

BEING INFORMED: TOWARD AN ONTOLOGY OF INFORMATION AS EXISTENTIAL STRUCTURE

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Abstract

Traditionally, information has been recognized as a signal, semantic content, or a means of gaining knowledge. Although these viewpoints have made a great contribution to information science and the philosophy of information, they are still generally epistemological, communicational, and computational in orientation. Thus, they explain how information functions in already intelligible contexts, while giving less attention to the ontological conditions necessary for the possibility of intelligibility and meaningful experience. This paper fills this gap by creating an ontology of information using the tools of conceptual analysis and hermeneutic phenomenology. It is based on the philosophy of information and a phenomenological ontology that argues that information is not only an object of knowledge but also an existential structure, the ground of disclosure, relationality, and intelligibility. The analysis introduces the concept of informational existence, which considers the act of being informed not as the possession of knowledge but as an existential mode of being through which reality becomes intelligible and meaningful. The paper unites the two perspectives of phenomenology and informational perspective, proposing a new ontological framework for the study of the relationship between information, meaning, intelligibility, and existence.

Keywords: Information Ontology; Philosophy of Information; Phenomenology; Existential Structure; Intelligibility; Informational Existence.

1. INTRODUCTION

Information is one of the densest but least philosophically worked-out concepts of modern thought. It plays an important role in many fields such as communication theory, cognitive science, artificial intelligence, information science, and philosophy. In these fields, information is generally recognized as something that can be encoded, transmitted, processed, stored, interpreted, and transformed into knowledge (Chi, 2026). Although it is a widely used type of technology, there remains little agreement concerning its fundamental nature or its ontological status. Although many theories within the frameworks of communication, cognition, and representation have made important advances to understand these processes, few of them have paid attention to the deeper philosophical question of whether information itself is a factor in the conditions that permit understanding and meaningful experience.

Contemporary conceptions of information have largely been shaped by three traditions. Shannon's mathematical theory of communication defines information in terms of the reduction of uncertainty and signal transmission (Shannon, 1948). However, the theory left out the question of meaning and ontology, and treated information as a measurable quantity rather than a condition of understanding. Semantic theories sought to overcome this limitation by reconnecting information with meaning and knowledge. Bar-Hillel and Carnap (1953) related information to logical content, while Dretske (1981) suggested that information can be a vehicle of semantic content that creates knowledge (Bar-Hillel & Carnap, 1953; Dretske, 1983). More recently, Floridi (2013) has developed a philosophy of information by proposing that information is a basic form of reality and should be considered as a legitimate object

of ontological study (Floridi, 2013). This view greatly expanded the field of information studies by bringing information itself into the realm of metaphysical.

Despite their differences, significant traditions in information theory and the philosophy of information address the concept of information from distinct perspectives. While meaning and ontology are not related to information, Shannon (1948) defines information syntactically as “a reduction of uncertainty”. Bar-Hillel and Carnap (1953) and Dretske (1981) again introduce semantics by regarding information as the bearer of meaning and as the basis for knowledge. Floridi (2013), on the other hand, presents an ontological argument, arguing that information is a basic structure of reality by means of informational structural realism. These are not only different in scope but also in the field in which they focus, from communication theory to epistemology and metaphysics (Zahnoun, 2025). However, a shared problem is that none explicitly theorize information as the necessary condition for the disclosure of reality as intelligible. Thus, this study does not deny but extends such traditions, suggesting information as an existential structure underlying disclosure and relationality and meaningful experience.

This comparison shows a certain theoretical gap, not a general one. Communication theory is the theory of information transmission (Shannon, 1948), semantic theories are the theories of meaning and knowledge (Bar-Hillel & Carnap, 1953; Dretske, 1981), and informational realism is the theory of informational constitution of reality (Bar-Hillel & Carnap, 1953; Dretske, 1983). In contrast, phenomenology is the study of the existential conditions of meaning and intelligibility (Heidegger, 1962). However, neither tradition explicitly inquires whether information itself is a part of the disclosure of a meaningful world. This study aims to answer the question but develops an ontology of information that takes information as an existential structure that conditions intelligibility and connects phenomenology with the philosophy of information. Information is usually analyzed in already meaningful contexts, and the conditions that render these contexts meaningful are underexplored (Huang, 2026). Consequently, current scholarship focuses on highly complex descriptions of information processes, but is comparatively less informative about the connection between information and the formation of meaningful experience. To overcome this restriction, an ontological paradigm of information needs to be addressed.

A different perspective is offered by phenomenological ontology, which focuses on the conditions for understanding, not on the transmission or representation of the informational content. Heidegger (1962) argues that human existence is fundamentally characterized by being-in-the-world, where understanding is not just a cognitive accomplishment, but an existential condition, before actual reflection (Heidegger, 1962). The structures of disclosure create meaning in such a way that entities can be seen as significant and intelligible. Similarly, Merleau-Ponty (2012) stresses the embodied and situated nature of perception, arguing that understanding is not achieved through “spectatorial” contemplation of the world (Low, 2012). These perspectives demonstrate that meaningful experience depends on the previously existing existential structures in which reality is disclosed before the action of cognition or acquiring knowledge.

