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Day one: Wednesday 4th September 2013

Session 1 – Information Ethics: Cross-cutting Issues (8:30-10:30)

Intercultural aspects of digitally mediated whones, privacy and freedom

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Abstract

Recent research in information ethics shows that the notion and practices of privacy vary in different cultural settings, thus also having an impact on digitally mediated whoness and freedom. This intercultural discussion is still in its initial stages, particularly with regard to the ‘Far East’ and also African and Latin American cultures, just as it is in comparative studies between, for instance, Europe and the United States as addressed, for instance, by Helen Nissenbaum and Beate RöSSLer. How and as whom we reveal and conceal ourselves is not just an abstract conceptual matter, but also always concretized and rooted in cultural traditions. What is common and what is different shines forth from different perspectives that in some cases appear to be incompatible, although not necessarily contradictory. But even in these cases, as we shall see in the following analyses, various options for common practices and regulations are possible. The emphasis on the latter should not, however, overlook the deeper cultural layers as well as the foundational narratives on privacy and publicness. The following overview of implicit and/or explicit notions of privacy, particularly in the cyberworld context in the Far East, Africa and Latin America, is a first attempt limited not only in the choice of cultures, but also in the treatment of their inner complexity. There is no intent to simplify by using geographical markers. The few examples of differing narratives on privacy and publicness should be understood as illustrations of different ways of living the intertwining of personal and socio-cultural whoness according to changing rules of play for concealing and revealing who we are, mirroring ourselves in and to each other. My self is always myself with other selves in a shared world.

http://www.acatech.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Baumstruktur_nach_Website/Acatech/root/de/Publikationen/Projektberichte/acatech_STUDIE_Internet_Privacy_WEB.pdf chapter 2.5

Keywords: Interculturalism, whoness, privacy, freedom

The ethical dimension of indigenous knowledge systems

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Abstract

The WSIS provided an opportunity for indigenous people to become part of an inclusive information society where everybody without distinction would have access to enhanced services, including information and knowledge resources, to improve their livelihoods. Although WSIS Action Lines 1, 2, 3 6 and 8 discuss the various legitimate rights that are pertinent to indigenous people and their information and knowledge systems, Action Line 10 (“ethical dimension of information society”), which should enforce the provisions of the rest of the Actions Lines, offers omnibus and overarching ethical prescriptions of an information society. This cannot effectively serve the needs and aspirations of indigenous people, nor promote and protect their knowledge systems which have been continuously marginalized. This paper assesses the ethical dimension of indigenous knowledge and outlines the legitimate rights that indigenous communities and their associated knowledge systems must enjoy in an inclusive information society. The following research questions are addressed: What are the legitimate rights of indigenous people? What is the ethical dimension of indigenous knowledge? What push and pull factors are contributing to the violation of rights of indigenous people and their information/knowledge systems? Are indigenous people’s legitimate rights unique? These questions are addressed using deontological/utilitarian traditions, as well as contemporary ethical traditions. A review of literature is used to respond to each of the research questions. The subject matter discussed has practical and policy implications for the implementation of Action Line 10 of WSIS on the ethical dimension of the information society.

Keywords: indigenous knowledge systems, information society, ethics, indigenous communities, sub-Saharan Africa

Session 2 – Cyber Ethics, Cyber Law, Internet Ethics and Computer Ethics (11:00-13:25)

An informetric view of the relationship between Internet ethics, computer ethics and cyber ethics

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Abstract

The emergence of computers and related technologies such as the Internet in the second half of the 20th century raised, and continue to raise, debates about the ethical use of these technologies (Moor, 1985), hence the birth of terms such as ‘computer ethics’ (Moor, 1985), Internet ethics and cyber ethics. It is, however, apparent from the published literature that the exact meaning of and distinction between computer ethics, Internet ethics and cyber ethics is vague (at best). In his study of the problems related to computer ethics, Kuzu (2009) observes that:

“ICT professionals were not sure of a working definition of computer ethics, and described the concept through providing unethical computer using behavior examples. They all agreed on a consensus regarding the importance of the issue, but considered computer ethics primarily as a component of Internet ethics”.

The confusion surrounding the exact meaning of computer ethics, Internet ethics and cyber ethics as well as their related ‘ethics’ does not only pose problems for literature indexers, but may also pose big challenges for educators who teach the subject/s. This paper explores the differences and similarities between the three concepts--computer ethics, Internet ethics and cyber ethics--using informetric approaches, more specifically content analysis, in order to provide a deeper understanding of the three concepts as they are reflected in published literature. The relevant data was extracted from several data sources, including Google trends and subject-specific databases. Based on the findings from Google trends, it was observed that the concepts’ popularity has waned over time when measured according to search volume, and the related queries in the case of computer ethics include ethics of computer, computer and ethics, ethics in computer, computer ethics commandments, what is ethics, computer ethics code, information ethics, computer technology ethics, etc., while those of Internet ethics include ethics of the internet, internet and ethics, ethics in the internet, ethics on the internet, computer ethics, what is ethics, etc. Other findings as well as further discussions and recommendations are provided in the paper.

