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COAL CITY LIBRARIES

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Edited by

Dr (Mrs.) N. E. E. Achebe

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COAL CITY LIBRARIES

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Contributions to the ***Coal City Libraries*** should not be more than 5,000 words. They should be typed in triplicates, double – spaced on one side only of A4 papers. Footnotes should be avoided. The author's name, position and place of work should be indicated. Diagrams and tables should be drawn in Indian ink on smooth white paper in such proportions that they can be reduced to a page measuring $7\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ or half that size. References and notes should be grouped at the end of article in the following order; for periodicals; author (s) date, title, unabbreviated journals' name, volume number, issue number and pagination e.g.

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Each article should include an information abstract of 100 words or less. *Opinions expressed in article published in this journal are those of authors.* Materials appearing in the journal must not be reprinted in whole or part without permission in writing from the editor *Coal City Libraries*.

AIM AND SCOPE

Coal City Libraries provides a forum for librarians, archivist, documentalists, information scientists and other information professionals in Nigeria, Africa and indeed other countries of the world to report their research findings. Emphasis is on Nigeria. We expect that distinguished scholars will find this journal useful.

MISSION

To provide a regular and sustainable basis for diverse scholarly views on research in the areas of library, Archival, Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Information Science.

VISION

To remain a source of inspiration to other libraries.

EDITORIAL

Since the debut of ***Coal City Libraries*** as a potent journal in library and information science, it has continued to be inundated with highly researched articles for publication. One clear justification for this is perhaps the journal's accepted high standard and preference for empirical studies and well researched opinion papers.

In this fourth issue, **Coal City Libraries** presents interdisciplinary articles to further enrich your knowledge power. First is Application of School Library Standards in Imo State. Next is Achebe's paper on 'Usability Index of Women Studies Journal Among Women Academics in University of Nigeria'. This is followed by a study on Environmental Health Hazard and Community Information Services in Bosso, Minna, Niger State by Babalola, G. A. Fourth is WSIS: Origin, Characteristics and Implication for Information Managers by Idiegbeyan – Ose, J, Eruanga E. C., Okosun E. H., and Falaiye Z. M. This is followed by Audu, C. D. on User Education Programme in Colleges of Education in Plateau and Nasarawa States of Nigeria. Dr Ononogbo examined the sustainability of NEEDS and the Information Dimension as an economic reform policy. Finally we present Julna Ndor's study titled, Electronic Library: The University of Jos Library Scenario.

We hope that these multi-dimensional papers offered by ***Coal City Libraries*** will enrich and enhance reading, research and publication interests of the readers.

While we acknowledge with gratitude the immense contribution of our guild of editors whose wealth of knowledge and professional experience will remain invaluable to our teeming readers.

Interested contributors should send their articles and book reviews for publication in the next volume

Thank you.

Dr. Nancy Achebe
Editor-in-Chief

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WSIS: ORIGIN, CHARACTERISTICS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR INFORMATION MANAGERS

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Abstract
The phenomenon of a changing society is taking place regardless of its size, state of development or political philosophy. To this end, the paper has examined the origin and causes of Information Society and described in details the characteristics of Information Societies by grouping them into economical, political and technological resources. It also gives an overview of WSIS, "World Summit on the Information Society" and how the summit has placed "Information" over "Communication" in having primary importance. The paper concluded that WSIS recommended ICTs for National and International development and hence there is need for all involved to develop the "Information Society".

Keywords: *Information Society, World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)*

INTRODUCTION

WSIS is an acronym for World Summit on the Information Society. The growing importance of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in human societies is undoubtedly one of the defining features of our present-day world. ICTs have become incorporated into all levels of human organizational endeaviours, and have had a large impact on the ways man communicates. The most recent example of an ICT transformative power over the last decade has been the development of the Internet and World Wide Web (WWW).

The prominence of information in today's society has led various scholars and leaders to claim that we now live in a new "Information Society," a society where information dominates new modes of social organization. This movement to a new

society is by no means a claim without debate. However, the shift to an Information Society has been framed by some in the context of 'continuity vs. discontinuity' (Schement and Lievrouw, 1986). In other words, debate exists between the notion of an Information Society that is a fundamentally new form of social organization, or is just a continuation of previous modes of social organization. The continuity/discontinuity argument, further articulated in the work of Webster (2002) is an important one. This importance stems from the fact that the continuity/discontinuity argument opens up a whole new area of critical discourse on the Information Society concept.

This distinction in thinking over the creation of an Information Society is not quite a simple one. However, a wide difference in thought exists within each camp, as different theorists place varying degrees of importance on information technologies and activities in shaping the modern world. In addition, theorists are approaching the growing information in the society from various disciplines such as economics, sociology, and communication, thus affecting how they view this societal transformation. Webster (2002) further elaborates on this distinction in Information Society theory by seeing it as a separation between those who endorse the idea of an information society, and those who regard informatization as a continuation of pre-established relations. Some of the major theoretical schools that advocate a new form of society are post-industrialism, postmodernism, flexible specialization, and the informationalmode of development (Webster, 2002). The other side of the debate that stresses continuity of established relations are theories of neo-Marxism, flexible accumulation, reflexive modernization, and the public sphere (Webster, 2002). All these theories provide a context for the understanding of the information revolution happening in today's world.

