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Decoding Power and Meaning in the Digital Age

Mohadeseh Vahidimehr [1], Abolfazl Davodiroknabad [2], Mahsa Khoie [3], Aliakbar Jahangard [4]

1. PhD student, Department of Art Research, Kish International Branch, Islamic Azad University, Kish Island, Iran.
2. Professor, Department of Design and Clothing, Yazd Branch, Islamic Azad University, Yazd, Iran (Corresponding Author).
3. Assistant Professor, Department of Music, Faculty of Arts, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.
4. Assistant Professor, Department of Art and Architecture, Faculty of Art, Shiraz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Shiraz, Iran.

Abstract

Problem Statement: Power institutions within societies have historically monitored and controlled individuals. After the advent of modernity, these institutions became increasingly invisible. Michel Foucault, in discussing the interdependent relationship between knowledge and power, argues that these two elements reinforce each other. As knowledge advances, power institutions gain the ability to exert control through mechanisms derived from technology. Don Ihde, in explaining the function of technology, suggests that technologies act as mediators of human knowledge. In this study, tools are examined as material entities capable of constructing structures of meaning, hence referred to as "knowledge-creating tools." Ihde also argues that these tools and technologies are not neutral in the process of human knowledge formation. The fundamental questions this study addresses are as follows:

1. To what extent is human understanding of existence influenced by tools and technology?
2. How do digital objects, as material entities capable of creating meaning structures, function within the mechanisms of power?

Objective: This paper aims to explore digital objects as knowledge-creating tools and examine how these objects serve pervasive functions within power institutions.

Methodology: The research method employed in this study is phenomenological. Phenomenology is the study of lived human experiences. The approach involves examining phenomena and describing them in terms of how they manifest and their effects, without assigning value judgments.

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Results: The findings indicate that technology and digital objects play a role in knowledge creation, can construct structures of meaning, and continuously position individuals to voluntarily adhere to specific algorithms and rules. By using objects like platforms, smartphones, artificial intelligence, and search engines, individuals live in a network of power mechanisms that both construct knowledge and subject them to surveillance.

Keywords: Power institutions, Michel Foucault, Digital Age, Don Ihde, Digital Objects, Meaning Structures

Introduction

Power institutions, which can be traced back to the earliest stages of human history, have always served functions of surveillance and control. However, a significant change occurred in the structure of power institutions after modernity, namely their visibility. Post-modernity, power institutions shifted from visible entities into unseen realms. Michel Foucault identifies the primary source of life for power institutions in their connection with knowledge—an enduring and reciprocal relationship that sustains both power institutions and knowledge itself. This connection enabled power institutions to exercise control without being seen. Foucault also posits that power institutions are not centralized; instead, they possess a fluid structure that, with the advancement of knowledge, operates in an invisible manner. Therefore, when examining the functioning of power institutions, it is crucial to accurately identify the effects of knowledge progress, particularly as they manifest through the emergence of technologies and tools, on human life.

The philosopher of technology, Don Ihde, attributes a knowledge-creating function to tools and technologies, a notion that Michel Foucault similarly acknowledges in a different context and which forms a foundation of this study. One significant outcome of knowledge advancement in the contemporary era is the pervasive presence of digital objects in daily human life. It is important to note that the impact of this presence extends far beyond issues inherently tied to digital concepts. This study will examine the influence of digital objects as knowledge-creating tools, positing that they are not neutral entities but instead significantly shape human epistemology, understanding of existence, thinking processes, and behaviors.

This paper examines the functioning of power institutions based on Michel Foucault's theories and relies on Don Ihde's ideas for the study of the knowledge-creating function of tools. The author argues that a phenomenological study of digital objects as knowledge-creating tools, viewed through the lens of the knowledge/power connection, will yield a nuanced understanding of the dual role that power institutions and tools play in the digital age. Ultimately, the paper explores how tools in the digital age can serve the interests of power institutions.