Keywords. Infometrics, internet ethics, computer ethics, cyberethics

Cyber infrastructure and service: Mainstreaming the margins

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Abstract

When there are great differences in the access to the essentials of life, or what is perceived to be such, it immediately brings into question the ethical foundations upon which a society is built. Viewed from a global perspective, and taking into consideration the profound changes in every society over the last century, we find that the tide of change that started with the industrial revolution has effectively been increasing through the technological revolution, which today lives on in the cyber-revolution. In this context, as we take a closer look at sub-Saharan Africa in particular, one of the persisting issues remains the difference in educational opportunity and access based on financial means and on location. The opportunity for good education in rural areas remains a major ethical dilemma. This paper is a pragmatic investigation into the potential reach that is presently possible within Higher Education in South Africa. The author argues for the restructuring of higher education to overcome the barrier of distance to opportunity. The paper builds on the three phases of the digital era (Du Plessis & Barczyk, 2013), which explains how initially holdings were digitized (still as separate holdings), followed by phase two with the emergence of the Internet (how digital libraries emerged), and presently phase three with mobile computing - how the e-book is delivered by wireless means from a central digital repository. This context is radically changing the access model to publications. The paper explores three key environments that could come together to achieve access to a first-rate university education for virtually all South Africans (and beyond). The first environment is the potential for broadband in South Africa. Given the recent and current delivery of fibre connections to Africa from Europe, South America, and Asia (See <http://www.afri-connect.com/africa-fiber-cables.html> and <http://cablemap.info/>), and the fibre connectivity within South Africa, broadband access is now a reality. The second environment is the vast network of government-sponsored public and academic libraries throughout the country, and the third environment is the ability to serve thousands of distance students by UNISA, primarily and less so by other government universities. The result of bringing these three environments into scope is the creation of a virtual space for students all over South Africa (and beyond) to learn from the best, share with peers, and gain an education, which may otherwise not be possible given the levels of poverty and insufficient access to information. The powerful motivator of ethics is emphasized for the common good and to reach one of the crowning ethical goals of a democracy – to offer all the opportunity to receive an education.

Keywords: Cyberinfrastructure, cyberservices, information access, ethics, South Africa

Power, programs and ethics in cyberspace: Creating balance through proactive interdisciplinary approaches

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Abstract

The need for cyber ethics is intensified by the nature of cyberspace. This space hosts and retains massive amounts of digital information, including our personal information and online behavior patterns, which can be aggregated to form detailed accounts of our online lives and, by extension, partial records of our offline lives. Individuals, governments and companies can use or abuse these accounts in increasingly sophisticated ways for surveillance and phishing and malicious hacking through the use of emerging Computational Intelligence (CI) software, such as Artificial Neural Networks (ANNs). The end users of online platforms and products have little knowledge of the processes that are active in the background of their interactions with cyberspace, and have relied on the discretion of specialists. However, the nature of the knowledge and skill sets of these specialists allows them to employ CI for constructive or destructive ends. ANNs, for example, provide state of the art tools for Internet Forensics, as well as for running intelligent online open access libraries (like the Fast Neural Network library). ANNs provide equally powerful tools for illegitimate surveillance, hacking and social engineering. In order to mitigate the power of the specialist and to protect the end user, ethics needs to be considered proactively in the conceptualization, design and application phases of cyber technologies, specifically intelligent technologies like ANNs. To this end, at least three approaches have been proposed by different authors: (1) Anticipatory technology ethics, (2) Value sensitive design, and (3) Ethics training and skills certification. The primary aim of this paper is to provide an overview of the viability of the actual application of these approaches. A major obstacle in all three approaches is interdisciplinary dissonance. Therefore, the secondary aim of the paper is to illustrate the feasibility of interdisciplinary cooperation, by way of employing selected philosophical perspectives in generating recommendations for solutions to overcome cyber ethics issues.

Keywords: Power, ethics, cyberspace, interdisciplinarity

A matrix for the analysis of ethical dimensions of social networking: a Facebook case study

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Abstract

The researchers conducted a qualitative study on the ethical dimensions of social networking, with specific reference to Facebook. In order to construe the discussion list, the researchers made use of two historic frameworks, i.e. the uses-and-gratifications theory, and the issues of information society as outlined by Mason. The issues explored include: information privacy, access, intellectual property and accuracy. The variables that constitute the uses-and-gratifications theory (diversion, personal relations, personal identity and surveillance) were placed on one axis and the four ethical issues of the information age as identified by Mason (privacy, accuracy, property and access) were placed on the other axis to form a matrix. One variable was added to each of the sets, namely legality and security respectively, to reflect recent developments in this field. The cells that were formed by combining the two variables in the matrix were then, where relevant, embedded in the discussion list. Six focus groups were conducted with respondents that were segmented according to age and gender. The preliminary findings pointed to a number of negative phenomena, i.e. addiction, dependency and diminished moral values whilst using applications such as Facebook. The aim of this paper is to investigate the reasons behind these phenomena.

Keywords: Social networks, facebook, ethics

Ethical and legal aspects of storing information in the cloud: lessons for information professionals in Africa

Victor Kabata

Abstract

Advancements in digital technology over the last decade have revolutionized the management of information. Today, we are witnessing the advent of a global information society where technology has increased the amount of information available and the speed of its transmission beyond all expectations. As organizations create and acquire more information, the cost of storage and management of information becomes a burden. Consequently, many organizations are shifting to cloud storage services, which involves storing data in a third party's storage space. The third party is devoted to providing large amounts of storage space, managing the stored data, and protecting the data. However, relying on a cloud service provider for information storage raises ethical and legal concerns. These concerns include: privacy of personal data stored in the cloud; information ownership given that information created and held in Web 2.0 software or the cloud may not be owned by the creator; information rights legislation given that dispersed information will be impacted upon by wide ranging information rights legislation across the globe with many different permutations; and information reuse, given that information stored in the cloud gains new value through new uses in its original form and through new forms such as mashups and "linked data" schemes. This paper, which is based on a literature review, defines the concept of cloud computing and discusses the ethical and legal issues that arise as a result of storing information in the cloud. It argues that most of these ethical and legal issues arise from the fundamental nature of cloud technology rather than any specific circumstances. The paper concludes by outlining possible ways of addressing these issues.

Keywords: Cloud computing, ethics, information professionals, Africa

Session 3 – Information Ethics Applications and implications (14:10-14:30)

The role of information ethics in innovation diffusion and technology adoption

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Abstract

With new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) introduced at an ever increasing rate, it is vital to understand what role information ethics plays in the diffusion of these innovations and the decision by communities, organizations and individuals to adopt ICTs. The adoption of technological innovations is variously defined, but it can be characterized as a three-stage sequential process encompassing initiation, adoption and implementation. Initiation is concerned with the gathering and evaluation of information on the ICT under consideration. During the adoption stage, the decision on whether to proceed or not is made based on the evaluation of information gathered in the initiation stage. The third stage, i.e. implementation, occurs once the decision is made to adopt a particular ICT. This contribution reports on an investigation into the role of information ethical considerations such as privacy, security, data ownership, play in innovation diffusion, and technology adoption by examining some of the most popular theories, models and frameworks in the field, including: diffusion of innovation (DoI), the technology acceptance model (TAM), the theory of planned behaviour (TPB), Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) and the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT).

