

*Lex Informatica 2013:*

*Cyber Law and ICT Law and Information Ethics*

# How? And Why? – Information Ethics as a supportive instrument towards ICT in Africa

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# Modern concepts of Information

## Statements:

- No definition for Information is possible because everything is information
- We now live in the Information Era (former hunters and gatherers then agricultural then industrial)
- Information Societies value information
- Information Societies create and consume information
- Understand that information became a commercial item and therefore has a commercial value
- Owning information or the conduit does not give you full property rights or control over information
- Your information becomes your identity - and your control

# General remarks

- Access to safe information and safe access to information are equally important
- Historically mainly librarians (as the 'memory of civilisation') were the managers of information – today it is a spectrum of multi disciplinary structures
- The division between rich and poor usually also reflects the status of access to information
- We need rules to guide information role players and stakeholders

# Why do we need rules?

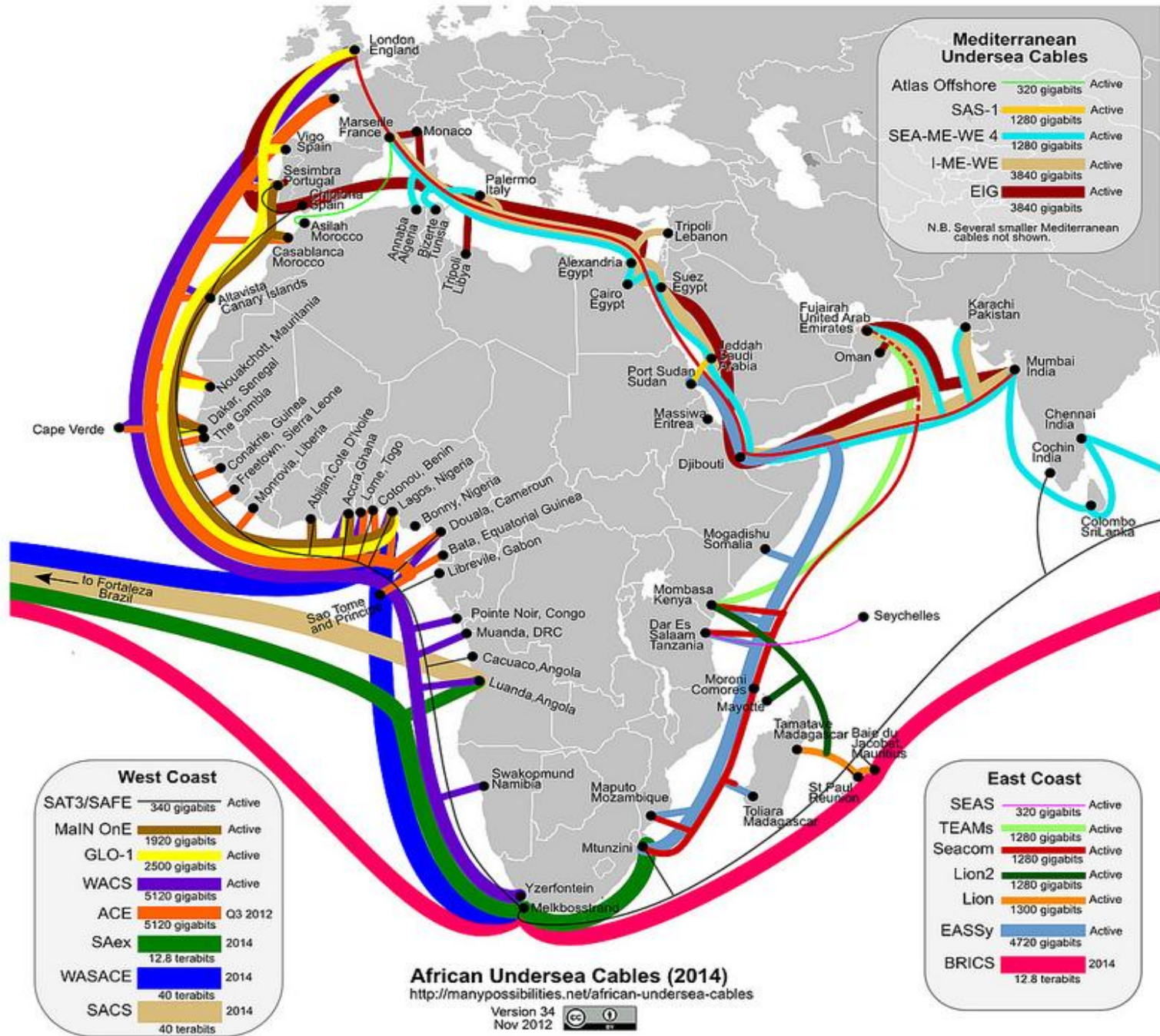
- Knowing the environment
- Predictable others
- Risk management
- Protection
- Feeling comfortable
- Confidence / trust
- Credibility of the system

