

Ethics in the Information Society: The Nine 'P's

A Discussion Paper for the
WSIS+10 Process 2013-2015

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for the WSIS+10 Process 2013-2015**



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The Globethics.net Board of Foundation discussed and acknowledged the issue paper on 5 May 2013 and invites all interested and concerned persons and institutions to discuss it and send their feedback and proposals for improvements.

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PREFACE

Information, communication and knowledge are key drivers of development in globalized, multicultural, knowledge-based societies. How can they be used in order to strengthen ethical development and avoid unethical consequences?

The “World Summit for Information Society” – WSIS – is the broadest platform for work on these issues. The “First WSIS+10 Review Event” on 25-27 February 2013 in Paris in its final statement “invites all Stakeholders to ... encourage international and interdisciplinary reflection and debate on the ethical challenges of emerging technologies and the information society.” Globethics.net as a global network of persons and specialists engaged on ethics contributes to this reflection with this discussion paper.

This text on the ethics of information and knowledge societies calls for value-based decisions and actions for the development of information, communication and knowledge. It is based on seven *core values: equity, freedom, care and compassion, participation, sharing, sustainability and responsibility*. These values are exemplified on nine core topics of the information society, the “Nine P’s”: principles, participation, people, profession, privacy, piracy, protection, power and policy.

The Globethics.net Board of Foundation acknowledged the issue paper on 5 May 2013 and invites all interested and concerned persons and institutions to discuss it and send their feedback and proposals for improvement.

Geneva, 5 May 2013

Globethics.net Foundation

Walter Fust, President of the Board

Christoph Stückelberger, Executive Director and Founder

INTRODUCTION

Ten years after more than 11,000 participants gathered in Geneva in 2003 for the opening session of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), a UNESCO meeting in Paris at the end of February 2013 met to take stock of what has been achieved since then and to set out challenges for the future.

The recommendations from this first WSIS +10 review meeting will feed into further United Nations deliberations and into the review of the Millennium Development Goals.

WSIS – which met in two sessions in Geneva (2003) and Tunis (2005) – aimed to promote access to information and knowledge through new communications technologies and to tackle the global digital divide separating the northern hemisphere from the global South. At the same time it highlighted the ethical dimensions of the Information Society, and underlined the need for measures to safeguard cultural and linguistic diversity and identity, to avoid local content being overshadowed by vested global interests.

The idea for Globethics.net was born during WSIS in 2003 by Christoph Stückelberger, then General Secretary of the development agency “Bread for all”, being an ethicist and involved in WSIS. Representatives from the global South identified the need to strengthen ethical institutions, especially in developing and transition countries, through strengthening the production and dissemination of, and access to, information and knowledge using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Bread for all needs information for all. This led to the creation of the Global Digital Library on Ethics, as well as the networking and workgroup facilities of Globethics.net.

A decade later, as UNESCO has noted, there is intense public debate over the future development of the Internet, shaped by the defence of the right to freedom of expression and freedom of information online, the growth of multilingualism on the net and the ever-increasing influence

and impact of communications technologies on all aspects of people's lives. Such issues are too important to be left to governments alone. Civil society is an indispensable part of the "ethical space" within which a global communication ethic needs to be elaborated, alongside the institutional political system of government and the institutionally orientated political society.

At the same time, research commissioned for the UNESCO meeting in Paris underlines that information ethics needs to address the challenges and implications of the information society in developing regions, particularly in terms of inter-cultural information ethics.

Globethics.net emphasises that most of the "Final Recommendations" of the first WSIS+10 Review Event in Paris on 25-27 February 2013 are relevant for the implementation of ethical values.

Globethics network with its 80'000 registered participants from 200 countries and territories can make a contribution for the WSIS+10 process 2013-2015. Globethics.net seeks to promote a truly global conversation on the Ethics in the Information Society.

1

PRINCIPLES: ETHICAL VALUES

Knowledge societies can be sustainable, coherent, innovative and integrative if they are based not only on pragmatic opportunities or political or financial interests, but on ethical values. In a globalized multicultural world these values have to be global values while at the same time respecting the diversity of contextual values.

The “Globethics.net Principles on Sharing Values across Cultures and Religions” (2009/2013) stated: “Global ethics is an inclusive approach to common binding values, guiding principles, personal attitudes and common action across cultures, religions, political and economic systems and ideologies. Global ethics is grounded in the ethical recognition of inalienable human dignity, freedom of decision, personal and social responsibility and justice. ... Global ethics identifies trans-boundary problems and contributes to their solution.

Global ethics promotes public awareness of those fundamental values and principles. They are the foundation on which the universal consensus on human rights is built. Human rights are the most tangible and legally binding expression of this ethical vision. Global ethics fosters trust among human beings and strengthens caring and action for global environmental protection.