Although phenomenology offers a great description of disclosure and intelligibility, it rarely develops information as an ontological category. On the contrary, philosophy of information is increasingly aware of the ontological importance of information but with less concern about existential disclosure and lived experience (Hoffman & Islam, 2026). As a result, these traditions have emerged largely independently of one another, but with similar interests in the bases of meaning. Thus, the connection between information and the conditions under which reality is made intelligible is consequently under-theorized.

The study fills this gap by uncovering the information as an epistemic object or communicative resource, but also as an existential structure. Here, existential structure describes the ontological conditions that enable disclosure, relatedness, and intelligibility in human being-in-the-world. Information is therefore explored not only as content in a world already meaningful but also as a

condition through which meaningful experience is made possible. Accordingly, the paper raises the question of whether informedness is an existential way of dealing with reality in which it is revealed and understood in hermeneutic phenomenology and in conceptual analysis.

To overcome this problem, the paper draws an ontology of information based on conceptual analysis and hermeneutic-phenomenological interpretation. It is led by three research questions: (1) What philosophical constraints arise from thinking of information primarily as an epistemological object? (2) How can information be reconceptualized as an intelligibility condition rather than merely a bearer of semantic content? (3) What philosophical consequences arise from the understanding of being informed as an existential mode of being as well as an epistemic one?

The study makes three theoretical contributions. First, it highlights an imbalance between the philosophy of information and phenomenological ontology, one that neither explicitly theorizes information as a condition of existential intelligibility. Second, it proposes informational existence as a heuristic concept with which to account for the role of informational structures in disclosure and meaningful engagement. Unlike Heidegger's philosophy, or being-in-the-informational realm as in Floridi's informational realism, it focuses on the mediating nature of informational structures in lived experiences. Third, it establishes an integrated ontological framework to dialogue these traditions, thus providing a basis for future research on the relationship of information, meaning, and existence.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Information as Signal, Meaning, and Knowledge

Epistemological issues have been the traditional focus of the discussions of information in both philosophy and information science. The most important starting point is Shannon's (1948) mathematical theory of communication, where information is defined as a reduction in uncertainty or signal transmission (Shannon, 1948). In this context, information can be thought of as a quantity that can be measured and encoded, transmitted, and then decoded by a communication system. By deliberately excluding semantic content, Shannon established a rigorous mathematical foundation that has revolutionized the theory of communication and continues to shape information science.

Shannon's model is essential for understanding communication processes, but with its lack of mention of meaning, the model is not very philosophically significant. Zhang et al. (2026) treat information as a syntactic property of the signal, not because of its relation to understanding or experience (Zhang et al., 2026). The theory, therefore, provides a basis for understanding how information is communicated but not why it becomes meaningful or how it contributes to the intelligibility of the world. It therefore assumes rather than explains the meaningfulness within which the communication takes place.

Later semantic theories attempted to overcome this by bringing back information and meaning as well as knowledge. Bar-Hillel and Carnap (1953) tried to relate information to language, and Dretske (1981) suggested an epistemic theory in which information is the bearer of language meaning that produces knowledge (Bar-Hillel, 1955; Dretske, 1988). These approaches are a significant improvement as they acknowledge the role of meaning, truth, and cognition.

However, semantic theories have been mostly epistemological. Information remains still perceived as a thing that can be learned, shared, interpreted, or owned by the cognitive subject. Whether conceived as signal, content, or knowledge tool, information remains as an object in cognition (Choi, 2026). While they explain how information contributes to knowledge, they devote comparatively little attention to the ontological conditions that make knowledge and understanding possible. One central philosophical question, however, remains unresolved – not what information communicates, but what enables information to be meaningful.

2.2 Ontological Turn in the Philosophy of Information

A more significant shift from epistemological conceptions emerges within contemporary philosophy of information, especially in the work of Floridi (Floridi, 2013). Rejecting the conception of information as merely a communicative or cognitive tool, Floridi considers information as "a fundamental category of reality. His theory of informational realism suggests that reality is made up of informational entities that are connected in an infosphere (Floridi, 2013).

From this ontological point of view, the philosophy of information is significantly expanded. Information is no longer viewed just as a means to gaining knowledge, but as a vital part of reality (Liu, 2026). By shifting the focus from the traditional issues of communication and representation, Floridi makes information a worthy object of metaphysics and offers one of the most influential frameworks now available to the metaphysics of information.

Nevertheless, even though informational realism is important, it accounts for reality through informational entities, levels of abstraction, the infosphere, and informational structural realism (Floridi, 2013). While information may be taken as an ontological category, the emphasis is more on how reality is constituted rather than phenomenologically accounted for in terms of what makes reality intelligible (Pawar, 2026). Therefore, existential disclosure and situated understanding are less considered. This study supplements Floridi's ontology by studying information as an existential condition that takes part in the process of disclosing meaningful experiences.