Given that 56.52% of 345 articles on innovation adoption, acceptance and diffusion, published in 19 peer reviewed journals between 1985 and 2007 (Dwivedi et al. 2008) were categorized as Information Science and Library Science, this study presents a valuable contribution to the disciplines and to both information ethics and technology adoption literature. Furthermore, innovation adoption, acceptance and diffusion models and theories are often used as theoretical frameworks in LIS research conducted in masters and doctoral research in Southern and Eastern African universities (Ocholla and Le Roux, 2011); therefore this study is also of relevance to postgraduate students engaged in research in the field.

Keywords: Information ethics, diffusion of innovation

Ethical dimensions of e-School success

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Abstract

E-Schools, as with other information systems, require vast resources for implementation and maintenance. The processes of planning, designing, implementing and maintenance are often very well-articulated and convey the conviction of guaranteed success. The design of information systems is used in communicating the inherent value of the project to the stakeholders who must be convinced to make resources available for the IS project. The stakeholders supporting the implementation of the systems stand the risk of forgoing development opportunities should the IS fail. Predicting information systems' success has remained an ongoing concern of researchers and practitioners alike. This paper argues that the success of information systems is founded on ethical dimensions of implementation. Using the NEPAD e-School Pilot as a case study, this paper highlights variables that explain the limitations to success established in the NEPAD e-School Pilot, and links these to the non-observance of ethics in various aspects of the implementation of the pilot project. The paper recommends that ethical decisions on financing, training of users, maintenance of systems and liberalizing e-School access, are critical to the success of an e-School. It is further recommended that governments should entrust implementation of e-Schools to contracted parties as a way of assuring observance of ethical dimensions and therefore improving the e-Schools' chances of success.

Keywords: IS implementation; ethics; NEPAD e-School; e-School success

A consideration of teaching information ethics at second year level at the University of Pretoria: a case-study of integrating theoretical information ethics with practical application

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And

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Abstract

Practising ethics has been an important consideration since Aristotle, with particular reference to his Nicomachean Ethics. Aristotle based his entire philosophy on understanding the nature of ethical interactions between people. Conversely, today teaching ethics is a more complicated task when basing one's considerations on Aristotelian ethics because, according to Aristotle, ethics cannot be taught. Virtue can only be practised by means of habituation, which is similar to stating that one cultivates virtues. Therefore, by means of habituation, ethical character can be developed. A reinterpretation of this in the modern day classroom or lecture hall can be challenging. This is experienced first-hand by the authors of the article, who are involved in the teaching of an undergraduate module in information ethics. The concern encountered was not due to the lack of content, but rested on the inability of students to internalize the information ethical considerations. As a result, the students found it difficult to critically reflect on and practically apply what they were being taught. In response to this, the authors endeavored to implement a practical component to the module to provide an opportunity for the students to engage more with the information ethical issues of an Information Society. The aim of this article is to discuss the implementation of the practical component, considering the overall theoretical information ethical framework. Thereafter, recommendations are made as to the improvement of this dual structure. The module was presented over a period of one semester and consisted of both practical and theoretical components. The themes covered during the theoretical component ranged from the foundational concepts related to information ethics; ethical issues of an information society, such as privacy, access and intellectual property; intercultural information ethics; social justice and social responsibility. Through the use of a practical portfolio to support the practical component, the students were encouraged to select one topic from each theme on which they had to conduct research to achieve various objectives: 1) writing a conference abstract; 2) presenting the research in a conference setting; 3) compiling a first draft and final conference paper; 4) designing a conference poster; and 5) formally reviewing each other's work. The results of combining the theoretical component with the practical outcomes are the main focus of this article. The authors found that the students were better able to engage with the theoretical content as a result of the practical component. In turn, the practical component also enriched the students' understanding of the theoretical content, informing their class discussions and overall quality of work. The authors recommend a similar approach to any other applied ethics course, but still highlight the extensive resources required.

Keywords: Information ethics, information ethics teaching, University of Pretoria

Does open access prevent plagiarism in higher education?

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Abstract

Although plagiarism is still a thorn in the side of higher education, it is far less obscure than it was in the past, exposed largely due to web based e-publications where access, scrutiny and the use of information content is escalating. We understand plagiarism to refer to unethical behaviour that involves: “the act of taking another person's writing, conversation, song, or even idea and passing it off as your own. This includes information from web pages, books, songs, television shows, email messages, interviews, articles, artworks or any other medium” (<http://www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/plag/whatisplag.php>). The advantages of easy access and use of internet information resources have come hand-in-hand with complex dimensions of plagiarism such as ‘copy and paste’ without recognition or acknowledgement of sources of citations. However, while this scholarly menace could be concealed in the ‘print only’ environment for centuries without undue attention, in the e-publishing environment, detection of plagiarism is becoming easier. On the other hand, even in the electronic publishing environment, such detection can take a long time and be costly if e-records are not in an open access environment where they rapidly appear in the public domain upon publication.

Keywords: Open access, higher education, plagiarism, copyright, South Africa

The role of professional associations in LIS ethics education

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Abstract

It is widely recognised that fast and effective LIS services can be found in countries with, among other things, established professional library associations with strong executive committees, policy guidelines, and enforceable library and information standards. Furthermore LIS education issues, such as designing the curriculum and its implementation and evaluation, have been addressed and developed remarkably faster in such countries. Consequently, it is not mere coincidence that it is the same countries, such as the Republic of South Africa, USA, Great Britain, etc., with well-established professional associations, that are leading in LIS education in general and LIS ethics teaching in particular. Based on literature analysis, face-to-face interviews with LIS educators and administrators, and comparative case studies in the SCECSAL region, USA and England, this paper sought to examine the role of LIS professional associations in LIS education with special reference to the teaching of LIS ethics. Also examined were strategies for teaching LIS ethics, the challenges encountered, and proposed solutions to such challenges.

