# Handling Information

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## Dedicated to the Kiwi Farms

Here I will identify the critical issue of managing the overwhelming flood of information received from today's world into our somewhat closed community, with the goal of distinguishing factual from misleading content. A system is needed to accurately and efficiently deal with information gathered from outside sources, whether they are reliable or not. It would be nice if, perhaps, correct or factual information could be separated from the wrong or purposefully misleading. The hope is that blunders and mistakes related to early reporting of events and errors in recording could be avoided: this is embarrassing, both for the individual and our community. I have gathered together several ideas related to this cause and I present them below.

## Collection of Observations

The primary method by which the above goal can be achieved is by the thorough and complete collection of observational data. User generated posts already serve this purpose: my suggestion lies in a meta-archival system that collects and organizes this user data for later analysis. Another step will occur here: somebody will need to go back and examine data points as they come in, how they may conflict with other data from any of many different interpretations, and how all of this may be constructed into a coherent and consistent narrative, or a plurality of competing narratives. What we hope to find are patterns and correlations rather than isolated facts. These interactions are preserved for future interpretation, creating transparency and accountability.

Considering the archival nature of this community, it's not surprising that I suggest a sophistication of observational tendencies. *Every observation needs to be recorded*. These recordings, obviously, will in turn need to be archived in a secure, efficient, and easily accessible source; of which I assume may either be centralized or decentralized.

Collection can be facilitated by the gathering of a great many different and varying individual observations. Ideally, idiosyncratic sources from several different spheres of knowledge will provide their sources. Users either collect information from other places or they (very rarely) generate novel ideas themselves: either way this information is brought here and made publicly available to other users. Users should be encouraged to gather data from abroad and to re-host it here. Even if incorrect statements happen to work their way in they will be contextualized, and their corrections contribute to collective knowledge.

All of this is already happening, so what is it that I'm suggesting to be done differently?

Firstly: I am suggesting that this be done with a renewed purpose and at a larger scale.
Secondly: Users will be tasked with stringing meta-archival narratives out of this available information. This is done for the task of creating stories that make sense out of tabled facts, to find and remove misinformation, and to maintain a cohesive story line with few faults. These theories should be made publicly available for criticism and commentary.
Thirdly: The time-stamp can be used for further reference and review. This is critical metadata that will be vitally important in completing the task that I have laid out.

This could be completed simply by the meta-archival of user posts. Users bring in and canonize their posts by making the post itself. Other users collectivize and sort this incoming information through classification and organization into new threads. This is how the information can be correlated among other facts also posted to the site. In fact, we have already fostered a pseudo direct democracy in individual votes (stickers) on posts. This can help collectivize the effort.

The task of meta-archival work is both intellectually demanding and critical to the integrity of the proposed system. The individuals, or potentially a team, responsible for this work must possess a unique combination of skills and qualities. This role is not merely administrative but requires a deep engagement with the content, the ability to discern patterns and correlations, and the judgment to manage conflicting interpretations effectively.

The system must be designed to embrace flexibility and adaptability by allowing reflection, correction, and the coexistence of multiple simultaneous models of reality. This model acknowledges the complexity of truth and the ever-evolving nature of knowledge.

The above goals should be achieved to educate other users and for the historical purposes of preserving our culture and ways of thought, so that we may present to others what has been achieved here. What I offer is a tool for future researchers to trace the evolution of ideas and narratives.

## Documentation

It is critically important that every single interaction that passes through these farms be documented. Judgment of these observations should be suspended until a thorough analysis can be found of how any individual fact may fit into any of a number of theoretical explanations. Each piece of data, no matter how seemingly insignificant, should be made available to any investigator willing to collect these pieces of evidence and arrange them into a theoretical narrative.

Documentation ensures that no observation is lost to time, enabling a comprehensive view of the system's evolution and the interplay between its many components. Each recorded observation acts as a node in a broader network of knowledge, preserving the context and nuances of the moment it was captured. By documenting systematically, patterns can emerge that reveal hidden connections, shifts, and dynamics that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Wrong statements and assumptions, once demonstrated to be incorrect, can be systematically recorded, serving as critical learning opportunities rather than being discarded or ignored. By preserving these errors and documenting the process of their correction, the community creates a vast repository of knowledge that not only highlights the truths discovered but also sheds light on the paths taken to uncover them.