2.3 Phenomenology, Disclosure, and the Emergence of Meaning

Phenomenological philosophy provides a distinct perspective on questions of meaning and intelligibility. Rather than asking about how information is transmitted or represented, phenomenology asks what conditions render reality meaningful, but meaningful in the first place. Heidegger (1962) argues that understanding is not so much a cognitive process as an existential aspect of being in the world (Heidegger, 1962). Human beings always already live in meaningful worlds, and entities seem significant and intelligible within these worlds.

Likewise, Merleau-Ponty (2012) points out the embodied and situated nature of experience (Low, 2012). Perception is relational, and intelligibility follows experience before concept and science. These perspectives converge to suggest that meaning comes before explicit cognition and is based on structures of disclosure that enable understanding.

The phenomenological approach explains how meaning emerges through disclosure, intentionality, worldhood, embodiment, and interpretation (McCulloch, 2026). Thus, while Heidegger provides insight into the way beings are made understandable via being-in-the-world, Merleau-Ponty focuses on the embodied and situated character of perception. Although these accounts clarify the existential presuppositions of meaning, they do not provide the concept of information as an ontological notion. This study, therefore, introduces information not to replace phenomenological disclosure but to complement it by explaining how patterns of differentiation, relationality, and intelligibility function as informational conditions of disclosure. Through doing this, it creates a link between the phenomenological ontology and the philosophy of information.

Mediation and relationality are also prominent in related developments in post-phenomenology and the philosophy of technology (Vidal, 2025). For instance, Ihde (1991) shows how technologies affect perception and experience by mediating relations among humans and the world (Ihde, 1991). Although these approaches illuminate structures of engagement and interpretation, they stop short of developing a comprehensive ontology in which information is the existential condition of disclosure.

2.4 Theoretical Gap and the Need for an Ontology of Information

A gap in conceptualization is found in the literature. Information theory and philosophy of information treat information as a signal, content, structure, or an informational object. These approaches offer detailed explanations of communication, representation, and the ontological nature

of informational entities, but give relatively little consideration to how information becomes meaningful. On the other side, phenomenological and existential traditions provide insightful analyses of disclosure, intelligibility, and meaning formation, while leaving the concept of information relatively neglected.

This split creates a large theoretical gap. The existing scholarship does not provide a consistent framework to account for information as an existential structure, wherein intelligibility itself is made possible. Current theories either describe information's role in contextually meaningful situations or explain the emergence of meaning without addressing informational structures.

The present study addresses this issue by constructing an ontology of information based on existential structure. It proposes that information is not just content, representation, or informational object, but is a constitutive condition of disclosure. The study reconceptualizes being informed as an ontological mode of existence instead of a purely epistemic state by incorporating elements from the philosophy of information and phenomenological ontology. This perspective provides the foundation for a more holistic understanding of the connection between information, meaning, and being.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: INFORMATION AS EXISTENTIAL STRUCTURE

3.1 Exploration of Information as Object to Information as Ontological Condition

Traditional information science and information philosophy have generally conceptualized information as a knowledge, communication, or computation object. Within these frameworks, information is considered as information that can be shared, coded, stored, understood, or converted to knowledge (Zhang et al., 2025). Even if information is given ontological status, it is likely to be interpreted as a thing or a structure within a pre-existing meaningful world. These methods tacitly presuppose the conditions of intelligibility that make the processes of information possible.

The present study takes a stance contrary to this assumption by offering a different view of information from an object-oriented approach to an ontological one, an approach that conceptualizes information as a condition of intelligibility. Rather than understanding information as a phenomenon present within the field of experience, the approach developed here examines whether information constitutes part of the ontological-phenomenological conditions that allow for meaningful experience to occur. In this case, "conditions of possibility" is taken in a Heideggerian, rather than a Kantian, manner, meaning existential structures through which beings can be disclosed in their intelligibility. Therefore, information is analyzed in terms of its ontological nature as one of those aspects of the relational structure out of which meaning and understanding are formed.

In this sense, information is not just a resource for cognition but a constitutive dimension of existence. Knowledge, interpretation, and communication are thus understood as emergent phenomena that are based on more basic informational conditions (Vuong et al., 2026). The proposed framework puts the information from the informational level to the ontological level.

3.2 Information as Disclosure and Relational Constitution

The first part of the framework conceptualizes information as a structure of disclosure. Information is not assumed to be neutral content that acquires meaning after transmission or interpretation. Instead, it is a condition through which entities become meaningful and intelligible (McCulloch, 2026). Information plays a part in the disclosure of reality as a condition of the relational processes wherein distinctions, patterns, and connections become intelligible. It is not seen as something which creates these distinctions and connections, or which merely conveys them as neutral material. Rather, it is seen as an ontological condition through which they come to be intelligible as distinctions and connections.