Contextual ethics takes seriously the identity of people and institutions in their local, cultural, religious, economic and political contexts. Global ethics needs to be local and contextual in order to have an impact on individual action and social structures. On the other hand, contextual ethics becomes isolationist if it remains local and is not linked to global ethics. Contextual ethics appreciates and respects diversity in its different forms as social, political, cultural, religious, and bio-diversity. There is an enormous richness in diversity. It may decrease vulnerability and

be a source of sustainability. Contextual ethics contributes to global ethics. Together they can lead to unity in diversity. All cultures and religions can contribute to global values. ...

Global and contextual ethics are two poles that challenge each other and inseparably belong together. ... Global ethics can be abused for domination over other cultures, religions and values. Contextual ethics can be abused to defend traditional privileges or power. On a global as well as on a local level, 'power over others' tends to be oppressive, 'power with and for others' tends to be empowering and nurturing. ... "

Fundamental values for the knowledge societies are:

- *Justice/equity* is based on the inalienable human dignity of every human being and on their equality. Justice grows when people cultivate a deep respect towards each other. Fair and equal chances of access to information are a precondition for mutual understanding.
- *Freedom* of access to information, of expression, of believe and of decision is core for human dignity and human development. Freedom, equity and responsibility balance each other.
- *Care and compassion* is the ability for empathy, respect and support of the other. It leads to solidarity.
- *Participation* is the right and ability to participate in societal life and in decisions of concern.
- *Sharing* leads to, enables, and sustains relationships between human beings and strengthens communities. The ITCs enable in an extraordinary way the sharing of information and knowledge.
- *Sustainability* as long term perspective for green technologies.
- *Responsibility* is accountability for one's own actions. The level of responsibility has to correspond to the level of power, capacity and capability. Those with more resources bear greater responsibility.

All these values are interconnected and balance each other.

Questions for consideration:

- Do you share these values? Would you add or delete values?

2

PARTICIPATION: ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE FOR ALL

Access to information, communication, education and knowledge is a basic right and public good. Open access for free or for affordable costs enables participation of all in the development of societies. It has to be further promoted by the WSIS+10 processes.

The digital divide between the global North and South is narrowing, but instead there is an "access divide" to knowledge resources. Technical developments in recent years have increased bandwidth particularly in Asia but also Latin America and Africa, although there are still major discrepancies with the global North. Technology alone is not enough, however. In fact, the right to education includes the right to information, communication and knowledge. They can be seen as one human right as they are interlinked. Nevertheless, the management of knowledge resources continues to be monopolised by the global North such as through large commercial publishers, particularly in the sphere of academic journals. Increasing access to knowledge needs to go beyond promoting an information flow from North to South. The dominant model and its alternatives downplay context and local aspiration. In recent years a number of developments have used the possibilities offered by information and communication technologies to increase access to knowledge, such as open access, both through open access journals (the "gold" path) and institutional repositories (the "green path"). In several continents, there have been moves by governments to ensure that publicly-funded research must be openly accessible. While such developments may increase access for those in the global South, to what extent do they really address a knowledge divide that needs to be bridged in both directions? To what extent do such technological developments significantly increase the possibility of contributions to global knowledge dialogue

from the countries of the South, or will the South again be marginalised? Open Access journals that do not charge author fees may mitigate some of these factors, but nevertheless face questions about visibility, accessibility and reliability, while the established journal mechanisms often discriminate against journals from the South. Another move towards increasing access to knowledge has been the increasing popularity of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). However, they may also reinforce the domination of large schools in the global North.

Recommendations:

Globethics.net calls upon

- Governments and international organizations to reinforce free and fair access to knowledge for developing countries;
- Governments to include support for open access repositories in Official Development Assistance, including training and support as well as infrastructure;
- Regulators to support the development of regional hubs that index open access repositories, distinguishing between full text repositories and those offering only metadata;
- Public and private actors to develop open access and open publishing initiatives in collaboration with institutions in the global South that include global visibility, accessibility, new ranking mechanisms, building impact factor metrics and local value attribution.

Questions for consideration:

- If Open Access in future requires payment by authors or institutions, what kind of solutions and preferential treatments are to be offered for institutions in developing countries that cannot afford subscription fees and resources for publication?
- How is Open Access related to copyright issues? Do “creative commons” licences help resolve the free circulation of knowledge, or do they risk allowing knowledge production in the global South being commoditised in the North?

3

PEOPLE: COMMUNITY, IDENTITY, GENDER, GENERATION, EDUCATION

People, human beings, as senders and receivers are the key actors of information, communication and knowledge. How to filter, digest and assimilate information and knowledge? How to use them for enrichment and not confusion, for identity building and not identity-loss, for respect of diversity and not increase of uniformity, for more equality instead of more inequality? Is knowledge primarily used to win over others in very competitive markets, to oppress others or for building communities?

The knowledge society should respect six aspects:

Value-based: Societies are envisaged where persons, groups and institutions share knowledge in fairness, equity, freedom and for the benefit of caring sustainable communities: families, communities and nations which respect the rights of individuals, but also of the communities, which strengthen unity but also respect diversity of cultures, languages, worldviews, religions, economic and political systems.

