

An Interesting Question and an Irrelevant Answer.

Abstract

The question is old and very interesting, because it is been around for more than two thousand years and it is still intriguing minds. However, the answer to that question is irrelevant because any answer is not verifiable. This does not mean that the question is going away. Also, this question is going to be around for a long time due to its nature and the tools to deal with it.

Is Reality Analog or Digital? This old question could be rephrased as: Is there an elemental and indivisible part of reality that allows us to form all reality? Let's call this elemental and indivisible part of Reality a Reality Atom. If this Reality Atom exist then it would not be possible to divide it any more no matter what technology it is used. If this Reality Atom does not exist then any part of Reality could be partitioned any time. In any case, if the answer is Reality is Digital or Reality is Analog then there should be a way to validate the answer.

If the Reality Atom exists then there should be a way to prove it. The first step to find a Reality Atom is to propose a possible Reality Atom. Lets call this a Wannabe Reality Atom because it would need some tests to pass in order to go from Wannabe Reality Atom to Reality Atom. The early Wannabe Reality Atoms were Water, Fire, Earth and Air. This Wannabes did not pass the tests because they were replaced by quematical elements. These quematical elements were the next Wannabe Reality Atoms. They even were called atoms because it was thought they were Reality Atoms. The Wannabe Reality Atom status did not last long because it was discovered that chemical elements were also divisible. And the story keeps repeating itself again because now we have several Wannabe Reality Atoms. They have colorful and strange names but the purpose is still the same: They are Wannabe Reality Atoms that need to pass the test in order to be called Reality Atoms.

So far the test is this: If Wannabe Reality Atom is a Reality Atom then it should not be possible to divide it into components. All previous Wannabe Reality Atoms failed the test when it was possible to divide them into some elements. The modern Wannabe Reality Atoms are still waiting to see if they don't fail the test but it is still necessary to find a test to validate that a Wannabe Reality Atom is a Reality Atom. This test does not exist because it is constrained by the nature of Knowledge.

A way to gain knowledge would be through experience and smarter entities. Let's say that after billions of years and the use of brains as big as galaxies there would be a Wannabe Reality Atom that would not split. Then it would be tempted to declare that Wannabe Reality Atom a Reality Atom. This would not guarantee that the Wannabe Reality Atom would be a Reality Atom because there would still be doubt that maybe there were not enough time, intelligence or knowledge to split this Wannabe Reality Atom. This situation rises due to the nature of Knowledge, because it is not possible to know the future Knowledge. This could be put in other way: it is not possible to know what else will be discovered in the future because there will be doubt about what else could be out there. The same situation applies for any Wannabe Reality Atom. Doubt will never disappear about ways of splitting the Wannabe Reality Atom no matter how many

times it fails to split or by how smart the intelligent entity, which would try to split it, is. Maybe no Wannabe Reality Atom goes this far and an Analog Reality is easier to test.

An Analog Reality would be the other way to go. If it is possible to validate that a piece of Reality will be split any time then Reality is Analog and there would not be need to worry about a Reality Atom. The implication of an Analog Reality is that a piece of Reality would be split every time it was tried. Let's imagine that technology advances really fast and every time that it is necessary to look for smaller pieces of Reality the technology is developed. Maybe sometimes development is slow and new technologies takes thousands of years or billions of years and brains as big of planets or as big as galaxies. None of these circumstances will guarantee that the next technology breakthrough will come, because past success does not guarantees future success. This situation also arises due to the nature of Knowledge that it is not possible to know the future knowledge. Doubt will not disappear because there will be doubt about being able to split Reality one more time. This would send the question back to possibility of a Digital Reality and back to a Wannabe Reality Atom.

The argument that any answer for the initial question is irrelevant might suggest that there is no sense in looking for answers. This is not the case because the same constrain about Knowledge that won't permit an answer for this question will allow to keep looking no matter what barriers are out there. Maybe these barriers are time-space in nature, but no matter what these barriers are, there will be no way to know what else is out there to know unless somebody looks for it. This also implies that science and inquiring would be around as long as somebody asks the question: Is Reality Analog or Digital? Maybe the answer is irrelevant but the question is not.