunities to improve what is inherent in them, including their cognitive abilities. This leaves a relatively voluntary choice: to take advantage of opportunities for one's own spiritual development or to rely on information from the World Wide Web. This choice is *relatively* voluntary because it is conditioned by the social environment in which one lives and by certain requirements and realities of the Internet. This choice is also relatively *voluntary* because it has a *value and attitudinal basis*. In the first case, the individual becomes a developing subject, an active participant in learning (although possibly mistaken in *their* conclusions and assessments of *information* on the Internet). In the second case, a person in their interaction with the World Wide Web follows the path of passive adaptation to reality, further simplifying their own personality, possessing not knowledge, but only the possibility, not always realised, of obtaining information that is likely to be inadequate.

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