People-centred: The fast innovations in ICTs make technology a main driver of development. But technology is not a goal in itself, it should serve people. Information society needs to be people-centred.

Communities and identities-oriented: ICT trends increase individualism and individual media consumptions. The needs and rights of individuals and of communities need to be balanced. The flood of information leads to constant deconstruction and reconstruction of identities and needs care in balancing change and stability and building strong identities especially of adolescent people.

Education-focussed: A key element for WSIS+10 is education in responsible use of the almost unlimited mass of information and communication. Information ethics is needed on all levels, from the producers

(see P4) to the consumers in order to deal with information in a responsible way. Awareness has to be increased that dealing with information, communication and knowledge can be as challenging as handling toxic substances or driving a powerful car. Therefore education for the ethical use and the personal transformation of such information to knowledge for the society becomes very important. Instruments are education in critical media consumption including the use of social media.

Gender-oriented: Gender equality in access to information, communication, knowledge and decision-making is an important dimension of an inclusive and people-centre society. It includes ensuring parity in women's representation in high levels and decision-making in the ICT.

Generation-sensitive: Computer literacy of older persons is important for their participation in society and for intergenerational exchange.

Recommendations

Globethics.net calls upon

- Educational institutions to increase information ethics in the curricula and examine a “driving licence” for young adults for using the information highways (already practiced in test schools);
- Educational institutions to care for ethical aspects of fast growing e-learning, distant learning and Mass Online Courses;
- Media providers and educational institutions to increase efforts to transform information into adapted and digested knowledge
- Public and private media institutions to care for cultural and lingual diversity of programmes;
- Building empowering capabilities of women and girls to use ICTs for education, formation and citizenship and for older persons in computer and internet literacy;
- Validate and include indigenous people's values and knowledge;
- Policy makers to guarantee the freedom of expression while avoiding moral harm and violation of the integrity of persons.

Questions for consideration

- On which recommendations do you agree or disagree?

4

PROFESSION: ETHICS OF INFORMATION PROFESSIONS

Professions in the fields of information, communication and knowledge creation, processing, dissemination, control, renewal, preservation, archiving and policy-making have a special ethical responsibility in implementing core values.

Journalists, librarians, archivists, teachers, bloggers, philosophers, scientists, IT hardware and software developers, curricula developers, religious leaders, social media owners, politicians and many other content professionals in information, communication and knowledge production have a great influence on private and public opinions since ever. But even more it is the case in the modern information society.

Value-based development and Human Rights require strengthening ethics and Human Rights for the *work conditions of the content professionals*. This includes: the space and freedom for value-based, corruption-free, honest journalism; the protection of information professionals who in some countries face threats to life, or are killed; the value-based vision of media-owners to support cultural, linguistic and religious diversity and views expressed and to optimize but not maximize the profits expected from media investments.

At the same time, the *content professionals* have to strengthen these values, virtues and rights *themselves* through their professional work. This includes: fair, honest, transparent, corruption-free, qualitative journalism based on integrity, independence of investigative journalism and the endeavour to seek truth; respecting integrity of people and institutions; respecting ethical benchmarks against the pressure of economic profit maximisation, audience rating and entertainment goals. Professional codes of ethics are important instruments to enhance the ethical responsibility of content providers in the information society.

Recommendations

Globethics.net calls upon

- Associations and network of professionals (e.g. journalists, publishers, librarians) to ensure the promotion and strengthening of ethical codes in the production, distribution and archiving of information, communication, and knowledge;
- Associations and network of professionals to develop and promote respective codes for consumers who become more and more also producers of media content (bloggers, citizen journalists, citizen photographers etc.)
- Governments to ensure a legal framework that offers space for corruption-free and honest journalism;
- Governments and society as a whole to protect information professionals and to take clear legal actions against killing, intimidation and other violations of the freedom of expression;
- Governments, content producers, media owners and consumers to ensure cultural, linguistic and religious diversity;
- Training institutions of media professionals to include ethics courses as mandatory in the curricula;
- Training institutions to provide training in digital safety for journalists, both off-line and online.

Questions for consideration

- On which recommendations do you agree or disagree?
- What are your experiences with professional codes of ethics and how can they be strengthened?

5 PRIVACY: DIGNITY, DATA MINING, SECURITY

Privacy is a human right, not a commercial concession. Views on privacy rights differ between the US, UK, Continental Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America and political structures. Threats to privacy are constantly arising - especially from the commercial and security sectors and social networks. Reasonable balance needs to be struck between privacy and security needs. The WSIS process should support the safeguarding of privacy, in coherence with open access to information.

The protection of privacy is a human right recognised in the UN Declaration of Human Rights Of 1948, Art. 12. It is not a concession to be granted at the whim of commercial or other interests. This has not always seemed to be so. For much of its history, humanity has lived a communal life. Privacy has been difficult - especially for those who are poor - but so have e.g. health and security. The UN System is itself a positive – albeit imperfect – response to the horrors of the Second World War. The UN has said privacy is a right. But privacy rights have to be balanced with community rights as expressed e.g. in the African Banjul Charta of Human Rights and Peoples’ Rights. They limit each other.