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Literature Review

The characteristics of the digital age have been examined from various perspectives.

Risse (2021) focuses on human rights in the digital age, comparing the epistemological functions of digital systems in China and Western countries in his article "The Fourth Generation of Human Rights: Epistemic Rights in the Digital World." Risse highlights China's extensive efforts to strengthen digital governance, including massive data collection and electronic ranking of individuals. In contrast, Western countries, despite their stronger commitment to democracy and human rights, have done relatively little in this area. Risse argues that the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights belong to the analog world and emphasizes that this declaration needs to be revisited in the digital era to remain effective. Schwarzenegger (2020), in an epistemological study, bases his research on interviews with 49 individuals. These participants shared with Schwarzenegger how they use media, their methods of searching for and acquiring information, and their opinions on robots, algorithms, new media, filters, and similar topics. Through this study, Schwarzenegger explores digital-age epistemology from the perspective of media. He examines three concepts related to digital-age epistemology: selective criticism, pragmatic trust, and trust in competence. Mackenzie and Bhatt (2021) investigated how platforms and their algorithms interact with human perceptual mechanisms, specifically studying the epistemology of deception in the post-digital era. Mackenzie and Bhatt demonstrated how platform algorithms can deceive human perception. They argue that the effects of deception in the post-digital era are widespread, influencing even the formation of governments and social movements. Turner (2022) studied digital-age epistemology in the context of augmented reality. He categorized the epistemological challenges of the digital age and the internet into three areas: digital confusion, digital deception, and digital dispersion. Turner then described the capabilities of augmented reality and conducted a phenomenological analysis of these challenges within the framework of augmented reality. Given that digital epistemology is a relatively new field, it requires further study from various angles. In this research, digital objects are examined as tools that construct meaning and generate knowledge. The study emphasizes that digital objects are not neutral in producing "meaning structures" and are highly influential in reinforcing various forms of power institutions.

Theoretical Foundations

The theoretical foundation of this study on power is grounded in Michel Foucault’s views on the concept of power institutions and the reciprocal relationship between knowledge and power. Regarding the examination of the role of digital objects as knowledge-creating tools,

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the study is based on Don Ihde's ideas concerning the capacity of technology to generate knowledge.

Research Methodology

The research methodology employed in this study is phenomenology. Phenomenology emphasizes that objects in the external world cannot exist independently; rather, their existence is realized within the consciousness of individuals. The aim of phenomenology is to describe human life experiences as they occur in the lives of people. It is based on the premise that experiences construct the meaning of phenomena for individuals and seeks to study phenomena as they are perceived by social actors.

Power

Michel Foucault views power as a fluid force within human society that controls individuals, establishes norms, and categorizes them. In this process, "power" draws upon knowledge, forming a dual relationship of knowledge-power. According to Foucault, in modern society, power is dispersed among institutions that analyze and critique human identities and introduce norms. He sees power as pervasive throughout all social dimensions, meaning that for Foucault, power is fluid and local, imposing itself on individuals wherever they may be. Foucault considers power to be something that can never be fully dismantled or rendered ineffective (Callinicos, 2006). According to Foucault's analysis, the mechanism of power in modern times is more deeply rooted, subtle, and even deceptive than its functions in traditional systems, and it is not confined to specific centralized authorities. He argues that in modern times, individuals submit to power under the guise of noble ideals such as truth or freedom. Citizens are depicted as having learned to view surveillance, discipline, and categorization as normal, shaping their behavior and character in accordance with the demands of power and disciplinary projects (Hindess, 2001, p. 130). Foucault views the new penal system as encompassing numerous channels for the exercise of power within the framework of "micro-physics of power," where subjects, scientific-social discourses, and political arrangements converge, subtly constructing and reinforcing each other. Thus, the individual is seen as a reality shaped by specific technologies of power, manifesting through disciplinary techniques (ibid, pp. 134-135). Foucault asserts, "Our society is not one of spectacle, but of surveillance; under the surface of images, bodies are deeply encircled" (Foucault, 2017, p. 27).