# Information Ethics: Qualities of information

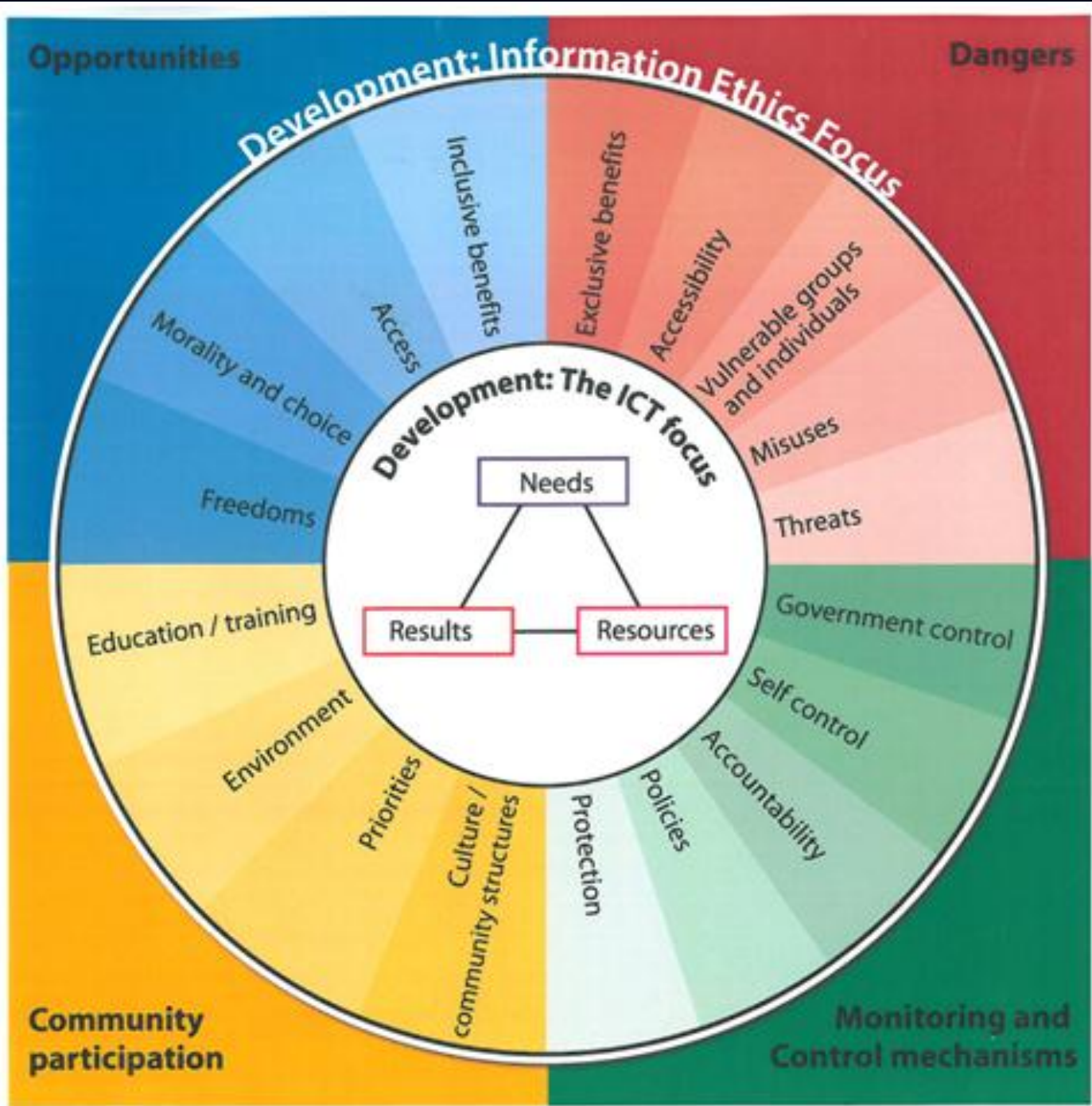
- Truth / Quality
- Availability
- Accessibility
- Usability
- Value
- Ownership
- Merged information (profiles)