In the time of the British writer George Orwell, the greatest threat to individual liberties was felt to be from the state. The threat is still there, but the internet has opened up possibilities for private and state organisations to data mine huge amounts of individuals’ data and to use it for their own private and not necessarily socially beneficial ends, or simply to incompetently lose it. Because something is technically possible does not mean that it is socially desirable or legally acceptable. Books have been digitised without permission of rights owners, Street View has intruded into your neighbourhood whether you like it or not, and Facebook ‘privacy’ settings have rightly become the subject of intense criti-

cism. Mobile phone records can already easily track us electronically without our consent.

It has been argued that because X is now technically possible, so X must be actioned because it is part of inevitable human progress. This is ethically wrong – because criminal journalists can hack into telephone accounts of murdered teenagers does not make it morally or legally acceptable. It is also argued that if you have nothing to hide, you have nothing to fear. It ignores the question of principle and the fact that a certain degree of privacy and discretion rather than full-on disclosure (as per Wikileaks) is necessary for diplomacy and society to function.

Different political systems and historical experience lead to different privacy policies: North Americans are concerned about governments invading individual privacy, Europeans about enterprises controlling life, Chinese officials about uncontrolled Western individualism.

Governments must be able to protect public security. But cyber-warfare can threaten public security. Companies, in their pursuit of profit, must respect the privacy of individuals. If not, the information society becomes the surveillance society and we are on the slippery slope towards the loss of fundamental liberties. Privacy is threatened as much by private sector excess as by government action or negligence, but both must be accountable to individuals and organisations for their actions.

Recommendations

Globethics.net calls upon

- WSIS review process to demand and governments to enact and enforce reasonable privacy safeguards for their citizens;
- Companies to develop software and collecting data to ensure greater attention to the ethical dimension of business, including a genuine respect for the privacy of individuals;
- Internet intermediaries to be more transparent about requests they receive from governments for data access.

Questions for consideration

- On which recommendations do you agree or disagree?

6 PIRACY: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, CYBERCRIME

Piracy is an old problem, with a new electronic face. Piracy can be an existential threat to existing business models for innovative content creation and use. Piracy may occur because potential users see content as too expensive and rights protection as excluding the poor. Compromises are needed to take account of all stakeholder interests.

Pirates have operated since time immemorial in the lawless regions of the world. Today most pirates don't steal treasure on the high seas: they steal ideas and information electronically. It has always been possible to steal ideas and information. But with the growth of digital media and the advent of the Internet, stealing has become easier. Sometimes, it has become policy: e.g. the disregard for national laws in the global programme of digitizing books without seeking the permission of rights owners is fine example of business arrogance of a large private digitizing company, and an illustration of why ethics must go hand in hand with innovation: just because something is innovative does not make it the right thing to do.

While new technology has fuelled the intellectual property piracy problem, paradoxically it has also helped to provide solutions too. Plagiarism is now much simpler to detect with appropriate software.

Not everyone opposes the pirates' efforts to circumvent patent and copyright laws. Millions of people have, come to see free music as almost a civic right. This has declined recently as legal download sites become easier and cheaper to use, and a few delinquent downloaders have been sued for large sums. Poorer people, and the developing world, have a case when they argue that current intellectual property regimes protect rich business interests in the developed world at the expense of less well-off populations in the developing world. WIPO has at times seemed

to defend information producer interests more than promote information user interests. This is not helpful in the context of making information more freely and affordably accessible in the developing world.

The licensing of information products rather than the sale to the end user raises new questions about information ownership and the rights of individuals to transmit or bequeath digital materials. The acquisition and reuse for commercial purposes by some content curators and Internet-based companies of information and digital products submitted free-of-charge by users needs to be resisted, especially when such companies have near-monopolistic positions in the Internet economy.

At the heart of the intellectual property piracy issue is the ethical question of what should count for more: the lives of less well-off people who need access to drugs, information, etc. or the protection of world business interests and incomes of the creators and distributors of intellectual property? Piracy, if not controlled, poses an existential threat to the current business model of content producers and distributors. The challenge is to identify and chart out a middle course and implement it in an ethical and effective manner so that all stakeholders feel they have gained.

Recommendations

Globethics.net calls upon:

- WIPO and other international organizations to ensure that copyright enforcement initiatives be based on inclusive, multi-stakeholder processes that reflect transparent and accountable processes;
- Governments and other actors including UNESCO to encourage research and debate on a balanced legal system to protect intellectual property and to favour access to information for all;
- WSIS to support relaxation of patents where affordable copies of products (e.g. drugs) are essential for saving lives;
- The WSIS review process to underline the need for it to be legally possible to do digitally what can be legally done in hard copy, including an individual's right to own digital materials and to bequeath or transfer their ownership to others.

