

Information and Meaning

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In 1948 Shannon published a seminal paper that gave birth to information theory. To measure “information” it is only necessary to recognize the symbols, irrespective of their meaning. However, the purpose of information for us is to carry meaning. If a symbol has no meaning there is no information. This theory brought information into the materialistic worldview that has come to dominate science and society. Recently, large language models like ChatGPT and Gemini, are generative artificial intelligence programs that allow us to ask questions and have answers that at times are more meaningful than those we could get from a well-read human being. Are we then machines like the computers that run Gemini? The author will explain how training a computer with neural networks can create programs that appear intelligent. Surprisingly, this explanation requires a new theory of consciousness and free will that restores to the universe and to us the meaning and purpose that materialism stripped away.