Meanwhile, information is inherently and essentially relational. Traditional models usually view information as a discrete element connected through communication processes (Niu et al., 2025). The framework presented here argued, however, that relationality is informationally constituted. Entities do not first exist independently and then connect through information relations, but they emerge through information relations, which help to define their intelligibility and identity.

This relational epistemology suggests meaning is created through relationships of differentiation and connection. Information is thus not only a bridge between pre-existing objects but also a condition through which beings are made intelligible in a meaningful world (Nourizadeh). Disclosure and relationality are thus uniquely linked aspects of informational life.

3.3 Information as Existential Mediation and Intelligibility

A second dimension of the framework concerns existential mediation. Information doesn't exist between the subject and the object as a representational layer, but as the field in which the subjectivity and objectivity are possible (Conklin, 2025). Information structures influence the way people meet themselves, each other, and the world, making meaningful engagement possible.

This interpretation differs from the traditional understanding of mediation that focuses on communication or technological interface. In this context, mediation is defined as an ontological feature of existence itself (Derin & Baytaş, 2025). The conditions of informationally surround humans from the outset, shaping perception, interpretation, and understanding. Information, therefore, isn't only about the acquisition of knowledge but also a way of interacting in the structures that make reality accessible.

Information is a basic condition of intelligibility, at its most fundamental level (Rudolph, 2026). It is a structure that gives rise to entities, relations, and meanings as meaningful. Information is therefore not a property of things but part of the conditions that enable things to be understood and encountered. Informational intelligibility is a precondition for knowledge, interpretation, and communication, and thus depends upon it.

3.4 Informational Existence: The Central Proposition

Building on the preceding analysis, the framework suggests that the human existence, which is phenomenologically understood, is always already embedded in informational structures of disclosure, relationality, and mediation, in which the world becomes intelligible. This does not mean that everything in the world could be described as information or that information is reality outside of experience (Edwards, 2025). Instead, it suggests that informational structures are involved in existential conditions that afford meaningful engagement with the world, insofar as humans experience and make sense of their surroundings. Information is thus not perceived as another material or aspect of reality, but as an ontological property of the relational structure that is the way in which entities are made meaningful.

This proposition leads to the idea of informational existence. Informational Existence refers to the condition in which beings are situated in informational structures that enable understanding (Suorsa, 2024). From this perspective, being informed cannot thus be explained as holding propositions or verified knowledge-claims. Instead, it is an engagement with the ontological circumstances in which meaning comes to be, and reality is made possible.

The philosophical value of this approach lies in its capacity to connect the philosophy of information and phenomenological ontology. It provides a critique of reductionist approaches, which only consider information as a signal, content, or computational structure, and also expands the phenomenological analyses of disclosure by adding information as an ontological category. These traditions are woven into this framework to give rise to an ontology of information, where information is seen as an existential structure that underpins intelligibility, meaning, and world-

disclosure. The conceptual relationships among disclosure, relationality, mediation, informational existence, and intelligibility are summarized in Figure 1.