7 PROTECTION CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Through access to the Internet on computers, smartphones and tablets, young people are connecting with each other and wider society in ways that were previously unimaginable. A generation of children and young people have grown up for whom the digital world is taken for granted. Nevertheless, there are concerns that children, young people and young adults may face specific risks and hazards, including sexual exploitation, a lack of anonymity and potential addiction to online networks.

Young people and young adults who have grown up in the Information Society often feel at home in the digital world in a way that is not the case for older people. This includes young people and young adults developing their own strategies for dealing with their online existence in areas such as anonymity, sharing of personal data, and verifying information found online. Nevertheless, concerns have been raised about risks that children, young people and young adults face in the digital world. These include cyberbullying and sexual abuse, as well as the potential lack of anonymity on the Internet, confusion between individual and social identity, and the permanence of online information. There are also dangers of addiction to online games and social networks.

Developing responses mean avoiding sensationalism, mythmaking and inappropriate policy measures. There is thus a need for accurate information to better calibrate appropriate responses. So far much of the research has been undertaken only in industrialised societies.

Children, young people and young adults may be better aware of some of the risks that they face online than are adults. Effective strategies thus require their active involvement as actors in their own right to under-

stand their use of information and communication technologies, their awareness of the risks and hazards, and the strategies that they have developed to counter such risks.

Globethics.net welcomes initiatives such as “Child Online Protection” COP of ITU and partners and the “Draft African Union Convention on ... Cyber Security in Africa” In some cases related to criminal abuse, measures require rigorous offline criminal investigation measures, in which children are seen as credible witnesses. In others, risks may be dealt with through the enforcement of general measures such as transparency, the need for explicit consent in sharing of information, and the right to withdraw such consent.

Measures to protect children and young people need also to take into account their rights as set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international agreements to information, freedom of expression and association, privacy and non-discrimination.

Recommendations

Globethics.net calls upon:

- Internet and social networking providers to ensure comprehensible and accessible privacy mechanisms;
- Governments and international organisations to support research into the use of ICTs by children, young people and young adults, not only in industrialised countries;
- National authorities to ensure their investigation and enforcement mechanisms are equipped to deal with cyber-based criminality, including the exploitation and abuse of children.

Questions for consideration

- Where is the balance between measures to protect children and young adults and affirming their rights to participate fully in the information society, including freedom of information/expression?
- Where is the balance between legislative measures to protect children and young adults online and the restrictive measures that impinge on their rights to free expression and information online?

8

POWER:

ECONOMIC POWER OF TECHNOLOGY, MEDIA AND CONSUMERS

The production, processing, dissemination, control and archiving of information, communication and knowledge need political power to set the legal frame and economic power to provide the necessary investment capital. Political and economic power should not be power over others, but sharing power with others and using it for others as a service to human beings, the whole society and public governance.

The value chain and number of suppliers in the production, processing, dissemination, control and archiving of information, communication and knowledge is very long, complex and global. The products - information, communication and knowledge - with its far reaching impact on human beings and society are services with a different quality and ethical importance than daily commodities and products such as shoes or clothes because of its high impact on behaviour, mentalities, ideologies, world views, identities, cultures, economic and political developments.

The free market together with a political regulatory framework and informed consumers can provide the necessary innovative dynamics. But the ethical responsibility of political regulators and economic investors are higher in this sector than for other commodities.

Key actors are the investors in and managers of companies and institutions for information, communication and knowledge, the politicians and associations as regulators as well as the consumers. All these actors have their specific responsibilities in using their entrusted power. The larger the power, the higher are the responsibilities and accountability.

Globethics.net in its “Principles of Sharing Values” stated: On global as well as on regional, national and local level, “‘power over others’ tends

to be oppressive, ‘power with and for others’ tends to be empowering and nurturing. Power as ‘power from’ (e.g. power from God, from the people through election) can be abused to justify oppressive power. It can also be used responsibly as an empowering power, serving the needs of the needy.” And “Also global ethics can be abused for domination over other cultures, religions and values. Contextual ethics can be abused to defend traditional privileges or power. Both can be used to serve people and their needs.”

The profits expected from media and educational investments should be optimized but not maximized. Profit is not a goal in itself, but a means to provide these services for the sustainability development goals.

Consumers have their own responsibility in selecting information, communication and knowledge products and paying fair prices for them.

Recommendations

Globethics.net calls upon

- Investors and relevant organizations to pay due heed to the values and standards of socially responsible investments (SRI) in all investments relating to information and communication technologies;
- Media owners and other relevant private-sector enterprises to ensure that their involvement in and strategy of information and communication companies is based on ethical values and responsibility for the specific impact of the sector for society;
- Politicians and other regulators to base media regulations on the values of freedom, equal access, peoples’ participation, respect of diversity and sustainable development;
- Producers and consumers of information, communication and knowledge content to use their respective power to promote ethics in information society.

Questions for consideration

- On which recommendations do you agree or disagree?
- How can economic and political power related to ICTs be used as a service for the information and knowledge society?