Foucault believed that, on one hand, knowledge generates power, and on the other, power produces knowledge. Power and knowledge are directly related; there can be no power relations without the creation of a corresponding domain of knowledge, nor can knowledge exist that is not intertwined with power relations, creating them in turn (Fouladvand, 1997, p. 8). The growth of knowledge granted power institutions the ability to monitor without being

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seen and facilitated the more efficient collection and classification of individuals' identity, physiological, and behavioral information to plan for influencing and guiding them (Wells, 2013). Citizens find themselves in situations where, even without being aware of it, their subconscious is manipulated; values are instilled in their beliefs, and they assume that this process is inherently self-driven. "Disciplinary power is exercised by making itself invisible; instead, it imposes the principle of compulsory visibility on those whom it subjects. The disciplinary individual is, in fact, the effect of this uninterrupted visibility" (Foucault, 2017, p. 230). With the advancement of technology and the emergence of new media and social media in the digital age, the visibility of individuals has intensified. Although citizens revel in the seemingly liberating experience of acquiring new freedoms through modern technologies, they must be reminded: welcome to the new prison. "According to Foucault, the panoptic society is one where members are constantly subjected to surveillance, monitoring, and training, and are ultimately imprisoned within the scope of power" (Zeimaran, 2017, p. 156).

Foucault uses the term "panopticon" to describe this pervasive, invisible surveillance—an abstract, omnipresent eye that watches you. "A perfect disciplinary apparatus would make it possible for a single gaze to see everything constantly. A central point that would both illuminate everything and serve as the locus of convergence for all that must be known—a perfect eye that nothing escapes, and a center towards which all gazes are directed" (Foucault, 2017, p. 218). In the modern world, power institutions, while remaining unseen, have the ability to make citizens visible. "In ancient times, visibility was reserved for the powerful, but with the advent of modernity, it extended to ordinary individuals, while the powerful became invisible" (Zeimaran, 2017, p. 151).

The author believes that this encirclement by power and its constant surveillance of bodily behavior—through the analysis of which it disciplines, models, and guides bodies—evokes the image of a vast prison. The rise of knowledge, the proliferation of digital objects, and the ubiquity of the internet have enabled citizens to produce and disseminate information, images, opinions, ideas, and achievements as much as they desire. It is as if technological advancement had brought citizens a gift of freedom. However, this is only one side of the story, as this process also harbors a reverse trajectory. In the present study, by conducting a phenomenological analysis of tools and technologies, the issue will be explored as to how objects, especially in the digital age, shape human understanding of life and control their thoughts. Power institutions, in their new form, are so deeply integrated into every moment of life that they have become invisible.

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Digital and Meaning Structures

Every technology introduces new effects on human perceptions and knowledge, influencing behavior. While not all human knowledge of existence is derived from tools and technologies, these technologies are also not entirely neutral or impartial—they target human understanding of existence and, in another sense, are knowledge creators. Ihde considers technologies to be "mediators" of human experience. He argues that technologies are not merely another category of things in the world used by humans; rather, they are transformative agents that affect human perceptions and actions. "There is no neutral technology, or positively stated, all technologies are non-neutral" (Ihde, 1993b, p. 34). Although technology and tools were not always as complex as they are today, they have always played a significant role in the construction of human knowledge. "The beginning of human experience is not indicated by the time of their birth, nor by their earliest experience. The beginning of human experience connects them to entities whose time does not coincide with their own... revealing that objects existed long before humans, and thus no one can ascribe a beginning to humans, whose experience is fully shaped and limited by these objects" (Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 422).

It is also important to note that a technology can always be used in various ways, developed along different lines, and adapted differently in diverse cultures. As Ihde states, "Technological culture is not a singular entity. It is neither uniform nor has its progression throughout the world reached the level that its opponents fear or its proponents hope for" (Ihde, 1990, pp. 150-151).

