

## **Myth of information (Abstract)**

### **Friedrich Kittler**

If we want to engage with the notion and myth of information, we will, first of all, have to revert to Claude Shannon, without whose theory of information we would not be able to obtain a mathematically exact definition of information. However, the exactitude of Shannon's method was due to the express exclusion of semantics. Information is thus the exact opposite of myth because a myth (except for the strictly syntactic definition Lévi-Strauss gave it) was the great resource of all semantics. Also, the only mythical shadow which falls on Shannon's theory was cast by the Pentagon — apart from the official version, there exists also a cryptographic one, which was kept secret. It says that information is mainly measured in terms of its shortcomings.

This is precisely the point (of hidden information) where the complexity theory of modern computer science comes in, even though it actually runs counter to Shannon's theory in all other aspects. "Logical depth" (Bennett) seems to be the current notion reinstating the classical and romantic myths of authorship and copyright under high-tech circumstances, viz. the hard way. The depth of hardware and software, without which there would be no digitalized information and communication, ensures that the wide-spread theory according to which the transition to the information society would be ipso facto a process of democratization necessarily remains a myth.