9

POLICY: ETHICS OF REGULATION AND FREEDOM

Parliaments, governments, civil society and educated citizens are needed to ensure that regulatory measures support freedom of expression, freedom of association in information and communication technologies and the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. Fast technological development, ethical standards and regulatory framework have to be more synchronized.

Information and communication technologies are not just an expression of a globalising world, they are also the foundations on which globalisation has been built, including its economic, cultural or political aspects. In Geneva in 2003, WSIS highlighted the “Ethical Dimensions of the Information Society”: the need to uphold fundamental values, respect human rights and the fundamental freedoms of others, while dealing with the “abusive uses” of Information and Communication Technologies, through illegal and illicit actions. Such ethical questions raise the issues of regulation and regulatory frameworks. The ethical challenges transcend the “abusive uses” of ICTs, however, encompassing issues such as access to information and knowledge, capacity building, cultural and linguistic diversity, identity, local content and media pluralism.

The global nature of ICTs suggests that a global approach is required. Yet while global decision-making structures in international fora may be able to deal with issues of technical standards, they are often not adapted to dealing with the ethical challenges of the information society. International regulatory agreements are subject to negotiations between governments that might have very different ideas about what constitute, for example, “illegal and illicit actions” or pluralism and diversity. Large

transnational corporations may *de facto* exercise greater influence than elected governments in developing policy and regulatory frameworks.

In this context, parliaments, governments and strong civil society organizations need to exercise their respective roles in promoting and protecting communication rights, including the right for all to engage in transparent, informed and democratic debate.

There is a balance to be faced between Internet freedom, which may risk exacerbating inequity and unequal access, and promoting an equity of access that requires regulation. The current regulatory structure for information and communication technologies risks favouring economic and commercial deregulation to the detriment of the wider interest of communities and the public commons.

Recommendations

Globethics.net calls upon

- The United Nations in the WSIS+10 review process to reaffirm the foundational principles of the Information Society (Universal Declaration of Human Rights; freedom of expression and of association, “seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”), and for civil society organizations to remain vigilant about any threats to such principles;
- UN instruments to promote the regulation and freedom of the cybersphere, including a UN Rapporteur on Human Rights and Internet;
- International regulatory bodies for the information society including the ITU and the Internet Governance Forum to ensure a multi-stakeholder approach based on transparency, accountability and representativeness, to encompass the activities of transnational corporations, to address net neutrality and inequalities in Internet access.

Questions for consideration:

- What is the balance between Internet freedom with the risk of unequal access, and regulations in order to promote equity of access?
- How may inclusivity, transparency, representativeness and empowerment best be ensured in ICT regulation and internet governance?

The following text is a draft proposal. It is submitted to the International Telecommunication Union ITU by Globethics.net for consideration (to be replaced by the final text).

[ITU AND] GLOBETHICS.NET: INTERNATIONAL CALL FOR ETHICS IN THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

Presented at the WSIS FORUM, GENEVA, May 13th-17th 2013

We, experts in the Information Society field, meeting regularly since the preparatory Conference of the Information Society Summit in 2003, having reflected in depth during the annual forums since then, launch with this document an international call for the inclusion of an ethical dimension as a fundamental pillar of the Information Society post-2015.

Considering that the WSIS process from 2003 has provided a catalyst for forward movement with the Millennium Development Objectives (MDOs) and their realisation in 2015, notably as regards the use of ICT in the education, health and environment sectors

Considering particularly the report of UNESCO in 2007 on the ethical implications of emerging technologies, and the multilateral conventions of UNESCO

Considering further that the outcome of the WSIS Forum in 2013 will determine the process for the future, that the recommendations and the Action Plan of UNCTAD for 2012 is considered a goal for the Information Society process and that the Action Plan of UNCTAD for 2016 will define the outcome of WSIS+10

Recalling that the engagement of UNDP in the environmental field will be completed by the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005 – 2015 with its 4 biannual sessions in Geneva

Aware that the primary role that cities play in governance including access to the internet

Aware in particular that diversities and their promotion are strategic issues for social harmony, public health and food security

Further aware that the contribution of information, communication and knowledge to technological innovation and the ethics of society are substantial

Welcoming the collaboration of ITU with the International Organisations implicit in the ethical information society process

Especially encourage the contributions of non-State actors in hatching creative and innovative talent, which will constitute an enriching element to WSIS

Underline that the WSIS Information Society process is a fundamental instrument for reaching sustainable development objectives

Recommend and request

- that the principles of an ethical information society should be elaborated by experts under the egis of the International Organisations concerned;
- that free and fair access to information (open repositories) should be reinforced above all in favour of developing countries
- that ethical codes and legal regulations of professions involved in the production, distribution and archiving of information, communication and knowledge be promoted and reinforced
- that educational programmes promoting the responsible use of information and communication tools are reinforced
- that ethics must be systematically included as an essential topic in academic research, training and education, notably in the fields of

internet technology, and professional training in the content of information

- that gender analysis and principles are fully integrated in WSIS related strategies and facilitate their implementation
- that investors and relevant organisations pay due heed to the values and standards of socially responsible investments (SRI) in all investments relating to technology and information and communication media
- that enterprises in the private sector, including small and medium enterprises, take initiatives for the introduction of ethics into the information society
- that cultural, linguistic and religious diversity be preserved as an expression of the diversity of ethical values and as a fundamental human right
- that the future governance of the internet be based on ethical values such as equity and inclusion
- that the UN General Assembly formally announces an International Ethical Information Society Year
- that UN Member States announce regional and national Ethical Information Society Days