Keywords: LIS professional association, LIS education, LIS ethics education

Information seeking behavior in the academic environment: a study of informal sector entrepreneurship in Lagos State

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Abstract

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Traditionally, the hallmark of the academic environment has always been teaching and learning. Knowledge acquisition is often characterized with information seeking and usage. A typical academic environment consists of the academia, students, researchers, non-academics and service providers. However, some service providers, like the informal entrepreneur, comprise of individuals who engage in private, commercial business initiatives on a small scale with little income for daily survival and little or no capital for sustainability. Their jobs are not recognized as normal income services where taxes are paid, hence their informal nature. The concept of informal sector entrepreneurship is a multifarious, dynamic, social human behaviour that is recognizable in all societies. Knowledge acquisition arises (as a consequence of an information need perceived by the information user who, in order to satisfy it, makes demands upon formal or informal sources or services, resulting either in success or failure (Wilson, 1999). This implies that whether it is the formal or informal sector, academics or non-academics, scholars or students, human beings generally seek information to deal with challenges. In view of the aforementioned, this study aim to unravel the pattern of information seeking by informal sector entrepreneurs in three campuses in Lagos State, Nigeria. The influx of informal sector entrepreneurs to academic environments calls for concern, as it is likely a reflection of the economic situation of the society at large. Although the statute that sets up an academic environment does not stipulate any rule for this category of people, human sympathy does not allow them to be rejected from their sources of livelihood. Hence, this study intends to provide an insight into their information needs and seeking behaviour as regards to the sustainability of their businesses, and how they have fared thus far, although the environment that they inhabit does not recognize them as major economic contributors. Literature is reviewed on information seeking behaviour, academic environments and informal sector entrepreneurs. The following objectives were be used to guide the study: identifying the information needs of informal sector entrepreneurs in the academic environment; identifying the informal sector entrepreneur's information seeking behavior; finding how informal sector entrepreneurs use information for their business growth; ascertaining the influence of information resources provided by the academic environment on informal sector entrepreneurs; and establishing the influence of the academic environment on informal sector entrepreneurs. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Three campuses consisting of one university (University of Lagos), one polytechnic (Yaba College of Technology), and a college of education (Federal College of Education Technical), all in Lagos State, constituted the population of the study. Samples werel drawn from the informal sector entrepreneurs at the three selected campuses. Data was gathered using questionnaires and structured interviews. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and recommendations were based on the findings. It is believed that the findings werequite revealing and shall increase knowledge and provide an alternative view of the complexities of information seeking in an academic environment.

Keywords: Information seeking behavior, universities, informal sector, Lagos State, Nigeria

Information literacy programmes in selected Nairobi-based public and private universities in Kenya

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Abstract

Information literacy (IL) programmes in institutions of higher learning play an important role in providing students and academic researchers with the skills to effectively and efficiently exploit the diversity of information resources and services in academic libraries. However, the state of these programmes in both public and private universities in Kenya has not been adequately investigated to determine their degree of effectiveness. The aim of the study was to investigate the current status of information literacy (IL) in selected Nairobi-based public and private universities in Kenya, and develop a model on information literacy programmes for universities in Kenya. The specific objectives of this study were to: examine the current status of the existing information literacy initiatives in selected Nairobi-based universities; establish the structure of information literacy initiatives; examine the instructional methods used in offering the existing information literacy initiatives; establish the ways in which university library management and faculty members are involved in the implementation of information literacy initiatives; establish the major challenges facing the provision of information literacy initiatives; and develop a model of information literacy programmes for universities in Kenya. The sampled universities for the study consisted of three Nairobi-based public universities, namely the University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University (KU) and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), and five private universities, i.e. United States International University (USIU), Catholic University of East Africa (CUEA), Daystar University, Africa Nazarene University (ANU), and Strathmore University. This study was based on Jerome Seymour Bruner's (1971) theory of Discovery Learning and Christine Bruce's (1997) Seven Ways or Faces Model. The study design was both exploratory and cross-sectional. The data collection methods consisted of the survey method, key informant interviews, in-depth interviews, and observation. During the study, university librarians were interviewed as key informants, while lecturers and other library staff directly involved in information literacy initiatives were interviewed through in-depth, face-to-face interviews. First year undergraduate students (first years or freshmen) from the sampled universities were interviewed through a questionnaire. Data from the questionnaires was analyzed and presented using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. The qualitative data was analyzed and presented on the basis of the Grounded Theory approach. The findings indicate that all the sampled universities have initiated information literacy programmes with varied goals and objectives. However, most respondents indicated that the information literacy programmes should be designed to ensure that all users are literate in the use of both printed and electronic resources in the library. It is envisaged that the findings will enable public and private universities to use the information literacy model that was developed so as to benefit students to become effective users of information resources. The recommendations will inform librarians, lecturers, university administrators, curriculum planners and education administrators on the importance of information literacy in the learning process.

Keywords: Information literacy; information literacy programmes; Kenyan Universities, Nairobi

Day two- 5th September 2013

Session 4: Information Access, Information Poverty and Digital Divide, Open Access and Institutional Repositories (8:20-10:50)

It is not 'that you know' (Big Brother), but 'how much you know' (big data): an ethical reflection on the new emerging field of big data

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Abstract

Big data has become a hot topic since 2011 and refers to the ability of information technology to crush a vast amount of data and, based on predictive analytics, allow us to draw astonishing conclusions and to make well informed predictions. As a true revolution, it has profoundly changed the way we think about business, military strategies, governance, education, crime prevention and human behaviour in general. Big data also poses some serious ethical threats with respect to our right to privacy, the role of government as big brother, the responsibility of those who collect and use the data, ownership of personal and private information of people, as well as discrimination based on information. Our free will to make decisions and to determine our own future is also under serious threat with the use of predictive analytics. This paper focuses on these ethical threats in particular and attempts to provide guidelines that can be used to guide our ethical decision making with respect to the use of big data.

Keywords: Big data, ethical reflections, privacy, ethical decisions.

