

Towards a Strategic Framework for State-Level Epistemological Functions

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Abstract : While epistemology, as a sub-field of philosophy, is generally concerned with theoretical questions about the nature of knowledge, the explosion in digital media technologies has resulted in an exponential increase in the storage and transmission of human information. That increase has resulted in a particular non-linear dynamic - digital epistemological functions are radically altering how and what we know. Neither the rate of that change nor the consequences of it have been well studied or taken into account in developing state-level strategies for epistemological functions. At the current time, US Federal policy, like that of virtually all other countries, maintains, at the national state level, clearly defined boundaries between various epistemological agencies - agencies that, in one way or another, mediate the functional use of knowledge. These agencies can take the form of patent and trademark offices, national library and archive systems, departments of education, departments such as the FTC, university systems and regulations, military research systems such as DARPA, federal scientific research agencies, medical and pharmaceutical accreditation agencies, federal funding for scientific research and legislative committees and subcommittees that attempt to alter the laws that govern epistemological functions. All of these agencies are in the constant process of creating, analyzing, and regulating knowledge. Those processes are, at the most general level, epistemological functions - they act upon and define what knowledge is. At the same time, however, there are no high-level strategic epistemological directives or frameworks that define those functions. The only time in US history where a proxy state-level epistemological strategy existed was between 1961 and 1969 when the Kennedy Administration committed the United States to the Apollo program. While that program had a singular technical objective as its outcome, that objective was so technologically advanced for its day and so complex so that it required a massive redirection of state-level epistemological functions - in essence, a broad and diverse set of state-level agencies suddenly found themselves working together towards a common epistemological goal. This paper does not call for a repeat of the Apollo program. Rather, its purpose is to investigate the minimum structural requirements for a national state-level epistemological strategy in the United States. In addition, this paper also seeks to analyze how the epistemological work of the multitude of national agencies within the United States would be affected by such a high-level framework. This paper is an exploratory study of this type of framework. The primary hypothesis of the author is that such a function is possible but would require extensive re-framing and reclassification of traditional epistemological functions at the respective agency level. In much the same way that, for example, DHS (Department of Homeland Security) evolved to respond to a new type of security threat in the world for the United States, it is theorized that a lack of coordination and alignment in epistemological functions will equally result in a strategic threat to the United States.

Keywords : strategic security, epistemological functions, epistemological agencies, Apollo program

Conference Title : ICE 2023 : International Conference on Epistemology

Conference Location : Miami, United States

Conference Dates : March 16-17, 2023