# Information Practitioners *roles and responsibilities*

- Create information
- Own information
- Store information
- Merge information
- Use information
- Distribute information
- Manage information
- Destroy information









# International structures

- UNESCO
  - WSSD
  - WSIS
    - Geneva
    - Tunis
    - Paris
- Action Lines
  - Action line C 10

# African Centre of Excellence for Information Ethics (ACEIE)

- The establishment and activities of the ACEIE is based on a formal MoA between the South African Department of Communications and the University of Pretoria

# Definition of Information Ethics

Traditionally, information ethics focuses on the moral questions relating to the life cycle of information as it pertains to its generation, gathering, sharing, organization, storage, retrieval, and use. As a field it broadly examines issues related to privacy, security, access to information, intellectual freedom, quality and integrity of information, as well as intellectual property rights. In addition, the broader domain of professional ethics is of import, encompassing the ways we as professionals engage with, and respond and react to those ethical issues. The main stakeholders impacted by this array of ethical issues can be divided into three groups. These are the creators/distributors of information products and services, information mediators, including librarians, and the information users. Information and communication technology (ICT) supports the different information life cycle activities and plays a pivotal role in the shaping, understanding, and defining of information ethic.

# Main focus of the ACEIE

- promote academic research in the field of Information Ethics;
- develop tools for the practical application of ethical reasoning
- ensure that the opportunities offered by the developing Information Society are effectively utilised for socio-economic advancement and a better life for all.
- establishment an office and manage the administrative operations of the Centre
- support establishment of other Ethics Centres in Africa through the African Ethics Research Centre Network.
- convening, coordination and administration of Ethics Conferences, and follow-up implementation of the conference resolutions.
- hosting of Ethics Award Ceremonies in collaboration with other partners as determined.
- the Centre will focus on research and training in Information Ethics
- ensure research and publication of Information Ethics Journals.

# Current participating academic institutions in Africa

- University of Zululand
- University of Pretoria
- Tshwane University of Technology
- University of Zambia
- Nelson Mandela African Institute of Science and Technology
- University of Technology, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
- University of Fort Hare
- Rhodes University
- Kenya Polytechnic University College
- University of Botswana
- University of Nairobi, Kenya
- Moi University, Kenya
- Makerere University, Uganda
- University of Ibadan – Nigeria
- University of Zanzibar
- University of KwaZulu-Natal
- University of Ghana
- Uganda Christian University
- National Institute for the Deaf

# ANIE and the ACEIE

## African-based initiatives

- ANIE participated in the WSIS Forum 2010 was held from the 10 -14 May 2010 at the ITU Headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland. More information available at: [http://www.itu.int/wsis/implementation/2010/forum/geneva/ifm/ifm\\_8.html](http://www.itu.int/wsis/implementation/2010/forum/geneva/ifm/ifm_8.html) and the Information Ethics Report: [http://www.capurro.de/wsis2010\\_africa\\_infoethics.html](http://www.capurro.de/wsis2010_africa_infoethics.html)
- More information on the Africa Network for Information Ethics (ANIE) activities: <http://www.africainfoethics.org/index.html>

# The way forward

- Be aware
- Don't be scared or afraid
- Contextualise in practice
- Incorporate
- Run...very fast to keep on being part of the information society



**Thank you**