Privacy and public access: using Internet cafés in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Internet cafés play an essential role in bridging the digital divide in developing countries. They provide a model for overcoming infrastructural constraints to accessing Information and Communication Technologies. In Zimbabwe, five percent (5%) of Internet penetration is through Internet cafés (Chidzero, 2012). It is against this backdrop that the issue of privacy threats to patrons of the cafés becomes important. Hence, the question: to what extent is the privacy of patrons in the Internet cafés in the City of Bulawayo maintained? Privacy in online environments has been a major subject of study, especially in the West. However, the right to privacy is culturally biased, according to the view of the empiricist tradition (De Boni and Prigmore, 2002). This necessitates the need for a study that would bring about a perspective on the right to privacy in a developing country. A study of a sample, selected on a judgemental basis, of Internet cafés in the City of Bulawayo was conducted. Interviews were used to collect qualitative data, which was analysed on the basis of themes that emerged. The study results are useful for media, communication library and information science workers.

Keywords: Privacy, Internet cafés, information ethics, information access, Zimbabwe

The impact of the digital divide on the access and use of electronic information resources at Egerton University, Kenya

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Abstract

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have continued to spread globally. This has given rise to a digital divide in society, with the education sector being one of the most affected as institutions strive to incorporate ICT into the education system. The use of computers and the Internet has increased in universities and this has brought with it a myriad of opportunities as well as challenges. For example, with ever expanding information sources and information databases both online and off-line, and in their quest for accurate, relevant and appropriate information to do their assignments and conduct research, students can be faced with 'information overload'. This largely affects the students' use of electronic information resources because many students get discouraged as the exercise of searching for information consumes a considerable amount of their time, sometimes with no results. In Egerton University, the library has invested heavily in the provision of e-resources in a bid to supplement its print material. However, the e-resources remain largely underutilized. The increased gap between those who are 'information literate' and those who are 'information illiterate' in universities continues to contribute to the difference in the way that e-information resources are accessed and used. This paper presents findings of a study on the differences of the levels of information literacy among students at Egerton University, and how this has affected the way they perceive, access and use e-resources provided by the University library. The random sampling method was used on the study population, and data was collected through self-administered questionnaires from both postgraduate and undergraduate students. The data obtained was analyzed using SPSS Version 18 and presented in tables and figures. Suggestions and recommendations are provided.

Keywords: Digital divide, electronic resources, Egerton University, Kenya

Ethical Dimensions of Theoretical Framework in Qualitative and Quantitative Research and Analysis of Modernization Theory as applying

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Abstract

Ethics is a field of study that deals with bad and good human behaviour in relationship to self, others and the environment. According to Mutula (2013:28) ethics refers to well-founded standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do, usually in forms of rights obligations, benefits to society, fairness or specific virtues. To predict the relation between variables a theory is very important. Neuman (2006:74) defines a theoretical framework as a general theoretical system with assumptions, concepts and specific social theories. A theory, according to Busha and Harter (1980:13), is a set of assumptions, definitions and propositions that explain a group of observed facts or phenomena in a field or discipline. A theory has a significant role to play in research. According to Gorard and Taylor (2004), a theory can be very crucial in transferring findings to new settings and an important end-product of research findings. This paper aims at discussing ethical complexities in the application of Modernisation theory with reference to informal sector women entrepreneurs KwaZulu-Natal, by using qualitative critical analysis approach/method. Preliminary findings indicate that it is understandable that application of a theory is not free from unethical behaviour such as falsification. The paper concludes with several unanswered questions such, how much do we need to abandon in order to be modern? Can we live without modernisation? Who is in-charge of the modernisation ethics to ensure that issues like digital divide, privacy, censorship are accounted for? Can we trust them?

Keywords: Ethical dimensions; theoretical frameworks; qualitative and quantitative research; modernization theory

Session 5: Emerging Ethical Issues(11:10-13:00)

Towards effective LIS ethics curriculum in developing countries

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Abstract

The priority of teaching ethics in education in general is growing rapidly. Many schools, faculties and departments now provide general ethics programmes/courses. Equally LIS ethics education, through appropriate curricula, is gradually but steadily gathering momentum. For example, many LIS programmes in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa, as elsewhere in the world, now incorporate ethics courses and modules in their LIS curricula. The assumption is that because information is an important ingredient of political, economic, social and technological development, information ethics cannot only be taught; the LIS professionals must also be equipped with the knowledge and skills to implement ethics in the work environment. Based on Kigongo-Bukenya's PhD thesis on "LIS Optimum curriculum...", personal interviews with lecturers and students and other beneficiaries of information ethics programmes/courses, coupled with literature analyses of LIS ethics education/curricula, the paper examines the aspects of design, delivery and evaluation of an information ethics curriculum. The paper further isolates challenges encountered and the solutions to counteract such challenges.

Keywords: Information ethics, LIS Ethics curriculum, developing countries

Ethical issues and challenges in the access and use of information services in public libraries in Nigeria: A PAPA Model analysis

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Abstract

Ethics is a field of study addressing the principles of morality based on the right and wrong actions and decisions that occur within a society. Access to and the use of information services in public libraries are examined with a view to determine ethical issues that touch on copyright, social media, ICT or Web CT by using the PAPA (Privacy, Accuracy, Property and Accessibility) model, which is germane to activities concerning information access and use. This paper seeks to determine ethical issues in the access to and use of information services in public libraries in Nigeria. Besides a literature review, a survey research method was used, with questionnaire responses received from professional librarians in Nigeria. The findings of this study reveal that ethical issues in the access and use of information services in public libraries in Nigeria show recognition of the importance and challenges of privacy and accuracy of information services. We recommend that ethical issues that tie into public library information access and use should be addressed by way of legal intervention in Nigeria. Public librarians and service providers must be conscious of ownership rights and the rights of the users of information services. We recommend further interrogation of the PAPA model for analyzing information service ethics in the country.