Request the United Nations and the International Institutions to cooperate and take the lead to ensure the effective implementation of this call for action

Encourage the implementation of this call as a contribution to the realisation of Johannesburg + 15 in 2017 through the adoption of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

SOURCES

- Globethics.net: *Principles of Sharing Values across Cultures and Religions*. Geneva 2012, www.globethics.net/web/ge/texts-series (accessed 20 April 2013)
- *Ethics of Information and Communication Technologies*, European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies to the European Commission, Opinion No. 26, Brussels, 2012 website (accessed 20 April 2013)
- *Final Statement. Information and knowledge for all. An expanded vision and a renewed commitment*, First WSIS+10 Review Event in Paris on 25-27 February 2013, http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/wsis/WSIS_10_Event/wsis10_final_statement_en.pdf (accessed 20 April 2013)
- *Final Recommendations* of the First WSIS+10 Review Event in Paris on 25-27 February 2013, http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/wsis/WSIS_10_Event/wsis10_recommendations_en.pdf (accessed 20 April 2013)
- Child Safety Online: Global challenges and strategies, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2012, http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/ict_techreport3_eng.pdf (accessed 6 May 2013)



Globethics.net is a worldwide ethics network based in Geneva, with an international Board of Foundation of eminent persons, 70,000 participants from 200 countries and regional and national programmes. Globethics.net provides services especially for people in Africa, Asia and Latin-America in order to contribute to more equal access to knowledge resources in the field of applied ethics and to make the voices from the Global South more visible and audible in the global discourse. It provides an electronic platform for dialogue, reflection and action. Its central instrument is the internet site www.globethics.net.

Globethics.net has four objectives:

Library: Free Access to Online Documents

In order to ensure access to knowledge resources in applied ethics, Globethics.net offers its *Globethics.net Library*, the leading global digital library on ethics with over 1 million full text documents for free download. A second library on Theology and Ecumenism was added and a third library on African Law and Governance is in preparation and will be launched in 2013.

Network: Global Online Community

The registered participants form a global community of people interested in or specialists in ethics. It offers participants on its website the opportunity to contribute to forum, to upload articles and to join or form electronic working groups for purposes of networking or collaborative international research.

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Globethics.net registered participants can join or build online research groups on all topics of their interest whereas Globethics.net Head Office in Geneva concentrates on six research topics: *Business/Economic Ethics, Interreligious Ethics, Responsible Leadership, Environmental Ethics, Health Ethics and Ethics of Science and Technology*. The results produced through the working groups and research finds their way into *online collections* and *publications* in four series (see publications list) which can also be downloaded for free.

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Globethics.net offers services such as the Global Ethics Forum, an international conference on business ethics, customized certification and educational projects, and consultancy on request in a multicultural and multilingual context.

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Globethics.net Publications

All volumes can be downloaded for free as pdfs from the Globethics.net library and at www.globethics.net/publications. Print copies can be ordered at infoweb@globethics.net. Prices are in CHF/USD, differentiated between low and middle income countries (S=South) and high income countries (N=North)

The Editor of the different Series of Globethics.net Publications is Prof. Dr. Christoph Stückelberger, Founder and Executive Director of Globethics.net in Geneva and Professor of Ethics at the University of Basel/Switzerland.

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Globethics.net Global

Books on ethical issues with global relevance and contextual perspectives. Each volume includes contributions from at least two continents and with two editors, often one from the global South and one from the global North.

- 1 Christoph Stückelberger / Jesse N.K. Mugambi (eds.), *Responsible Leadership. Global and Contextual Perspectives*, 376pp, 2007, 13.-S/ 25.-N.
- 2 Heidi Hadsell / Christoph Stückelberger (eds.), *Overcoming Fundamentalism. Ethical Responses from Five Continents*, 212pp, 2009, 10.-S/ 20.-N.
- 3 Christoph Stückelberger / Reinhold Bernhardt (eds.): *Calvin Global. How Faith Influences Societies*, 258pp, 2009, 10.-S/ 20. - N.
- 4 Ariane Hentsch Cisneros / Shanta Premawardhana (eds.), *Sharing Values. A Hermeneutics for Global Ethics*, 418pp, 2010, 13. - S/ 25. - N.
- 5 Deon Rossouw / Christoph Stückelberger (eds.), *Global Survey of Business Ethics in Training, Teaching and Research*, 404pp, 2012, 13.-S./ 25.-N
- 6 Carol Cosgrove Sacks/ Paul H. Dembinski (eds.), *Trust and Ethics in Finance. Innovative Ideas from the Robin Cosgrove Prize*, 380pp, 2012,

Globethics.net Focus

Each volume is focused on one actual ethical issue with global relevance, normally from one author.

