

# The Foundation (Part I)

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## Abstract

The Foundation of the title is two things. It is the foundation of actual Human knowledge, in the sense of being the knowledge we have *together*, about how it is that we actually know anything. This secondary knowledge about knowledge is in fact *more* important than the primary knowledge of actual facts, because when our primary knowledge is imperfect, and it always is in practice, we need the secondary knowledge of how it is we know what are the facts, in order to resolve inconsistencies. Without it, there is no rational way to solve problems, and so this secondary knowledge is quite literally the basis of Human reason.

Actual Human knowledge itself is important because it is the basis of all value. Even so-called “natural resources” are only resources because of the knowledge we have of where they may be found, and how to collect and use them; and money is only valuable because of the shared actual knowledge we have about what it represents and how it can be used. Indeed, *all* problems any Human being could know, without exception, are ultimately problems of either knowledge, or the lack of it.

Therefore The Foundation is also the foundation for the future of Humanity, the basis on which we will create a better world, not only for the people who live now, but also for those who will live thousands, millions and billions years in our future.

We can realize The Foundation, right now, as a global organization with a universally recognized identity and objectives; governed by principles of openness and transparency, for the good of all Humanity for all time. Since this is *possible*, to do anything else would be evil.

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# 1 Introduction

We must first explain how it is that we know that it is possible to realize The Foundation as described in the last paragraph of the abstract. The knowledge that this is possible comes from the simple fact that actual knowledge exists *now*. This, together with the observations we made above, that all value is founded on shared actual knowledge, and the fact that *we know this to be the case*, shows that The Foundation *potentially exists*, and always has done. All we need to do is make it actual, by giving it an identity as a global organisation governed by principles of openness and transparency.

We require the openness and transparency of the governing principles of The Foundation to be the subject of universal actual knowledge. The problem is essentially one of communications: because it must be possible, in principle, for anyone to know what are the reasons for the belief that the governing principles of The Foundation are in fact what they are claimed to be. The Foundation will be realized as soon as we realize a communications system, the integrity of which is the subject of actual knowledge so that, in principle, *anyone* can know the reasons why the integrity of the system is an actual fact.

Although it may not be immediately obvious to everyone, it is possible to realize such a communications system on the basis of communications media which are in themselves *not* trustworthy. The way this is done is quite simple: one just uses a perpetually varying representation of the data in the underlying media, and then the knowledge of the integrity of the communications (i.e. the knowledge that the data received over the channel is the data that was transmitted) is the fact that the response is coherent (i.e. that it is in every way consistent with the knowledge the receiver has about the sender). This knowledge is not based solely on the data contained in the message; it also depends initially on the past history of interaction between the communicating parties, and as time passes, the knowledge of the integrity of the data communicated *should* increase monotonically, as more and more corroborating evidence accumulates.

If it doesn't, then the integrity of that channel from the point at which the message was transmitted (and all those other channels via which any subsequent communications which appeared to confirm that integrity) is suspect, as is the integrity of the channel over which news of the inconsistency was transmitted (and also any other channels over which further communications which cor-

roborate the inconsistency are received). In such circumstances, the evidence accumulating is said to be *equivocal* and, as time passes, evidence both for and against the integrity of the mutually contradictory sets of messages, will continue to accumulate monotonically.

Communications over equivocating channels will clearly be less effective, and there will therefore be a natural tendency for the network as a whole to stabilise around the non-equivocating channels and to marginalise the equivocating ones. And the actual knowledge of the integrity of the network as a whole will come from the absence of equivocation. This mechanism should not be seen as the prejudicial marginalising of “outsiders,” however, because the nature of The Foundation is *supposed*, or *assumed* to be based on actual knowledge, and therefore the only “outsiders” are those who do not have actual knowledge of what The Foundation really is. These people are not marginalised because of any knowledge The Foundation has about *them*, on the contrary: they are marginalised because of the *absence* of such knowledge within The Foundation, and because of *their* lack of actual knowledge of The Foundation.

The effect of this marginalization of those who can only “communicate” with The Foundation over equivocating channels is a strong selection principle acting against any people or group of people whose business is not conducted in an open and transparent manner consistent with the universal identity of The Foundation. These people will know nothing but an infinity of shifting, impenetrable, utterly incomprehensible barriers which will forever bar them from access to The Foundation. On the other hand, those whose business is conducted in an open and transparent manner will cross this threshold without even being aware of it. To them, there will be no distinction between the world at large, as it has always been and as it always will be, and The Foundation.

Therefore the identity of The Foundation as something separate and apart from all that exists, all that ever has existed, and all that ever will exist, only “exists” outside The Foundation, and to those outside, that identity will always be mythological, and for those outside who are also foolish enough to “believe” in its concrete existence, it will be the object of deepest, darkest fear and hatred.

Thus The Foundation will naturally and inevitably grow, until it absorbs all who have actual knowledge of the greater good. And so it will either unite all of Humanity in sharing actual knowledge of what is universally good, or it will divide Humanity into those who actually know, and those who cannot.