

public sphere &c. (cont.)

news, opinion, information ...

Concepts of information, Feb 14

"Human language is local ... therefore incapable of being used as the means of unchangeable and universal information."

- Tom Paine, *Age of Reason*, 1794

shorter view

TODAY

opinion and news

Habermas & Calhoun

the 'news'

TUESDAY

transformation,

information, informed public in 18c

modern "public sphere"



malleable assignment

THURSDAY

- In the course of the year, we will hear claims that "The American people/ Republican Party/Democratic Party/People of the great state of ... has or have spoken ...", or that "Public opinion is clear that ...", etc. Pick a particularly interesting or egregious recent claim of this sort and analyze the evidence (or lack of) for the claim, the likely function of the claim, and the applicability of Habermas's argument and/or conceptions of information that we have been discussing to what is going on with such claims. Consider, in particular, Poster's argument, and ask what differences the Internet has introduced to the newspaper-based world that Habermas describes. If we can assume that an idea of a public sphere was important to how we conceived of our polity, is such an idea still tenable?

recap

new* to *news* to *the news

[cp *information* to *les informations*, late 19c]

contrast

an information* to *these informations

to *information*

"The challenge of a historically located
social category ... not an ideal type."

--Habermas, xvii

apophantic?

"unspoken presuppositions of a discourse ...
considering how much work we ask the word
'information' to do, we don't spend time
thinking critically about what it means"

Nunberg, 1996

standing in the shadow of "knowledge"?

used by philosophers, but not mentioned or indexed

used by dictionaries (in text and paratext) but not
defined

"assurance that we have from our senses .. that they do not err in the information they give us of the existence of things without us."

Locke, *Essay*, 1690

mind the gap

"unable to comprehend in what manner body can act upon spirit"

Berkeley, *Treatise*, 1710

(responding to Locke & Newton)

to

"one great comprehensive law shall be found to govern both the material and the intellectual world"

Priestley, "Introductory" p. xxviii to
Hartley's *Theory of the Human Mind*. 1790.

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An Universal Etymological
English Dictionary:
COMPREHENDING

The Derivations of the Generality of Words in the English Tongue, either Antient or Modern, from the Antient British, Saxon, Danish, Norman and Modern French, Teutonic, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew Languages, each in their Proper Characters.

AND ALSO

Brief and clear Explication of all difficult Words derived from any of the aforesaid Languages; and Terms of Art relating to Anatomy, Botany, Physick, Pharmacy, Surgery, Chymistry, Philosophy, Divinity, Mathematicks, Grammar, Logick, Rhetorick, Music, Heraldry, Maritime Affairs, Military Discipline, Horsemanship, Hunting, Hawking, Fowling, Fishing, Gardening, Husbandry, Handicrafts, Confectionary, Carving, Cookery, &c.

Together with

Large Collection and Explication of Words and Phrases us'd in our Antient Statutes, Charters, Writs, Old Records, and Processes at Law; and the Etymology and Interpretation of the Proper Names of Men, Women, and Remarkable Places in Great Britain: Also the Dialects of our different Counties.

Containing many Thousand Words more than either Harris, Philips, Kersey, or any English Dictionary before Extant.

Which is Added a Collection of our most Common Proverbs, with their Explication and Illustration.

The whole WORK compil'd and Methodically digested, as well for the Entertainment of the Curious, as the Information of the Ignorant, and for the Benefit of young Students, Artificers, Tradesmen and Foreigners, who are desirous thorowly to understand what they speak, Read, or Write.

By N. BAILEY, Φιλολόγος.

