Evidence Status and Pathological Uncertainty

A Working Standard for War Contamination Information

Laboratory of Information Systems

Overview 2 / Artificial Intelligence and Research on the Consequences of War / 15 minutes

The sources of uncertainty

Empirical gaps concern observations and historical information

Information problems obscure sources and inferential transitions

Methodological limits concern the question and its means of investigation

Institutional conditions can restrict access and admissible questions

Uncertainty in a developing object

The environmental process continues between observations

Different records may describe different stages

New conditions can change the relevance of an earlier model

Pathology arises when the information system conceals these differences

The dioxin jazz of a changed environment

Wartime contamination introduces a new configuration into a territory

Persistence and environmental change extend the research horizon

Local conditions shape pathways and possible exposure

The metaphor describes an evolving configuration

Morphology as a means of investigation

The approach examines forms, sequences and transitions

It relates manifestations across places and periods

Comparisons identify recurring and conditional relationships

Each proposed relationship requires evidence

Vietnamese archives as a practical example

National Archives Center III adds records preserved in Vietnam

National Archives Center II holds Republic of Vietnam records

The collections add different documentary perspectives

Cross-source reconstruction can refine questions for verification

The limits of archival conclusions

A document establishes that a statement was recorded

A reconstruction requires evaluation of content and dependencies

Environmental pathways need additional evidence

The record preserves the boundary between established and proposed links

The origin of each claim

Observed identifies a measurement or direct observation

Documented identifies a statement in a traceable source

Reconstructed identifies a past event assembled from sources

Inferred and Predicted identify analytical and model outputs

Verification within stated limits

Verification identifies the claim, procedure and result

Authenticity and content require different checks

A local result has a stated spatial and temporal scope

Confidence records the grounds for the current assessment

Source dependence and apparent confirmation

Several publications may repeat one evidential origin

Citation chains retain the relation to the first available source

Contradictory records remain visible

A missing record does not establish an absent event

The question and the available method

A method can answer a narrow question accurately

The wider object may involve relationships outside that question

Soil investigation must retain territory, history and subsequent change

The object determines whether the research design is adequate

Political decisions and material continuation

Human decisions initiate and modify military environmental impacts

Political closure does not establish ecological completion

Physical and biological processes require their own investigation

Interventions can change the trajectory and must enter the record

Institutional limits to knowing

Restrictions may concern territory, data or substantive discussion

A record identifies the specific restriction and its consequence

Methodological objections require examination on their merits

Unperformed verification remains unresolved

The working evidence record

Each claim retains source, origin, time and place

The record separates uncertainty, contradictions and missing links

Verification specifies its procedure and limits

A next action and revision history keep the investigation open

The expert–AI system

AI assists extraction, comparison and candidate reconstruction

The expert checks consequential sources and inferential transitions

Source pointers and claim histories survive changes of model

Improved capabilities enter the same explicit standard

An open research architecture

The object remains the primary reference point

New manifestations can change boundaries and questions

Morphological comparison directs further investigation

Progress concerns particular uncertainties and their consequences

Sources and working standards

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Uncertainty as a research task

The developing object and the evidence both require histories

Each uncertainty has an identified origin and consequence

Morphology makes missing relationships available for investigation

The next action aims to change a specific state of knowledge