In *Bodies in Technology* (Ihde, 2002), Don Ihde reflects on the epistemological implications arising from technological tools. He views technological innovations as objects that historically combine human and mechanical factors, leading to the production of knowledge. He claims that "the devices [I use], the specific machines or technologies, themselves offer paradigmatic metaphors for knowledge" (Ihde, 2002, p. 69). Ihde refers to these relationships between humans and machines as "epistemological engines." He suggests that epistemological engines raise questions about how perception is formed, how we acquire understanding of our environment, and how we distribute this perception.

In this view, there exists a combination of relationships between humans and technology that leads to the creation of various and influential forms of knowledge and ontology. The author likens the role of tools in understanding existence to "lenses" that shape human perception of existence.

Beyond the tools and objects that "digital" has brought into human lives, it has also created a new perspective for viewing the world. Galloway emphasizes the binary concept in digital technology, arguing that "digital" is primarily a mental mode rather than a collection of

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machines, networks, or databases. He further states that digital technology "evokes a relationship—a true miracle—between sets of things that should not, in principle, have anything to say to one another" (Galloway, 2014, p. 63). Today, a network of media and communication systems based on digital technology has emerged. This digital technology has altered the way data is perceived and distributed, impacting various epistemological fields and the mechanisms of knowledge accumulation.

In a blog post, Alan Liu addressed the concept of "digital epistemology" (Liu, 2014). Liu suggests that digital capabilities are not only relevant to those who work with digital tools or engage in digital explorations, but in his view, "digital knowledge should signal an epistemic shift" (Liu, 2014).

As mentioned earlier, the author considers the metaphor of "lenses" broadly applicable to technology and will continue to use this metaphor throughout the discussion.

Discussion

In this study, three historically significant tools are examined phenomenologically to elucidate how tools function in knowledge creation and how they shape human understanding of existence. The findings from this examination will then be applied to explain the role of digital tools and objects in knowledge creation. Additionally, the study will explore the function of digital objects within power structures through a phenomenological lens.

A: The Clock and the Perception of Time

In his 1936 book *Technics and Civilization*, Lewis Mumford highlighted the critical role of the clock in the development and reorganization of medieval life. According to Mumford, clocks were initially used in monastic life to regulate religious practices and structure church activities. The invention of clocks marked the beginning of humanity's technological mediation of time.

The precision with which clocks display a particular perception of time reveals two important points. First, until recently, all clocks indicated time using moving pointers—like the shifting shadows of sundials, the water levels in water clocks, and the hands on cathedral clocks. Second, before the digital era, time display tools allowed for a visual observation of time passing. In clocks, the physical space between the position of the clock's pointer and its subsequent position visually represented the passage of time. This physical space could be linear or circular, and the "moment" was visibly present on the clock face.

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The evolution of clocks is noteworthy. Initially, the movement of the pointer was rudimentary, related mainly to relatively large "units" of time. The earliest circular clock faces had only one hand to indicate the hour. As clocks became more mechanically refined, time was divided into increasingly smaller units. A second hand was added to mark minutes, followed by a third to indicate seconds. Time thus became increasingly quantified, with clocks enabling humans to perceive time as a series of atomized, discrete moments. Now, human perception of time is entirely mediated by technology. With technological advancement and the advent of digital clocks, the visual representation of time has receded and lost its significance. Digital clocks show only the current moment; the field of time is no longer visually displayed. This shift alters the perception of time. For instance, a person waiting for a train who once could see the relationship between the clock's hands and the expected time now sees only a number on the clock face, requiring them to infer or calculate the remaining time until the train's arrival.