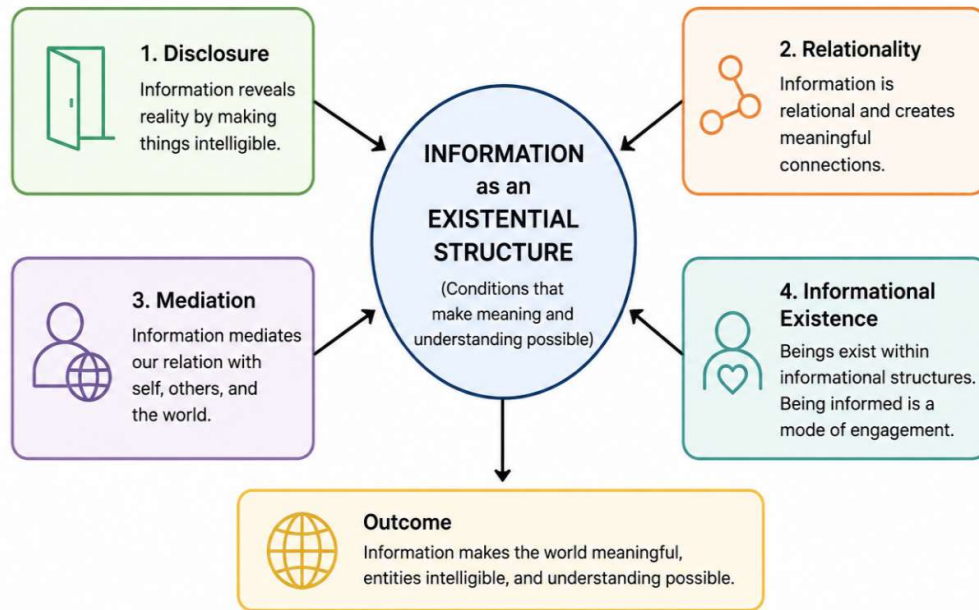


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Approach

This study used conceptual analysis combined with hermeneutic phenomenology as a study design from a philosophical perspective. Its analytical corpus is the primary philosophical works of the philosophy of information and phenomenological ontology, especially those of Shannon, Dretske, Floridi, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty, which are works that represent influential accounts of information, meaning, and disclosure. The study does not gather empirical data, but it looks at the conceptual assumptions of these traditions in critical comparison and phenomenological interpretation. Conceptual analysis is used to clarify key concepts, identify theoretical, and evaluate their explanatory scope, while the means of conceptual analysis, disclosure, worldhood, and intelligibility as existential structures are interpreted by means of hermeneutic phenomenology. The proposed framework is developed by conceptual synthesis by testing it philosophically with respect to the criteria of conceptual clarity, logistical coherence, interpretive consistency, and explanatory adequacy with respect to the nature of the relationship between information, meaning, and existence.

The research is based on the premise that the questions related to information, intelligibility, and existence cannot be answered solely by means of empirical techniques. Such questions need to be explored in terms of the conceptual underpinnings of the dominant discourses on information. Accordingly, the study aims at going beyond mere descriptions of informational phenomena and toward a philosophical reconstruction of information as a condition of meaningful existence.

4.2 Conceptual Analysis

Conceptual analysis is the main form of inquiry. This method is used to examine the assumptions, meanings, and theoretical implications of key concepts, such as information, being informed, existence, meaning, interpretation, and worldhood (Churchill & Fisher-Smith, 2026). In contrast to the

notion of self-evidence, the study critically analyzes the definitions and use of these concepts in various philosophical and interdisciplinary approaches.

Particular attention is placed on the most prominent information theories that view information as a message, meaning, computation, or resource. The study systematically explores these views and finds conceptual shortcomings that emerge when information is perceived as a means of acquiring knowledge or conveying information. The analysis aims at revealing some hidden assumptions related to the relationship between information and intelligibility, thus providing foundations for a broader ontological interpretation.

Conceptual analysis is thus not only used to make clear the words, but also to uncover new philosophies. By critically evaluating existing frameworks, the study establishes the need for a paradigm shift in information beyond conventional epistemological boundaries.

4.3 Hermeneutic Phenomenological Interpretation

The study is a conceptual analysis along with a hermeneutic phenomenological approach. Hermeneutic phenomenology focuses on the meaning of one's lived experiences and the ways through which meaning emerges within human life (Chikobola & Mutono-Mwanza, 2026). This is especially relevant given that the technical definitions of being informed may only give a partial picture of what it means to be informed; it has to be considered in relation to how people live, experience, and interpret meaningful worlds.

Hermeneutic phenomenology does not see information as a thing that is transmitted from one person to another but concentrates on how information becomes meaningful in experience. Information is treated as a part of the process of revealing the real, which forms the understanding of the subject, their world, and others.

The analysis is based on phenomenological notions of being-in-the-world, intentionality, disclosure, temporality, and interpretation. These ideas act as interpretive lenses through which the existential aspects of information are examined. In this way, being informed is defined not only as possessing information but as a way of engagement that enables the intelligibility and meaningfulness of reality.

4.4 Unit of Analysis & Theoretical Development

The unit of analysis for this study is not numerical data or empirical observation but philosophical concepts, theoretical arguments, and scholarly texts. The research interacts with literature from phenomenology, existential philosophy, and the philosophy of information to examine the different conceptions of information and the assumptions made.

The analytical process consists of three activities that are interrelated: critical interpretation, comparative analysis, and conceptual synthesis. The major theories of information, such as Shannon's communication theory, Dretske's semantic theory of information, Floridi's theory of informational realism, and the phenomenology of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, were critically analysed to highlight their assumptions about information, meaning, disclosure, and intelligibility. Second, these traditions were compared to shed light upon any conceptual convergences or tensions, especially between information as communicative or ontological content and phenomenological accounts of disclosure that don't explicitly theorize information. Third, the findings were synthesized conceptually to formulate the concept of informational existence, which rethinks about information as a phenomenon acting in the ontological conditions of disclosure, and not as a content that is transmitted or a semantic representation. This progression provides an argumentative path from a comparative analysis to the proposed ontological framework.

The process of theoretical development leads to the information being formulated as an existential structure. The proposed framework integrates perspectives that have traditionally remained separate, bringing together philosophical accounts of intelligibility and the contemporary theories of information. Through this synthesis, the study extends the idea of informational existence as the

environment in which human beings exist within structures, making meaning and understanding possible.