Keywords: Ethical issues; information ethics; information access; information use; public libraries; Nigeria; PAPA model

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Electronic waste: the dumping site of the information age

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&

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Abstract

Electronic waste (e-waste) is becoming one of the leading global concerns in the information age. This article establishes e-waste as an informational ethical issue impacting on the environment as well as the health and well-being of citizens. Furthermore, it elaborates on the consequences of the e-waste problem nationally and globally. The current solutions to the e-waste problem, as implemented in other countries, are considered with specific reference to the feasibility of such solutions in South Africa. The authors gained an insight into the level of awareness of the e-waste issue, as well as the willingness and ability of future information professionals to contribute to the recycling of e-waste in the long run, through the implementation of a survey of the views of undergraduate students within the School of Information Technology. The [School of IT \(SIT\)](#) at the University of Pretoria is a unique institution for tertiary education in the field of information technology and a significant contributor to future leaders in the IT industry. Through the incorporation of primary and secondary research, the authors hope to contribute to the field of information ethical research on e-waste and develop viable and effective methods to combat the problem of e-waste in the third world through the collaboration with manufacturers and end-users³

Keywords: E-waste, information age

Ethical considerations surrounding the administration of Runyoka/Lunyoka(Fidelity Charm) in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Cases of infidelity and cheating among married couples are assumed to characterize African traditional culture. Consequently, indigenous methods have been used to address these issues that are related to immorality. One method that has been used in Zimbabwe to deal with men who prey upon other men's wives by seducing them is runyoka/lunyoka. Runyoka is an indigenous way of fencing or locking a spouse, usually wives, to prevent them from committing adultery. The study sought to explore ethical issues related to the use of runyoka/lunyoka. Using desk research and content analysis, the study identified more than 16 types of runyoka common among Zimbabwean communities. Data was gathered from the internet and from eight interviews held with middle aged and elderly women in Bulawayo and Gweru urban. While the major findings were that women were unhappy with the invasion of their privacy, there was also a violation of individual women's rights as women were under constant surveillance by their husbands. It also emerged that the culprits suffered swelling or continuous growth of private parts, perpetual erection or shrinking of manhood, vagina disappearance, died a slow and painful death, or there was a marriage breakdown, among others. The study concluded that spouses did not trust each other. However, the study recommends that married couples should give each other space for their privacy which would encourage trust within the relationship.

Keywords: Runyoka, lunyoka, indigenous knowledge, privacy, surveillance, infidelity

³ This article has been accepted for publication. Holmner, M.A & Marais, L. 2013. Electronic waste: the leading information ethical concern of the information age. *Innovation*, June, 2013.

The challenges of access and use of university library services in Uganda: some ethical dimensions

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the status of the university library and information services in Uganda and point out some ethical issues pertinent to the provision of information services and resources by university libraries. Such issues include but are not limited to copyright, plagiarism, and challenges of access to electronic information services and resources in some Ugandan university libraries, such as use of passwords and usernames, remote access, etc.. It is recognised that the scope of modern library services is quite extensive and diverse. The paper focuses on the library information services that help users locate, retrieve and access information resources, excluding ancillary library services. In order to grasp the role played by ethics in electronic library services **we define** ethics as a term, and highlight some theories that discuss ethical issues in the context of this study. In doing so, the paper briefly discusses the methods that some of the libraries are employing to address the challenges of providing services to users as they try to facilitate their utilization of information resources. Proposals are made that are deemed helpful in addressing the challenges of access and use of information services, and that may serve as a remedy against the misuse of information services and resources.

Keywords: Information access; university library services; Uganda; library services; ethical issues

Session 6: Emerging Ethical Issues 2(14:00 -16:00

Ethical effects of emerging technologies for society

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Abstract

Emerging technologies are techniques and applications used in areas such as nano-scale science and engineering (NSE), artificial intelligence, robotics, biotechnology, and allied fields. Often, these technologies are referred to as “the next revolution” in science and technology. **As the core of technologies**, emerging technologies have a significant impact on the unborn development of human beings. They play a pivotal role in the area of human health as nano-technology can be used, through infrared, to dismantle cancer tumours. Nano-technology is also used by military and other agencies for combat and espionage. The technological advancements made through the use of the World Wide Web in the production and sharing of information is perhaps the most important contribution made by nano-technology in the modern era, as information is literally at our fingertips. The latest of emerging technologies is synthetic biology, which grew from the idea of assembling living organisms wholesale from nonliving parts, an idea that has intrigued the human imagination for centuries. For some, that possibility came one step closer in May 2012 with the announcement that scientists at the J. Craig Venter Institute had created the world’s first self-replicating synthetic (human-made from chemical parts) genome in a bacterial cell of a different species. The announcement echoed across the globe as its potential benefits were gradually established in areas such as synthetic fertilizers, bio-fuels, animal and human food, and genetically modified plants and animals. While the benefits of emerging technologies are hailed as a boom to the present and future human societies, ethicists and anthropologists are quick to point out their potential harm to human society and the environment. Some concerns are that the World Wide Web has the potential to bring unwanted information to the youth and destroy young minds. Likewise, the deleterious impact of biosynthetic organisms on humans and the environment, in general, is still unpredictable. This paper shall address these concerns by discussing the effects of emerging technologies on society. The suggested solution is that ethicists should take their concerns to the scientists in the laboratories which will result in mutual education. This paper also notes that funding agencies like the National Science Foundation have been stressing that scientists and engineers should consider the social and ethical implications of their work.

Keywords: Ethical issues, emerging technologies

Critical ethical issues of e-scholarship: Experiences from a South African and Kenyan University

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Abstract

E-scholarship is increasingly popular and complex in the e-publishing environment where the preparation, publication, and dissemination of research publications continue to be confronted with new challenges. In this paper, we discuss the complexities by analyzing recent ethical dimensions of e-scholarship in relation intellectual property and copyright contractual agreements, self-archiving, open access and institutional repositories, PAPA (Privacy, accuracy, property and accessibility), and e-learning. Beyond the conceptualization of these issues through literature analysis, we have sought the opinions of purposely selected academic staff who are actively involved with e-scholarship, for their views regarding the issues and how they affect or influence their scholarship. We argue that researchers/academics are not aware of the ethical dimensions of their research publications. We use applied ethical theories and tracking models to inform our study and confirm our argument with significant certainty. The information obtained from this paper will be useful to information research and scholarship, largely within universities.