L O N D O N: 24160

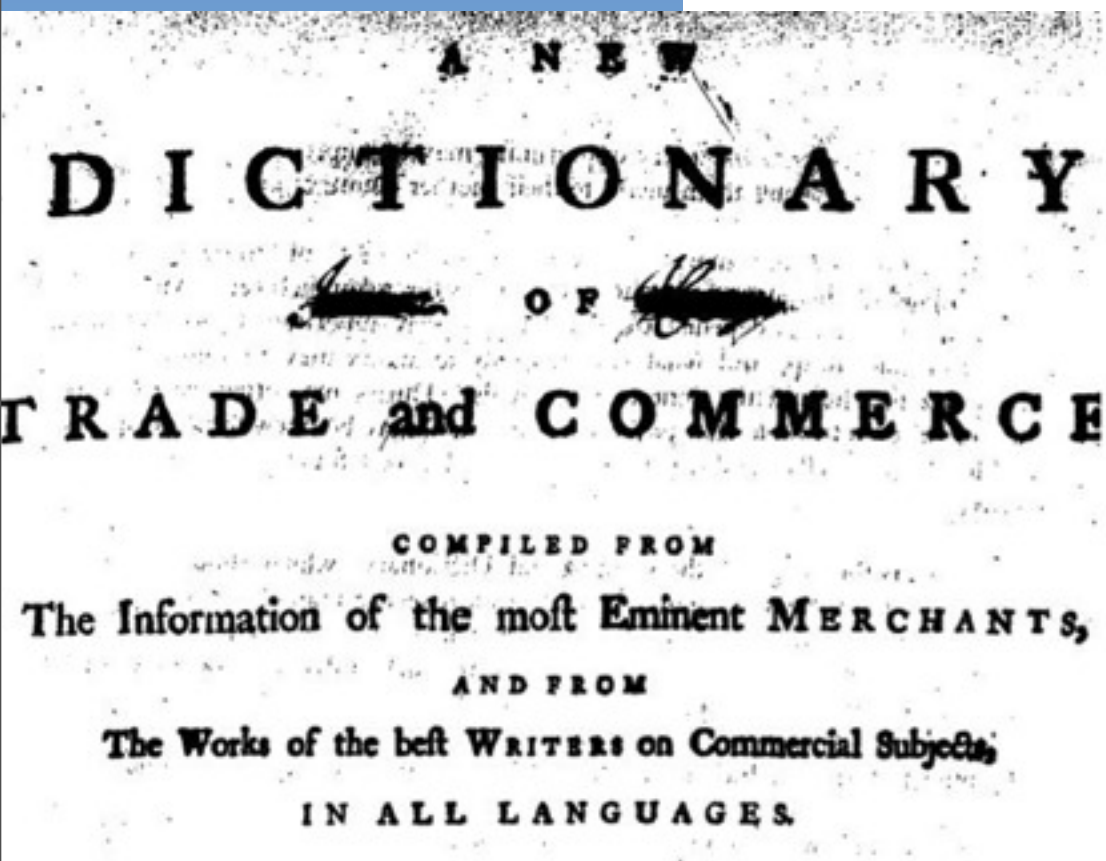
apophantic lexicography?

"compiled ... for ... the
information of the Ignorant" ...

Exchange Brokers: Men who give
information to Merchants

Bailey, *An Universal
Etymological Dictionary*, 1721

apophantic lexicography?



"compiled from the Information
of the Most Eminent Merchants"

Brokers: give the merchants
information of [the exchange's]
fluctuating condition

Rolt, Richard, *A New Dictionary
of Trade and Commerce*, 1756

THE
New Royal English Dictionary;

O R,

COMPLETE LIBRARY OF GRAMMATICAL KNOWLEDGE.

CONTAINING

A FULL AND COPIOUS EXPLANATION

OF ALL THE

WORDS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

Together with their various Significations, viz.

1. The Words, their Definition, and the various Uses in which they are used, supported by Authorities.
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The Whole containing every Thing that is valuable in all the

ENGLISH DICTIONARIES,

And other Grammatical Productions extant.

Carefully collected and digested, so that the Possessors of this Work may obtain any Information they require, without having Recourse to any other Dictionary.

use *and* mention

"collected ..so that the Possessors of this Work may obtain any information they require."

INFORMATION: intelligence or instruction; the act of communicating something unknown before

--Marriott, Charles,

New Royal English Dictionary, 1780

Incisorius *mus-*
 Incus [culus
 Index
 Indicator
 Indignatorius
 Interior penis
 Influent
 Intraalpinatus
 Infundibulum
 Infusion
 Inguen
 Inguinal ligament
 Inguinalis [mical
 Injection, anato-
 Innominate ar-
 — ossa [teria
 Innominate
 — os
 Inoculation
 Insects, anatomical
 Insertion [use of
 Integuments
 Intercapularia
 Intercostal
 — arteries
 — muscles
 — nerves

SCIENTIFIC INDEX.

CONTAINING



The several TERMS that occur in this Dictionary, arranged in ALPHABETICAL ORDER, and referred to their proper Subjects; and serving to direct those who consult it, where they may find that Kind of Information which they need or desire.

inscrutable

Dedication

"The Editor has ... recorded every kind of information ... best means of information"

Preface:

different sources of information ... communicate
 general information ... miscellaneous information

Index:

"find that Kind of Information which they need or desire."

Chambers, *Cyclopaedia*, 1786-88.

yawning back

antecedents

Information legal (1386) cp "to inform upon" (?15c)

inform "to give instruction, train, report" (14c)

an information as a report?

NBA's Gilbert Arenas Charged With Gun Felony

by THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



January 14, 2010

text size **A A A**

Washington Wizards guard Gilbert Arenas has been charged with a felony in connection with last month's locker room confrontation with a teammate.