4.5 Philosophical Rigor and Justification

This study is not empirical, but rather is termed rigorous based on philosophical considerations. Since the goal is conceptual and ontological investigation, attentiveness to the conceptual clarity, logical coherence, interpretive consistency, and explanatory adequacy of the argument is essential to its validity. The proposed framework is examined according to its ability to identify limitations within existing theories on information, give a coherent account of the relationship between information and intelligibility, and integrate the information of different philosophical traditions without conceptual conflict. Continuous engagement with relevant literature ensures that the analysis remains relevant to existing scholarly debates and provides an original perspective. The strength of the study, therefore, lies not in empirical verification but in the coherence of its argumentation and its capacity to provide a more comprehensive understanding of information as an existential structure.

5.FINDINGS: TOWARD AN ONTOLOGY OF INFORMATION.

5.1 Information as a Precondition of Intelligibility

The first conceptual postulation made in this study is that the interpretation of information is not an act of obtaining knowledge, but an act of acquiring intelligible information. Dominant perspectives mostly focus on the communicative, representational, or cognitive content of information that can be transmitted, processed, stored, or interpreted (Failla et al., 2025). These accounts are persuasive accounts of informational processes, usually predicated on a meaningfully structured world in which the process takes place. This study is based on the comparative conceptual analysis of the previous sections, in which the intelligibility of the concept is seen as a condition that needs conditions of reality that make it meaningful. The information would thus not only be the content of knowledge but also be a part of the existential conditions that make understanding possible.

The present analysis proposes an ontological role for information that is more fundamental. Reality cannot be communicated, interpreted, or understood unless it is already revealed as intelligible. Information is thus not merely the substance of knowledge but also one of the conditions that make understanding possible (Vuong et al., 2026). Informational structures not only contribute to knowledge acquisition, but they also shape meaningful experiences. This finding takes the focus of philosophy away from asking how information enhances knowing to examining how informational conditions enable the possibility of knowing in the first place.

5.2 Information as a Structure of Disclosure

Secondly, the findings are related to the disclosure of information. Reality is not found as a self-evident collection of neutral objects waiting to be interpreted; it is encountered in a process of phenomenological analysis. In place of entities, however, are horizons of significance wherein they can be recognized, differentiated, and understood. Structures of disclosure, then, are those that make the world accessible, and meaningful experience is dependent on such structures.

In this context, information is becoming the key element of disclosure. Information does not just describe a pre-existing world; it is also a process that helps formulate distinctions, relations, and patterns that make entities intelligible. Hence, information should not be regarded as a second description of reality but as part of the ontological conditions that articulate and encounter reality. This interpretation goes beyond representational theories to situate information in the process by which meaningful worlds become accessible.

5.3 Information and the Relational Constitution of Meaning

The third finding indicates that information is essentially relational in nature. Current theories often conceptualize information as discrete units that are separable, transferable, and independent of broader contexts (Rogers, 2025). The present analysis takes a different point of view, suggesting that informational significance emerges in a network of relations.

Meaning is generated through differentiation, connection, and contextualization. Entities are rendered intelligible by occupying the place within relational structures where it can be said that there is a 'self' and a 'world', a 'presence' and an 'absence', a 'possibility' and an 'actuality'. Information is thus not to be conceived as a thing, but as a structure that allows for meaningful relationships.

The relational knowledge has ontological consequences (Santos, 2025). Informational structures are not just links between preexisting entities but are part of the construction of the field of relationships where entities gain significance. Reality is, therefore, revealed in the dynamic patterns of informational relations and not in the individual informational objects.

5.4 Being Informed as an Existential Mode of Being

A fourth finding relates to the meaning of being informed. Conventional interpretations generally associate being informed with possessing true knowledge, facts that are relevant, or acquiring information about a particular subject. Although these interpretations are important for the epistemic aspects of informational engagement, they fail to capture its existential significance.

This current analysis implies that informing is more accurately understood as a mode of existence. Human beings are always already embedded in informational structures that influence their perception, interpretation, and understanding (Ruthven, 2025). Information, then, does not just refer to the content of what one knows; it also refers to the conditions of the existences that one is involved in.

From this view, informational existence precedes specific acts of knowledge acquisition. Individuals are informed not only when they get introduced to new information, but also insofar as they live in a meaningful world that is organized in terms of disclosure, interpretation, and relationships. Thus, being informed donates existential openness to intelligibility rather than simply the possession of factual knowledge.