Keywords: Ethical issues, e-scholarship, Kenya, South Africa

Session 7: Research in Progress(16:10-17:00)

Students' perceptions about the Library and Information Science profession and its career opportunities

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Abstract

The prestige and reputation of Library and Information Science (LIS) decreased slightly over the past decade. This led to LIS training and education undergoing major reshuffling, with some library schools in South Africa changing their names and curricula. But recently, an increase in LIS jobs and students' enrolment has been noticed. It is not known what has caused these dramatic increases, which is why it was deemed important to determine the students' perceptions and their level of knowledge about the LIS profession and its career opportunities. This study reports on undergraduate students' perceptions in a South African LIS department. Quantitative and qualitative methods in a questionnaire were used to collect data for the study from sixty students. The students were found to have had insufficient knowledge of the LIS field when they applied to study towards the LIS degree. In many instances, LIS was not their first choice when they applied. Interestingly, as they continued with their studies, the students became more aware of the LIS field and its career opportunities. The students suggested that they were not aware of the LIS field because it is not marketed well. The study recommends that in order to improve awareness of the programme, there should be LIS career exhibitions or presentations in high schools and public and community libraries. LIS departments/schools should also keep students updated about the career opportunities available in LIS.

Keywords: LIS profession, LIS students, career opportunities

Knowledge management practices by students in the Faculty of Arts based on DIS and Department of Social Work at the University of Zululand

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Abstract

Knowledge management is not one single discipline, but rather an assimilation of various accomplishments and fields of study. Knowledge management is an official series of things that must be done in order to achieve

particular results; it involves the organization of people, processes and technologies in order to find a solution that captures knowledge and delivers it to the right people at the right time. Processes include creation, application, storage, and the transfer of knowledge (Duffy, 2001 in Geisier). The purpose of this study was to investigate knowledge management practices by students in the Faculty of Arts. Two departments were selected, namely the Departments of Social Work and Information Studies. A qualitative approach was used to collect data. Sixty students were selected from the two departments. An open ended questionnaire was distributed to the sixty students. The results indicate that in both departments, students experience the need for information for different reasons. Both departments' students used the library and computer laboratory to find information sources. They read books, magazines and databases; paid attention to lectures and used notes for the creation of knowledge; used USBs and e-mails to store and transfer knowledge; and applied their knowledge during assessments/ assignments, and when writing exams or class tests. In both departments, students appeared to be aware of where to find information sources that contained relevant information to accomplish their knowledge management practices.

Keywords: Data, information, knowledge, tacit knowledge, explicit knowledge, knowledge management

An investigation into the services offered to physically handicapped students by the University of Zululand Library

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Abstract

This study investigated the services that the University of Zululand library offers to physically handicapped students, and whether these services are utilized by physically handicapped students. The study had five objectives: 1) To investigate what services are offered by the University of Zululand library to physically handicapped students, 2) To investigate which services are frequently used by physically handicapped students, 3) To investigate what the University of Zululand library should do to encourage physically handicapped students to use their services, 4) To investigate what services physically handicapped students need, and 5) To determine what challenges the library experiences in providing services to physically handicapped students. In this study, both qualitative and quantitative data was obtained through survey questionnaires and interviews. A questionnaire was used to gather data from handicapped students, while an interview schedule was used to gather data from the librarians. Fifty handicapped students were targeted, and 47 responses were received. The findings of this study indicate that handicapped students at the university mostly rely on books, and the library does not offer services specifically tailored for physically handicapped students. It was also found that the students experienced several problems when using the library services. The findings of this study indicate that handicapped students at the university mostly rely on books, and the library does not offer services specifically tailored for physically handicapped students. It was also found that the students experienced several problems when using the library services. It was recommended that the library must offer easier access to the lifts because some handicapped students cannot climb stairs, and that the library must offer relevant services to physically-challenged students.

Keywords: Information services, physically handicapped, students, University of Zululand Library

High school information sources and their effect on first year university students' information literacy skills at the University of Zululand

*Sanelisiwe Majola
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Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate high school information sources and their effect on first year university students' information literacy skills. The objectives were: (1) To determine the information sources that are available to and used by high school learners, (2) To determine the effect of access to information sources or lack thereof on the information literacy skills of first year students at the University of Zululand, and (3) To suggest what could be done to improve access to information sources in schools and ultimately improve information literacy. The study employed mixed methodology. The research design adopted was a survey, and the population consisted of University of Zululand students. Fifty first year students were targeted for data collection using questionnaires. The

results of the study suggest that information sources in high schools have a significant effect on the information literacy skills of first year university students. The results of the study show that the information sources found in high schools have a considerable impact on first year students' information literacy skills. On the negative side, the scarcity of information sources was found to contribute to poor academic performance. This was most visible in the students' failure to use the information sources available to them, and also in their failure to choose quality information sources for their academic work. The adverse consequences of this include students dropping out of university, or students changing courses as the majority fail to complete their assessments and meet other expectations placed on them by their departments. On the positive side, those who had access in high school appeared to encounter less problems in their academic lives. The establishment of libraries in schools to cater for the students' information needs, which would ultimately introduce information searching and retrieval skills that are critical for tertiary level education. Libraries should also introduce students to working independently as opposed to relying on teachers. The study recommends: Introducing computers in high schools to furnish students with computer literacy skills. The government should work hard to reduce the gap between schools in urban areas and rural areas with respect to access to ICTs, in particular computers. The quality of materials, in particular study materials, should be improved in the schools - not only curriculum based literature but all reading material. The university should make it a point that first year students attend orientation, which should not just inform them about the university buildings, but what is most important to them, i.e. let the students know of the information sources available to them, how to access them, and their importance.