Arenas was charged Thursday with one count of carrying a pistol without a license.

The charges were filed in D.C. Superior Court in an "information," a document that generally signals a plea deal.

f112-BPS 12

"[this book] not meant for those that had already mastered this subject ... but for my own information."

Locke, *Essay*, 1690

questions

a. as what gives shape (eg. to inform)

qv. Alain Rey, on 16th century France --façonner ...

see "for the information of ... ," "for your information ...,"
"man of ..."

b. as what has shape, form (cp a report)

a thorough ... , whole, complete ... , partial ... ,
extensive ... , complete ... , full information

--rising late 17, early 18th century

c. from container to contained

"piece of ... ," "particular" "any information" 18c.

"thank you for your information ... "

"received your information ... "

circulating content

Richardson, *Pamela* (cp Fielding)

"Dead counsellors are safest. The grave puts an end to flattery; and the information that we receive from books, is pure from interest, fear, or ambition."

Johnson, *Rambler* #87 [1750]:

"the Hearers of the Speech, from whom the *London-Evening Post* derived the Information, must have understood you [Huddesford] as saying what the News-Writer has delivered.

An Address to the Revd. Dr Huddesford ..., 1755

circulating content

"the information he gave to the ministry he had received in letters and messages from France."

--Smollett, *History I* [1784]

"The spirit of the people for obtaining this necessary information is evident from the incredible number of newspapers and other periodical publications"

Paine, *Common Sense*, 1776

"the press ought to supply them with all important information."

-- Knox, *Spirit of Despotism*, 1795

multiple roles

cause

"upon this information ... "

effect

"for your information ..."

perception

"That which relates to the perception of material subjects"

interpretation

"and that which relates to the interpretation of meaning and thought"

--Ferguson, *Institutes*, 1769

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mind the gap

"every mind ... is necessitated ... to receive its informations
... by the intervention of the body"

--Johnson, *Rambler*[1751] #148

"we report nothing of [nature], but what we receive from her
own information" --Burke: *On the Sublime*, [1757], Sect 27

"The senses you conceive as so many inlets ... The difficulty
is only to conceive how they get their information.

--Joseph Berington, *Letters on Materialism*, 1776

mind-body

"immediately on hearing the info, our blood
boils within us" --Knox, *Essays*, 178

"Give them fair and full information, and
[the people] will do the thing that is right
in consequence of it."

--Knox, *Spirit of Despotism*, 1795

in the public sphere:

"every man of information knows ...,"

"no man of information can doubt..."

aspects of "information"

cause - process - effect

countable

compressible

currency

conflicts

aspects of information: counting

"infinitely small quantity of information which each
[pronoun] conveys" --Hartley, *Observations*, 1749

"The best book is not that, perhaps, which contains the
greatest quantity of information" --Pinto, *Circulation*, 1774

"[Salamasius's works] furnish a great variety and quantity of
information" --Knox, *Winter Evenings*, 1790

"the register will be found to contain double the quantity of
information ever before inserted in it."

-- Longworth, *Almanac*, 1799

aspects of information: compressible

the stuff, or what the stuff contains

"the plain didactic Style is intended merely to inform the Understanding, so the rhetorical and poetical Styles are intended to excite the Passions."

--Hartley, *Observations*, 1749

"writers [of sermons]... endeavour to extract from [scripture] all the useful information and direction it contains"

--Priestley, *Lectures on Oratory* ... 1777

aspects of information: compressible

"Writers [who have] ... written with little solicitude to please .. .provided they were able to communicate information ..."

--Knox, *Essays*, 1872

"the dull compiler ... commonly contented with a book, however unadorned and uninteresting, if it affords information. The flowers of rhetoric they despise, as meretricious artifices; and the graces of style they neglect as contributing more to embellishment than to solidity."

--Knox, *Essays*, 1779

echoes of Shannon?

"Johnson's Journey to the Western Islands ..
does not admit of abridgement, because every
sentence compresses such a quantity of
information"

--Historical Magazine, 1799

aspects of information: currency

"mankind, however they may want to be reminded,
can never need information on this head."

Fielding, *Tom Jones*, 1749

"Information: intelligence or instruction; the
act of communicating something unknown before."

--Marriot, *Dictionary*, 1780

qv. Inform

qv. Bateson, Shanon?

conflicts

can one thing be both **cause, process, & effect?**

can we reconcile

countability

compressibility

currency?

resolution?

"species ... of information"

--*Bell's Annual Messenger*, 1798

"The Editor has impartially sought out and recorded every kind of information"

Chambers, *Cyclopædia*, 1778-88

types of information

useful

theological

practical

political

parliamentary

news-paper

practical

"Oxford .. in possession of advantages favourable to the study of theoretic physic, but scarcely able to afford any opportunities for practical information, till the erection of the Radclivian infirmary."