5.5 Information as an Existential Structure

The above conceptual propositions are not empirical findings but rather culminate in an integrated ontological model of information. In this model, information is interpreted as being involved in the ontological conditions under which reality can be made intelligible. Informational structures allow for disclosure, which accesses entities in experience; disclosure creates relationality, which sets entities in relation to each other; relationality creates meaning, which makes intelligibility possible. Informational existence, therefore, refers to human participation in this interconnected structure of disclosure, relationality, meaning, and intelligibility, rather than to the possession of informational content alone. The proposed model is an extension of communication and knowledge-oriented models that account for the role of information in meaningful experience and in the ontological conditions that are the conditions for the disclosure of meaningful experience. The differences between dominant theories of information and the proposed ontological framework are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparative Perspectives on Information and the Proposed Ontology

Dimension	Mathematical Communication Theory (Shannon, 1948)	Semantic & Epistemic Theories (Bar-Hillel & Carnap, 1953; Dretske, 1981)	Informational Realism (Floridi, 2013)	Proposed Ontology of Information
Primary	Signal transmission	Meaning, semantic	Informational	Information

concern	and uncertainty reduction	content, and knowledge	constitution of reality and the infosphere	as an existential condition of disclosure and intelligibility
Philosophical orientation	Mathematical/commu- nication	Semantic and epistemological	Ontological (informational realism)	Ontological- phenomenolo- gical
Status of information	Quantifiable signal	Meaningful content supporting knowledge	Fundamental ontological category	Existential structure participating in disclosure
Human- world relation	Communication between sender and receiver	Cognitive interpretation by knowing subjects	Informational agents within an infosphere	Human beings inhabit informational structures that enable intelligibility
Meaning	Outside the scope of the theory	Derived through semantic interpretation	Grounded in informational structures of reality	Emerges through informational disclosure and relationality
Main contribution	Explains communication processes	Explains semantic understanding and knowledge acquisition	Explains the informational constitution of reality	Explains how information participates in the existential conditions of meaningful experience
The principal limitation addressed in this study	Does not examine existential intelligibility	Does not explicitly theorize information as a condition of disclosure	Does not explicitly develop information as a phenomenologic- al condition of disclosure	Integrates philosophy of information with phenomenolo- gical ontology

6. DISCUSSION

The central objective of this study is to address a crucial theoretical gap in the philosophy of information, namely, a lack of a coherent ontological theory of information as a condition of intelligibility, not just as an object of cognition or communication. Previous theories have greatly contributed to the knowledge of information as signal, semantic content, computational resource, or informational structure. However, less attention has been paid to the ontological conditions necessary for the information to become meaningful in the first place. The results indicate that information is not only something that one encounters in an already intelligible world, but an existential structure that is involved in the disclosure of that world. This is an epistemology-to-ontology shift of information to

meaningful experience.

6.1 Reconsidering the Epistemological Dominance in Information Theory

The main implication of the study is a rethinking of the epistemological approach of information theory. According to Shannon's mathematical theory of information, information is a measurable quantity that is related to the reduction of uncertainty, but not related to any questions of meaning or ontology (Shannon & Weaver, 1948). Even though this paradigm has revolutionized communication theory and continues to form the foundation of information science, it can only be applied to the process of signal transfer. Similarly, the semantic theories of Bar-Hillel and Carnap (1953) and Dretske's epistemic theory (1981) successfully bridge the gap between information and meaning, along with information and knowledge, but still treat information as primarily content that is accessible to cognitive agents (Bar-Hillel & Carnap, 1953; Dretske, 1981).

The present study does not reject epistemological theories on information, but it suggests that the intelligibility they provide rests upon premises that they take for granted. The possibility of communication, interpretation, and knowledge depends upon the fact that reality is already disclosed and intelligible. Although phenomenological notions of disclosure, intentionality, and worldness reveal this fact, the notion of information offers an alternative ontological terminology to understand how the disclosure is intelligible. Instead of displacing phenomena, information acts as a mediator between phenomenology and the philosophy of information. This framework situates epistemological theories within a broader ontological account of disclosure, relationality, and intelligibility.

6.2 Extending the Philosophy of Information Beyond Informational Realism

The results also help in the current discourses of the philosophy of information, especially in the context of Floridi's informational realism. Floridi (2013) greatly expanded philosophical debates by proposing that "information is a fundamental part of reality" and not only a medium for communication or knowledge (Floridi, 2013). His research has led to the concept of information as a formal ontological category and to the recognition of the importance of informational structures in understanding reality.

However, the present study indicates that informational realism doesn't clarify the existentiality of information. The informational constitution of entities and systems is much more central to Floridi's framework than the disclosure of meaningful worlds is, though comparatively little work is done to argue for how informational structures participate in disclosure on the latter side. It is therefore suggested here that there is a difference between the informational constitution of reality and the informational disclosure of reality. The informational realism considers what reality is, while the present framework aims to understand how reality becomes intelligible for the situated human beings.

Accordingly, this study is thus complementary, rather than a challenge to Floridi's position. Based on the main concepts of disclosure, relationality, and intelligibility, it extends the philosophy of information from a structural ontology to an existential ontology, where information is not just a factor in the constitution of reality, but a factor in the meaningful manifestation of reality.

6.3 Bridging Philosophy of Information and Phenomenological Ontology

Another contribution of this study lies in establishing a conceptual dialogue between the philosophy of information and phenomenological ontology. These traditions have evolved largely independently despite sharing an interest in issues of meaning, understanding, and reality. The philosophy of information has been focused mainly on the nature and role of information, while phenomenology has explored the existential conditions in which meaning arises.