B: Galileo's Telescope and the Perception of Space

In 1597, Galileo, like many of his contemporaries, supported the Ptolemaic model of cosmology, which placed Earth at the center of the universe. However, by the spring of 1609, Galileo encountered a Dutch optician named Hans Lippershey, who had achieved greater magnification using two converging lenses. Based on this concept, Galileo made adjustments to the lenses and invented his version of a compound lens telescope with ninefold magnification. By the time he ceased making telescopes, Galileo had upgraded about 100 telescopes to achieve 30-fold magnification (Boorstin, 1985).

Before Galileo, when humans observed the world around them, they saw a universe revolving around Earth and regarded the moon's surface as a perfectly smooth, round object in the sky. The moment Galileo directed his telescope towards the heavens, the prior understanding of the world was irrevocably transformed. This was a unique moment in history when a tool irreversibly altered human understanding of existence and self. In this instance, materiality, through its own transformation, created new structures of meaning. Galileo's telescope, with its magnification, revealed a view of the universe that Aristotle and the Church fathers had never seen. Interestingly, Galileo was convinced that telescopic perception was "better" than unaided human sight. One of his arguments was that a specific "halo" around celestial bodies could be seen with a telescope but not with the naked eye (Brown, 1985, p. 487). Ironically, this phenomenon was a "technical artifact," a result of technological error rather than the actual celestial object.

Galileo's telescope brought forth new knowledge and a new interpretation of existence. However, several important points should be noted:

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- a. The tool Galileo used to observe the sky also presented "technical artifacts" to humanity—effects that were not recognized as distortions for a long time.
- b. Using Galileo's telescope, the magnification of celestial bodies, their axial motion, and the slight movements of the observer's body caused visual disturbances. Thus, the observer needed to use Galileo's special tripod and follow his instructions to obtain a clear image. In this experience, tools and technology are usable only under specific rules and regulations, and the observer must comply with these rules.
- c. The invention of the telescope paved the way for the refutation of the Ptolemaic model and the acceptance of the Copernican interpretation. However, the rapid spread of this invention was perhaps due to its more straightforward interpretation of existence.

C: Photography and the Suspension of Time

If the dramatic transformation of space was the main appeal of Galileo's telescope, then the dramatic transformation of time is what makes photography noteworthy. Photography "stops time," and early portraits were captured only after several minutes of a fixed pose because it took time for light to form the negative on a chemically treated glass plate.

While early photography focused on portraits and landscapes, the fascination with movement quickly followed. In 1878, Eadweard Muybridge's studies on horse gait answered a common scientific curiosity. By arranging a sequence of photographs of galloping horses, Muybridge demonstrated that all four of a horse's hooves leave the ground simultaneously (Dariush, 1984, pp. 34-35). What Galileo's telescope did for space, the camera did for time in a different way. Photography's ability to freeze time advanced rapidly, and by 1888, it had improved enough that the Mach brothers produced the first evidence of shock waves by photographing a high-speed bullet. In this case, the photograph revealed that it was the bullet itself, not "compressed air," that penetrated the target, debunking the prevailing belief (Dariush, 1984, pp. 42-43).

In addition to helping document events, photography played another crucial role: shaping and directing public taste. Photographs wielded the power to disseminate collective knowledge—from the glamorous images in various magazines to photographs of significant events like wars that motivated citizens to participate in sacred social activities, and images that stirred national pride. "Between the two World Wars, the male body, as depicted in Leni Riefenstahl's photographs celebrating German athletes during the Nazi era, became a symbol of the cult of power and masculinity" (Mora, 2015, p. 75). Photographs could preserve or alter a society's historical and social memory. "The pervasive use of photography in historical representations suggests that important events are those that can be pictured, turning history into a stage for performance" (Sekula, 2011, p. 22).