Keywords: Information sources, high school, students, information literacy, University of Zululand

Day three: 6th September 2013

Session 1: Student Workshop on Information Ethics Part 1 - Understanding Information Ethics in Africa (8:30-11:00)

Panelist: Prof. Johannes Britz,
Prof. Rafael Capurro,
Prof. Stephen Mutula and
Prof. Dennis Ocholla

Session 2: Student Workshop on Information Ethics Part 2- Information Ethics in Africa: Application(11:00 -13:00)

Panelist: Session Speakers

The scope of information ethics

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Abstract

How broad should the plane be on which the discourse on information ethics takes place? Many recent theories stemming from Information Science emphasize the role ICTs play in society. However, the broad interest and contributions other disciplines make to the understanding and the implications these events have on all spheres of our lives, calls for a larger historical framework in which the question can be approached through interdisciplinary discourse. In fact, the current trend towards interdisciplinary discourse is itself, the result of the awareness of interconnectedness and interdependence of academic disciplines. The broad interest in information calls, firstly, for a definition of information from an inclusive viewpoint and secondly, provides a platform large enough to simultaneously contain contributions from different disciplines on which this discourse can take place. Discourse, rather than prescription, should therefore become the driving component for information ethics. But first, a definition of information must be created that can come to terms with the scope of its use before an ethics can be created around it. This also requires that information should not be described as a result of certain processes, but that it should itself be seen as a non-linear process, revolving around, but also excluding several components. Gilbert Simondon's theory of "in-formation" as a dynamic triad relation consisting of a series of psycho/socio/technical individual processes provides an understanding of the term that opens possibilities for broader reflection and participation. The following paper will give an explanation of Simondon's theory as well as explore further ways for its understanding and application.

Keywords: Information ethics, information ethics theory, Simondon's theory

The adoption and diffusion of turnitin among faculty of arts academics within University of Zululand

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Abstract

This paper reports on the diffusion and adoption of Turnitin by faculty of arts academics at the University of Zululand. Turnitin is web-based anti-cheating software systems designed for tracking digital information and also checks student's assignments against database containing about 22 million papers written by students around the world, online sources and electronic archives journals (Turban & Rainer 2008: 116). Turnitin is an online plagiarism detection software that compares student's assignments and researches of academics against huge databases of information that is available online for text that matches then flagging it to analysis (Zimmerman 2012: 293). The study aimed to find out whether faculty of arts academics use Turnitin or not. Its objectives are to find its reliability and usefulness and academics' perceptions and challenges encountered when using it. A Qualitative method was used in the study. Data was collected using both open and close-ended questions. The results indicate that Turnitin serves its intended purpose of detecting similarities. However, it may not be always accurate tool and cannot be used alone in combating plagiarism for future purposes. It was also found that Turnitin as a text matching software will always catch a similar words, not necessarily as plagiarized text. The results also show that a number of respondents are aware of Turnitin, but only few respondents are active users of Turnitin. However, one participant had known about Turnitin after reading an introductory part of a questionnaire that highlights the purpose of the study before answering a questionnaire, while others they never heard about Turnitin. The paper concludes with; more training is required so as to ease access of individual and promotional or advertising of Turnitin so as to maximize its diffusion and adoption worldwide.

Key words: Plagiarism, Turnitin, Adoption and Diffusion, Academics

Information access for the disabled in South African Universities

By

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Abstract:

Millions of students across the world cannot benefit fully from traditional educational programs because they have a disability that impairs them from participating in a typical classroom environment. For these students, computer-based technologies can play an especially important role. Not only can computer technology facilitate a broader range of educational activities to meet a variety of needs of students with mild learning disorders, but adaptive technology now exists that can enable even those students with severe disabilities to become active learners in the classroom alongside their peers who do not have disabilities. This paper looks at the laws and legislation in place with regards to information access for everyone, in particular to disabled students in South African universities. The International ICT accessibility standards as well as the South African Constitution underpin the broader perspective of this paper, and hence all reviewed literature within this paper flows from these. A number of definitions are provided in an attempt to explain the terminology used within the content of this paper. The paper includes the technology and software used in popular South African universities that assist disabled students, with particular emphasis on the University of Pretoria. The paper also explores several other technologies that have been invented

and introduced to accommodate persons with disabilities. A brief conclusion offers some personal opinions of the authors.

Keywords: Information access, physically disabled, South African universities

Access to information across rural and urban areas in South Africa – Johannesburg and Nkandla

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Abstract

Equitable access to information is one of the most vital principles in the emerging global economy. Information needs are tied to the need to acquire basic resources, and when these resources (computers, electricity, libraries, etc.) are scarce, the supply of information becomes interrupted. This paper examines one aspect of Mason's PAPAS and principles of information ethics in examining access to information across rural and urban areas in South Africa, focusing on Nkandla Local municipality and the city of Johannesburg metropolitan municipality. Rural areas in South Africa are falling behind due to poor access to information which is caused by a lack of information infrastructure and resources. The main focus of the paper is information poverty, specifically the main causes and a moral reflection of information poverty on society. Information is always around, needing people only to search for and retrieve it. The problem encountered by people is their level of information literacy, with a highly negative impact on those who are not information literate. Illiteracy can be a major stumbling block in accessing information in both urban and rural areas, depending on how it is addressed. The study aimed to find out why information is not equally accessed or available in rural vs urban areas. This was done through an overview of literature on information poverty and a comparison between the level of access to information in Nkandla local municipality and the city of Johannesburg metropolitan municipality. Local and international literature was reviewed in order to gain greater insights and understanding. The local literature review included the use of progress reports, census surveys, and IDP budget reports that evaluate local developments. The research findings revealed that information is not equally accessed in rural and urban areas due to lack of electricity, lack of ICTs in rural areas, and the low level of literacy of people who dwell in rural areas.

Keywords: Access to information; ICT (Information and Communication Technology); information society; information poverty; rural community; urban community, Nkandla, Johannesburg

Poster presentation

1. Access and Use of Information Resources in the University Of Zululand Library

Mbalezinhle Kheswa

University of Zululand

2. Challenges in the Access and Use of University of Zululand Library printed materials

Mlungisi Mavimbela

University of Zululand

3. An investigation of the effectiveness of library displays in the academic library in promoting knowledge creation

Millicent Dlezi

University of Zululand

4. The Information Seeking Behavior of the Department of Information Studies Students

Zinhle Mangeni

University of Zululand

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