Commentaries upon this work can be crafted to serve as lasting resources for future education and the advancement of knowledge within this community. These commentaries go beyond merely cataloging observations; they provide deeper meaningful synthesis, contextual analyses, and critical reflections that enhance the understanding of the work's significance and its implications.

I would very much like to develop an internal literature that serves as intellectual engagement for our community, composed of primary texts, their secondary commentaries, and a vast array of derivative works interconnected through a web of sourced citations. This structure would not only preserve the foundational insights of the community but also catalyze the creation of new knowledge through layered analysis, interpretation, and creative expansion.

By integrating commentary with the documented record, future members of the community gain access to a layered, multifaceted perspective. This will enrich the learning experience by demonstrating not only what was observed but also how those observations were interpreted, challenged, or validated over time. Commentaries can highlight the rationale behind specific decisions, explore alternative interpretations, and trace the evolution of ideas, offering a dynamic and comprehensive view of the community's intellectual journey.

The role of collective user contributions is foundational to the success and vitality of any collaborative system, especially one designed to document, analyze, and advance knowledge. In a networked environment, each user becomes both a contributor and a participant in a shared intellectual ecosystem, where the cumulative value of individual efforts exceeds the sum of its parts.

Collective contributions bring together people with different experiences, skills, and perspectives, creating a space where a wide range of ideas can flourish. This mix strengthens the system, allowing for fresh takes on old problems, pushing boundaries, and encouraging discussions that reveal higher layers of understanding. Instead of relying on one perspective, it opens up the floor to many voices, guaranteeing the system remains flexible, balanced, and ready to evolve with new insights.

We couldn't expect any one person to handle this project; the scale, complexity, and diversity of tasks involved would make it unmanageable for a single individual. Instead, the responsibility must be distributed across a network of participants, each contributing their unique skills, insights, and resources to collectively achieve the project's goals.

Systematic organization and cross-referencing form the backbone of any effective knowledge management system. By methodically arranging information from various differing

sources and by creating links between related data points, transforming scattered observations into a cohesive, interconnected web of understanding.

Information could be tracked in its evolution, relationships, and context over time, creating a dynamic record that reflects the growth and interconnectedness of ideas. This process captures the way concepts develop, how they interact with one another, and the broader circumstances that shape them. By preserving this history, it becomes possible to see not just what ideas emerged, but why they did, how they were influenced by external factors, and how they influenced the system in return.

The chronological development of ideas reveals the trajectory of thought over time, conveying how concepts emerge, evolve, and interact within a given framework. This process is not merely a timeline but a dynamic narrative that reflects the growth and refinement of understanding as new insights build on, challenge, or reinterpret what came before.

The interplay of chronological development, interconnected data points, and the contextual evolution of ideas naturally gives rise to multiple narratives: each representing a unique interpretation or path through the complex web of knowledge. These narratives emerge as distinct yet interwoven threads, reflecting the diversity of perspectives, the dynamics of time, and the ever-shifting understanding of what we accept as truth.

When there are conflicting interpretations, we preserve every narrative that has not yet been known to have been falsified, recognizing the value of diversity in thought and the provisional nature of truth. This should ensure that no perspective is prematurely discarded, allowing the collective understanding to remain open, adaptable, and inclusive of all potential insights.

We should actively recognize and celebrate good narratives as well as the individuals who contribute to their creation, synthesis, and preservation; those who act as posters, synthesizers, and archivers. Let’s not forget the restorers and maintainers! These contributors form the backbone of the system, driving its growth, encouraging its resilience, and maintaining its longevity. By acknowledging their efforts, we not only highlight the value of their work but also incentivize the behaviors and practices that uphold the integrity and vitality of the community.

## Sorting

The role of the meta-archiver in sorting information is central to the success of the proposed system. This task involves categorizing data based on its reliability and relevance, ensuring that the system remains organized, efficient, and trustworthy. Below is a detailed breakdown of the responsibilities, processes, and challenges involved in this duty.

Ultimately, this necessitates the creation of a sophisticated hierarchical reputation system to systematically organize and evaluate the categorical nature of every piece of information, idea, statement, thesis, person, organization, or any other kind of entity. Such a system would serve as the backbone for maintaining transparency, reliability, and accountability in managing complex information ecosystems.

