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L'Internet et la variable géométrie de l'esprit

Abstract: The purpose of this article is to evaluate the epistemic impact of the Internet on the human mind. My approach is structured on three different levels. Firstly, I outline the arguments which imply that the interaction between man and the internet has negative consequences for the cognitive faculties of man; in other words, I will highlight the main lines of the argument of epistemological pessimism concerning the interaction of man and internet. Secondly, I will discuss some arguments of epistemological optimism about this relationship; in other words, I will try to clarify the baselines of the position according that depicts the alliance mind-internet as a new kind of epistemic subject, one with superior performance than the classic epistemic subject. Thirdly, I outline the assumptions and limitations of the two epistemological positions and, stepping away from any ideological interpretation, I will advocate for a position that considers the Internet as a collection of different tools. To understand the Internet as a homogeneous reality or possessing a certain essence is an unjustified metaphysical position. Regarded as a heterogeneous technological entity, the Internet is like a virtual set of suitable tools to solve a multitude of problems. These include punctual epistemic problems (storage of information, categorization of information, etc.). However, online cognitive prostheses cannot alter the centrality of the human mind in the genesis of knowledge.

Keywords: mind, cognitive prostheses, Internet, epistemological optimism, epistemological pessimism, truth, knowledge, information, ideological interpretation