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The phenomenological study of photography also highlights its role as a silent witness. The judiciary heavily relied on photography's realism to monitor the presence of dangerous classes in society. Photos were archived by power institutions, making it easier to analyze and track individuals whose details were previously recorded only in writing. "Even a small photographic archive, because of its authority and legitimacy, indirectly attracts the attention of these institutions" (Sekula, 2011, p. 18). Moreover, criminals' photos were distributed in various ways, making it harder for them to continue their criminal activities and allowing police or citizens to identify, report, and arrest them. In this way, a large group of citizens also became involved in the process of identifying criminals. Photographs, as silent witnesses, carried more weight than the oral confessions of criminals, beggars, and vagrants. Photos, despite their silence, had the power to act as compelling evidence: "a silence that silences" (Sekula, 2011, p. 41).

Knowledge-Creating Tools in the Digital Age

This study examines digital epistemology as a concept that is not focused on digital matters for their technical advantages but on their relationship with knowledge production. Given the networked nature of digital systems, Friedrich Kittler considers digitization a "discursive network" or a "writing system" (Kittler, 1990). Kittler views digital functions as linguistic in nature, echoing the poststructuralist linguists' argument that "we do not speak language; language speaks us" (Young, 2011).

In the digital age, numerous media tools have been created as intermediaries for language use. These tools themselves influence language, leading to the author's assertion that "objects in the digital age speak to humans." In an era where humans are constantly interacting with technology in all aspects of life, adapting to new and evolving digital technologies is essential for work and daily living. The author contends that technological tools in the digital age are more than neutral objects; they are not impartial and can influence human thought, behavior, and lifestyle. Digital tools, like Galileo's telescope, operate within their own defined systems, compelling humans to conform to these systems. The ubiquity of these tools has reached a point where, without adhering to the rules and systems of digital tools, one cannot live as an ordinary citizen. Therefore, in this era, the system of communication takes precedence over the methods of communication. The emerging issue here is that people have willingly subjected themselves to the order imposed by digital tools. Kittler quotes Nietzsche, stating that "our writing tools are working on our thoughts." Thus, in a Nietzschean sense, one could argue that human thoughts in the new era are controlled by digital tools.

Today, digital objects have become more pervasive than any other tools in human life. All individual and social activities in areas such as communication, entertainment, education,

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healthcare, economy, and wellness are intertwined with digital objects. The author emphasizes that tools and technologies have always played a role in knowledge production, functioning like Galileo's telescope lens. What makes digital objects particularly noteworthy is their unparalleled ubiquity and their progression towards a form of "thinking."

Power and Meaning in the Digital Age

One indicator of the proliferation of digital objects is the number of smartphone users. As of fall 2023, there were 6.92 billion smartphone users worldwide, accounting for 85.74% of the global population. This represents an 88.65% increase from 2016 when there were only 3.668 billion smartphone users, equivalent to 49.4% of the world's population at the time (https://www.bankmycell.com).

Internet-based social networks have also become widespread alongside the growth of smartphones. In the contemporary digital age, each citizen can create their own pages in the social media and publish their content. This has led to a vast array of digital images and information being organized within social media. Now, by visiting a citizen's social media page, one can observe their images and interests, and identify others who share similar interests. The number of users on these social media is rapidly increasing. In 2023, the global average was over 7,2 social network memberships per individual, with 85% of users accessing social media via mobile devices during the first quarter of the year.

Thus, the author suggests that by sharing information, images, and interests in social media, users have created a new opportunity for "visibility" and have voluntarily subjected themselves to constant surveillance. According to Foucault's theory, citizens celebrate their entry into a new prison by their continual presence on social media. Here, a form of power can be observed, replicated through smartphones, placing citizens under continuous control, assessment, direction, and visibility.