The results show that phenomena like disclosure, being-in-the-world, intentionality, and interpretation are helpful philosophical tools in reshaping the concept of information beyond epistemological frameworks. Heidegger's analysis of being-in-the-world shows that things acquire

meaning only in the light of previous horizons of intelligibility and not just by being recognized through disembodied cognition (Heidegger, 1962). Similarly, Merleau-Ponty's description of embodied perception demonstrates how meaning is created within the situated relationship with the world, as opposed to abstract representation (Low, 2012). The incorporation of these insights allows information to be understood not only as something represented in experience, but as one of the conditions of the ontologies that make experience possible in the first place.

This synthesis is thus a contribution to both traditions. It introduces information as a new philosophical category into phenomenological analyses of disclosure while enriching existential phenomenology with concepts from the philosophy of information.

6.4 Informational Existence and the Meaning of Being Informed

Perhaps the most important implications of this study are in terms of its understanding of being informed. The current debate is usually centered on the possession of accurate knowledge, access to relevant information, or the acquisition of factual content, all of which are considered to be informedness. These interpretations are able to capture the epistemic aspects of informational engagement but do not fully account for the existential aspects.

Informedness should rather be considered as a way of being, as is suggested in the present study. Humans are already located in a field of information that influences how they perceive, interpret, and understand before they even acquire knowledge (Bartsch et al., 2024). Thus, informational existence is before individual learning acts, as this is the ontological horizon in which learning is possible.

From this viewpoint, the concept of information has a greater philosophical meaning. Information is not just something people have but something through which they relate to themselves, others, and their environment. Therefore, informational existence is not just the facticity of information, but the existential openness to its intelligibility. This interpretation also disrupts the objectification of information as a technological, communicative, or computational process by moving information into other ontological frameworks that address meaning, disclosure, and human life.

6.5 Theoretical contribution and implications

The main theoretical contribution of this study is the development of an ontology for information based on the notion of existential structure. Unlike traditional theories that define information as the state of being transmitted, represented, or semantically represented, the proposed framework defines information as a state of intelligibility. This contribution fills the theoretical gap found in the literature by systematically accounting for information that relates informational phenomena to broader questions of existence and meaning.

The study also contributes to the philosophy of information by taking the discussion from informational realism to existential issues. It also makes a contribution to phenomenological philosophy by bringing information as an explicit category within analyses of disclosure and worldhood. In the context of these dual contributions, the study introduces a new framework for a dialogue between information theory, ontology, and phenomenology.

In general, results indicate that future philosophical inquiry should transcend the view that information is solely an object of knowledge. Questions about the intelligibility of information, mediation of disclosure, and the impact on existential understanding may become more significant for understanding the role of information in contemporary human life. Thus, by conceptualizing information as an existential structure, the study provides a foundation for such investigations and opens new avenues for research into information, meaning, and being.

7. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to fill an important gap in the philosophy of information: the lack of a systematic

ontological account of information as a condition of intelligibility and existence. While dominant theories have largely approached information through epistemology, semantics, computation, and communication, less attention is given to the question of how information relates to the conditions that enable meaning and understanding to be possible. By examining this limitation from a conceptual angle and a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, the study proposed an alternative standpoint in which information is not only conceived as content, or representation, or knowledge resource, but also as an existential structure.

The results showed that information has the nature of a precondition of intelligibility, a structure of disclosure, a framework of meaning in a relationship, and a mode of existential engagement. Information is not just a thing to be known, but a thing that is part of processes that make reality accessible, available, and meaningful. From this basis, the study advanced the concept of informational existence and suggested that humans are already always located within informational fields that are informing their perceptions, interpretations, and understandings. Therefore, information is not just the possession of knowledge or the retrieval of facts, but an essential way of being, where people experience and interpret the world.

The principal contribution of the study is to address the philosophical question of how information stands in relation to the conditions of intelligibility rather than to the issues of communication or knowledge. Through the integration of the ontology of phenomenology and the philosophy of information, the theoretical framework presented herein attempts to answer the question of how information is involved in disclosure, relation, meaning, and understanding through the same ontological framework. Unlike phenomenology, which does not theoretically explain information and informational realism studies the constitution of reality, the idea of informational existence clarifies the position of information in existential revelation. This can serve as a conceptual basis for philosophical analysis in the future on information, meaning, and existence.

However, several limitations should be noted. The study is a conceptual and philosophical study and does not offer empirical evidence for the proposed framework. Furthermore, it is focused on phenomenological and existential approaches, and other philosophical perspectives could be explored. The ontology proposed here could be expanded in the future by dialogue with other philosophies, as well as by analysis of the implications for current phenomena like artificial intelligence, digital environments, and human–technological relations. Ultimately, the ontology presented in this study suggests that information is not only something that human beings have and exchange, but rather a constitutive element of the structures through which reality becomes intelligible, meaningful, and experimentally accessible.

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