- 1 Christoph Stückelberger, *Das Menschenrecht auf Nahrung und Wasser. Eine ethische Priorität*, 80pp, 2009,5.-S/ 10.-N.
- 2 Christoph Stückelberger, *Corruption-Free Churches are Possible. Experiences, Values, Solutions*, 278pp, 2010, 10.-S/20.-N.
- 3 Vincent Mbavu Muhindo, *La République Démocratique du Congo en panne. Un bilan 50 ans après l'indépendance*, 380pp, 2011, 13.-S/25.-N.
- 4 *The Value of Values in Business. Global Ethics Forum 2011 Report and Recommendations*, 90pp, 2011, 5.-S/10.-N.
- 5 Benoît Girardin, *Ethics in Politics: Why it matters more than ever and how it can make a difference*, 172pp, 2012, 8.-S/15.-N.

- 6 Siti Syamsiyatun / Ferry Muhammadsyah Siregar (eds.), *Etika Islam dan Problematika Sosial di Indonesia*, 252pp, 2013. (Articles on Islamic ethics from paper competition, in Indonesian and English), 10.-S/20.-N.
- 7 Siti Syamsiyatun / Nihayatul Wafiroh (eds.), *Filsafat, Etika, Dan Kearifan Local Untuk Konstruksi Moral Kebangsaan*, 224pp, 2013 (articles on Indonesian ethics from paper competition, in Indonesian and English), 10 S/20 N
- 8 Aidan Msafiri, *Globalisation of Concern II. Essays on Education, Health, Climate Change, and Cyberspace*, 140pp, 2012, 8.-S/15.-N.
- 9 Willem A Landman, *End-of-Life Decisions, Ethics and the Law*, 136pp, 2012, 8.-S/15.-N.
- 10 *Seeds for Successful Transformation. Global Ethics Forum 2012 Report. Outcomes and Next Steps 2012-2014*, 112pp, 2012, 6.-S/ 10.-N.
- 11 Corneille Ntamwenge, *Éthique des affaires au Congo. Tisser une culture d'intégrité par le Code de Conduite des Affaires en RD Congo*, 2012, 5.-S/10.-N.
- 12 Kitoka Moke Mutondo / Bosco Muchukiwa, *Montée de l'Islam au Sud-Kivu: opportunité ou menace à la paix sociale. Perspectives du dialogue islamo-chrétien en RD Congo*, 48pp, 2012, 5.-S/10.-N.

Globethics.net Texts

Short declarations and guidelines, some of them adopted by the International Board of Globethics.net Foundation.

- 1 *Principles on Sharing Values across Cultures and Religions*, 20pp, 2012. Available in English, French, Spanish, German, Chinese, Indonesian, Persian. Other languages in preparation, 10.-S/15.-N. for 5 copies.
- 2 *Ethics in Politics. Why it matters more than ever and how it can make a difference. A Declaration*, 8pp, 2012. Available in English and French,
- 3 *Ethics in the Information Society. The Nine 'P's. A discussion paper for the WSIS+10 Process 2013-2015*, 2013, 34pp.

Globethics.net Theses

Publication of doctoral theses on ethics with a focus on the Global South.

- 1 Kitoka Moke Mutondo, *Eglise, Protection des Droits de l'Homme et Refondation de l'Etat en République Démocratique du Congo: Essai d'une éthique politique engagée*, 412pp, 2012, 13.-S/25.-N.
- 2 Ange Sankieme Lusanga, *Ethique de la migration. La valeur de la justice comme base pour une migration dans l'Union Européenne et la Suisse*, 358pp, 2012, 13.-S/25.-N.
- 3 Nyembo Imbanga, *Parler en langues ou parler d'autres langues. Approche exégétique des Actes des Apôtres*, 356pp, 2012, 13.-S/25.-N.
- 4 Njojo Kahwa : *Ethique de la non-violence. Etudes sur Jésus selon les évangiles*, 596pp, 2013, 30.-

www.globethics.net/publications



Ethics in the Information Society: The Nine 'P's

A Discussion Paper for the WSIS+10 Process 2013-2015

The global ethics network Globethics.net calls in this discussion paper for value-based decisions and actions for the development of information, communication and knowledge. It is based on seven core values: equity, freedom, care and compassion, participation, sharing, sustainability and responsibility. These values are exemplified on nine core topics of the information and knowledge society, the "Nine P's": principles, participation, people, profession, privacy, piracy, protection, power and policy.

The Globethics.net Board of Foundation discussed and acknowledged the issue paper on 5 May 2013. Globethics.net invites all interested and concerned persons and institutions to discuss it and send their feedback and proposals for improvements to the Executive Director Christoph Stückelberger: stueckelberger@globethics.net.
Website: www.globethics.net.