On the other hand, internet users have become unpaid workers for various platforms, simultaneously enhancing the influence of these platforms. Users not only produce content and information for these platforms but also tailor and publish their materials to align with the platforms' algorithms. From this perspective, the story of how Google and Facebook generate profits is straightforward: users are unpaid laborers who produce goods (data and content), which are then sold by companies, advertisers, and other interested parties (Srnichek, 2020, p. 57). These platforms, while offering users highly beneficial tools for quickly meeting their needs, earning income, and connecting with friends, simultaneously extract data from user behavior—data that is invaluable for capturing the attention of those same users in a world saturated with information. How can a company attract a specific user's attention to its

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products? How can a political party secure a specific voter's support in an election? By analyzing that user's behavior in the social media, it is possible to identify factors that effectively capture their attention. Srnicek, citing Zuboff in *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism* (2015), notes that in the digital economy, there is a convergence between surveillance and profitability, leading some to speak of "surveillance capitalism" (Srnichek, 2020, p. 62). Here, the author reinterprets two of Foucault's phrases for the new era: in the digital age, by entering social media and various internet platforms, humans exist in a "camp-like model" where they are under constant surveillance, and a "panopticon eye" monitors their behavior without being visible.

Various social networks, search engines like Bing and Google, and other internet platforms do not present information hierarchically to users. For example, when typing keywords into the search fields of various internet platforms, users are guided to results that do not necessarily match what they were looking for. Additionally, the search results displayed to users of these internet platforms in different geographic regions vary. This algorithm and method of information management is neither "democratic" nor "neutral"; instead, it is defined in line with the goals and interests of the platform owners and associated stakeholders.

Today, digital objects are extensively mediating our interactions with the external world for knowledge acquisition and production. As a result, the role of these tools in all aspects of life, particularly in understanding and thought, is significant. These tools are so ubiquitous and pervasive that their presence has become almost invisible. Nevertheless, digital objects influence human thought and behavior in two ways: first, through the vested interests of institutions behind them, in the form of regulations and algorithms defined for their use (similar to Galileo's instructions for using the telescope), and second, by their very nature as "knowledge-creating tools." Notably, in the present era, the phrase "tools are working on our thoughts" is gradually moving beyond a metaphorical state to a reality where "tools are thinking for us." The rapid growth of artificial intelligence and its role in digital objects further illustrates this trend. Additionally, if it was once metaphorically stated that "objects in the digital age speak to humans," today, tools like "Siri" literally speak to humans.

In a not-so-exaggerated sense, it can be claimed that in the digital age, tools are becoming new power institutions, and given their omnipresent nature, they constitute the most widespread form of power exertion.

Conclusion

Michel Foucault argues that power institutions function to monitor, control, and discipline individuals, a process made possible by the reciprocal relationship between knowledge and

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power. With the advancement of technology, power is no longer exerted centrally within societies; instead, power institutions operate in a fluid and invisible manner, subtly influencing individuals.

To understand how power is exerted, it is essential to study the role of technology. Drawing on Don Ihde's theories, this study shows that technology affects human perception and behavior, constructs meaning, and acts as an intermediary "lens" in shaping our understanding of existence. However, these lenses are not inherently neutral or impartial.

In the present era, digital objects are among the most pervasive tools in daily human life. Through various digital devices, users share their information and interests, voluntarily subjecting themselves to constant visibility. On the other hand, the use of these digital tools strengthens vested power institutions that are not easily seen. By employing digital objects, citizens voluntarily enter a world where, as Foucault suggests, they are subject to surveillance and control. In the digital age, individuals continuously engage with tools that not only create knowledge for them but also compel them to adhere to rules and algorithms that benefit the interests of these institutions. Consequently, digital objects in the contemporary era have acquired a power-exerting function, reflecting the condition of the present age—a reality that the author does not intend to judge.

Finally, two questions remain unanswered:

- Considering Galileo's telescope, which revealed a halo around celestial bodies that did not exist, an important question arises: To what extent can knowledge gained through tools be trusted, and to what degree is humanity, unknowingly, receiving knowledge that is a "technical artifact" rather than true understanding?

- Tools and theories tend to evolve together in ways that minimize contradictions, providing the simplest path for alignment between theories, tool functionality, and the knowledge obtained. If the foundational assumptions for interpreting existence had been based on a paradigm other than Copernican theories, how might theories, tools, and sources of knowledge differ from those of the present day?

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