I have harbored thoughts that when a user leaves a sticker, it functions very similarly to a vote. The user is allowed to express their judgment freely, and because the vote is public, it carries both transparency and a degree of accountability. This mechanism could evolve into a core feature of the system, integrating individual participation with collective decision-making.

The three categories of reliable, unreliable, and questionable provide a straightforward and effective framework for evaluating information, entities, or ideas. Each category is based on the certainty and quality of the data and serves to guide decision-making, analysis, and understanding within the system. Reliable information, sources, models, or thesis are known to be reliable. Those known to be unreliable are marked as such. The questionable things are held in neither category until further supporting evidence can be gathered either way. This will need to be argued out in some sort of public debate, of which I may have more to say later.

I do not have a name or even a model for such a system. I leave this up to, for now, others. If it is still incomplete come some future date then I may be required to complete the project myself.

## Archiving

Long-term knowledge preservation is a cornerstone of any system aiming to maintain, evolve, and leverage information over time. It ensures that insights, data, and narratives are not only safeguarded against loss but are also readily accessible for analysis, reinterpretation, and application by future generations.

The goal is to preserve every interaction, whether it turns out to be right or wrong, because the future may demand a precise map of how we arrived at where we are. Posterity relies on the threads we leave behind, and every scrap of thought, dialogue, or discovery, no matter how flawed, is part of that fabric. Future researchers, sifting through what we now consider routine or insignificant, might find the key to unraveling or weaving new narratives. To them, we owe the completeness of our efforts, providing them with the tools and clarity to trace the pathways we forged, making their own work not only easier but more meaningful.

We seek to preserve, for now and forever, the precise record of what was said, by whom, and when, woven into the broader fabric of everything that came before. It is not enough to archive fragments; we must capture the entirety of historical actions, not just of individual users but of everyone, so that no thread is lost in the tapestry of understanding.

This archive should be a living repository of knowledge: it should be readily accessible to the users of the site, yet securely shielded from those who are not. Its design must prioritize efficiency, ensuring that answers are delivered swiftly and without unnecessary complexity. Furthermore, the archive must be resilient, built to withstand the passage of time and protected against both degradation and acts of vandalism. In essence, it must stand as a fortress of knowledge: strong, reliable, and enduring, capable of serving the community for generations to come.

The farms already serve many of these purposes. The only thing required is a greater consciousness of the problems and their solutions.

It would be nice if this system could be integrated with a blockchain, though I admit my understanding of the technology is limited. From what I gather, blockchain offers a unique combination of permanence and public visibility, aligning well with the archival goals of this system. It seems capable of ensuring the integrity and accessibility of records in a manner that matches our aspirations. However, I am also aware that this technology comes with uncertainties and potential drawbacks, which would need to be carefully considered before any implementation.

We aim to look back, with hindsight, to discern which paths proved right and which went astray.

## Trust in Organizations

So this brings me to an obvious problem: how do we deal with people that betray our trust?

Forgiveness is essential, yes, but it must not be accompanied by forgetfulness. To forgive is to release the weight of grievance, but to forget is to risk repeating the same mistakes or allowing harm to resurface unchecked. Those who have betrayed trust, traitors and enemies, must be remembered, not out of malice, but as a safeguard against future threats. In remembering, we maintain vigilance, assuring that lessons learned through hardship are not erased, but preserved as a shield for the challenges that inevitably lie ahead.

Organizations or individuals who breach communal expectations should be noted and added to this communal noma lectura. Forgiveness, of course, should be extended, but not without retaining the memory of their past actions. There should be a structured way to track reliability while leaving room for redemption. Striking a careful balance between accountability and forgiveness is essential to maintain fairness and trust.

Trust demands a certain openness in our thinking: we must hold multiple models simultaneously, reducing the risk of reliance on a single flawed perspective. This approach allows us to balance and adapt to new information or to recalibrate when misinformation previously deemed reliable is uncovered. By maintaining a plurality of scientific theories, we preserve flexibility, fostering a resilient and dynamic understanding of truth.

## Further Reading

Frankena, W. K. (1963) Ethics, Prentice-Hall (12/15/24)