

Understanding the Informational Turn: the Fourth Revolution

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Abstract

In this paper I argue that recent technological transformations in the life-cycle of information have brought about a fourth revolution, in the long process of reassessing humanity's fundamental nature and role in the universe. We are not immobile, at the centre of the universe (Copernicus); we are not unnaturally distinct and different from the rest of the animal world (Darwin); and we are far from being entirely transparent to ourselves (Freud). We are now slowly accepting the idea that we might be informational organisms among many agents (Turing), *inforgs* not so dramatically different from clever, engineered artefacts, but sharing with them a global environment that is ultimately made of information, the *infosphere*. This new conceptual revolution is humbling, but also exciting. For in view of this important evolution in our self-understanding, and given the sort of IT-mediated interactions that humans will increasingly enjoy with a variety of other agents, whether natural or synthetic, we have the unique opportunity of developing a new ecological approach to the whole of reality.