Knox, *Essays*, 1779

political

"National conduct ought to be the result of national wisdom, a plan formed by mature consideration and diligent selection out of all the schemes which may be offered and all the information which can be procured."

Johnson, Idler #8, 1751

political

"something exceedingly ridiculous in the composition of monarchy; it first excludes a man from the means of information yet empowers him to act in cases where the highest judgement is required"

--Tom Paine, *Common Sense*, 1776

political

"the degree of correctness with which the common papers of intelligence appear, is really wonderful, and affords a striking instance how much industry can effect, when stimulated .. by the hope of that abundant gain, which our more than Athenian love of political information constantly supplies." --Knox, *Essays*, 1779

"Give [the public] fair and full information, and they will do the thing that is right."

-- Knox: *Spirit of Despotism*, 1795

teasing apart

"[a member of parliament should be] first ... a man of principle, secondly a man of information, and thirdly a man of fixed stability."

"Adam Smith as the first of our Writers, both in Point of genius and information."

coming apart

"It has been with much concern that I have heard that a petition is now handed about in Birmingham, for a reform of Parliament, and that instead of originating with, or being patronised by those whose education and opportunities of information, enable them to judge of the present propriety of such a measure, applications for signatures have been made, principally to the workmen in the various manufactories, while those with whom the petition originated, remain unknown. ..."

--Friend of Birmingham and the Constitution, 1793

either or ...

"he will form on that account some judgment the author's candour or information ..."

"no man ... who has considered their affairs with any degree of attention or information, but must hourly look for some extraordinary convulsions."

--Burke, *Observations on a Late State of the Nation*, 1769

"never heard a man of common judgment, or the least degree of information ..."

--Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution*, 7th ed, 1790

useless information

"Mr Burke observed, that it was the first Time he ever heard News-paper Information made a Foundation for any solemn Proceedings in that House."

St. James's Chronicle, 1775

"Mr Burke ... believed the letter ... genuine, though founded on news-paper information."

Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 1779

useless

"The man who never looks into a **newspaper is better informed** than he who reads them, inasmuch as he who knows nothing is nearer to truth than he whose mind is filled with falsehoods and errors. He who reads nothing will still learn the great facts, and the details are all false."

--Thomas Jefferson to John Norvell, 1807

auctoritas, veritas, ratio



"Information is an advantage to us; and we have a right to demand it. He that is bound to act in the dark cannot be said to act freely. ... Reason clearly and manfully delivered, has in itself a mighty force: but reason in the mouth of legal authority, is, I may fairly say, irresistible."

--Burke *Two Letters .. on the Proposals for Peace, 1797*

"auctoritas, non veritas facit legem"

back to Habermas

"For the Actions of Men proceed from the Opinions, and in the well-governing of Opinions, consisteth the well-governing of Men's Actions in order to their Peace and Concord"

Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 1651

auctoritas or voluntas?

"NOTHING appears more surprizing to those, who consider human affairs with a philosophical eye, than the easiness with which the many are governed by the few; and the implicit submission, with which men resign their own sentiments and passions to those of their rulers. When we enquire by what means this wonder is effected, we shall find, that, as FORCE is always on the side of the governed, the governors have nothing to support them but opinion. It is therefore, on opinion only that government is founded; and this maxim extends to the most despotic and most military governments, as well as to the most free and most popular."

--Hume, "Of the First Principles of Government," 1741

national wisdom

"National conduct ought to be the result of national wisdom, a plan formed by mature consideration and diligent selection out of all the schemes which may be offered and all the information which can be procured."

--Samuel Johnson, *Idler* 8, 1751

what public?

"[Mr Courtney] said, that in every government of a mixed or popular form, the middle rank of people were those whose voice ought to be more especially attended to. They were the true echo of the nation. This was an observation that indeed carried an appearance of truth and plausibility, but experience proved it to be totally fallacious. **The sense of the people**, or great body of the nation, was, in HIS [ie CJF's] opinion, the true criterion by which **Public Opinion** could be fairly determined."

--Charles James Fox, House of Commons, 1781

the news master



cabinet papers

London Gazette

Review

Examiner

Post-Boy

Mercator



in-house journalists

Defoe

Swift ...



and so

Habermas, Jürgen, 1989. "On the Concept of Public Opinion" pp 236-250 in Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

- Papacharissi, Zizi. 2002. "The Virtual Public Sphere: The Internet as a Public Sphere," *New Media & Society* 4(1): 9-27
- Poster, Mark. 1995. "The Net as a Public Sphere," *Wired* 3.11 (November)