In the case of WSIS, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has taken the lead in organizing the Summit, and has placed "information" over "communication" in having primary importance. WSIS can thus be seen as a movement away from an international community focus on communication, to a focus on information. In addition, WSIS is a much larger and more ambitious project, as it is the first major summit of its kind dealing solely with issues of information. (Webster, 2002)

INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION (ITU)

The ITU is currently the most inclusive international ICT governance forum, including country governments, private sector and civil society organization in its membership (MacLean, 2003). The ITU also has the widest range of ICT governance functions for an international organization, including regulation of satellite orbital positions and regulation of the radio frequency spectrum (MacLean, 2003). In the theoretical framework of international regime theory, the ITU also has been the basis for the formation of a highly successful international telecommunications regime (Cogburn, 2003). The ITU's move to sponsor WSIS can be seen as a chance for it to influence debate on a wider set of issues regarding ICTs and development. Transformation in the world, in terms of globalization and the growing awareness of an infrastructural/Global Information Society (GII/GIS) regime is taking place (Cogburn, 2003) It appears that the

ITU is using WSIS as part of an ongoing effort to define a new information regime, and to give it a new relevance in a rapidly globalizing and information intensive world.

ORIGIN AND CAUSES OF INFORMATION SOCIETY

The origin and causes of information society rely on two interrelated developments: *long-term economic development and technological change.*

The structure of economics changes, when this happens, it begins with a reliance on the primary sector: agriculture, forestry and mining. Gradually, the secondary sector – manufacturing industry becomes more important, contributing a larger proportion of Gross Domestic Product and usually also contributing to exports. The rise of the secondary sector is then followed by an expansion of the tertiary sector. The commercial and service sector grows and makes a greater contribution to the national income.

At each stage in this progression, the productivity of labour grows, more value is added by each worker, capital investment increases and the economy expands. Just as significantly important as the different sectors of the economy, changes do occur and the effect of this is shown quite clearly in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s Human Development Report (1994). This shows that in economies as diverse as Singapore or Senegal, Hong Kong or Hungary, the service sector accounts for more than 60% of the nation's economic activity. Even in the world's least developed economics, the share of the service sector (43%) is higher than agriculture (37%) or industry (20%) (UNDP,1994).

These changes have been taking place through-out the world for the last thousand years. Over the last fifty years, however, as economists like Fritz Machlup, Mare Uri Porat and Daniel Bell (WSIS.htm, 2006) have shown that the tertiary or service sector has become ever more concerned with processing information in different forms. Technological change is a major contributor to this process of economic development.

Certainly in recent years, the rapid development of information and communication technologies has vastly increased our capacity to process information and in so doing has undoubtedly accelerated growth in the information-intensive tertiary sector. What this means is that as many people depend heavily on information, a new social class, 'information dynasty is created. Although some economists may argue against this, it is possible to have a short-term economic cycle that is equally a period of sustained economic growth triggered by technological change. For instance, the development of steam power can be argued to trigger the expansion of economics in Europe and America during the Industrial Revolution. Electricity and the internal combustion engine accounted for the dramatic economic expansion during the mid-twentieth century. And now we have information and communication technologies.

Purpose of the Paper

The general purpose is to examine the origin and purpose of WSIS. The specific purpose is to indicate the origin, purpose and characteristics of WSIS with a view to analyzing its impact in societies.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF INFORMATION SOCIETIES

Information societies have three main characteristics. First, information is used as an economic resource. Organizations make greater use of information to increase their efficiency, to stimulate innovation and to increase their effectiveness and competitive position, often through improvements in the quality of the goods and services that they produce. There is also a trend towards the development of more information-intensive organizations that add greater amount of value and thus benefits a country's overall economy.

Secondly, it is possible to identify greater use of information among the general public. People use information more intensively in their activities as consumers: to inform their choices between different products, to explore their entitlements to public services, and to take greater control over their own lives. They also use information as citizens to exercise their civil rights and responsibilities. In addition, information systems are being developed such that will greatly extend public access to educational and cultural provision.

The third characteristics of information societies is the development of an information sector within the economy. The function of the information sector is to satisfy the general demand for information facilities and services. A significant part of the sector is concerned with the technological infrastructure: the networks of telecommunications and computers. Increasingly, however, the necessity is also being recognized to develop the industry generating the information content providers. In nearly all information societies, this information sector is growing much faster than the overall economy. The International Telecommunications Union (ITC) estimated that in 1994 the global information sector grew by over 5% while the overall world economy grew by less than 3%.

The creation of individual information societies is taking place within a much greater, international process of change. Partly, because the developing information systems are global, or at least international, in their reach; and the satellite broadcasting systems do not recognize national boundaries. Telecommunication networks provide connections between countries and continents as in the case of which the Internet is perhaps the ultimate example of a global system that supply information without boundary limitation.

Both developed and developing countries are being transformed into information societies. Most of them are concerned about how to use information to improve their relative competitiveness or, at least, to retain their position in an increasingly competitive global market. As part of this, countries of the world, from Australia to Zimbabwe, are actively developing their local information industries so as to participate in the growing international trade. The development of information societies represents a series of attempts to achieve more general economic and social advance. Countries as diverse as Singapore, Sweden and South Africa are building economies that encourage information-intensive companies. They are creating information systems that will raise levels of education, strengthen community links and stimulate public participation in decision-

making.

There is a concern, however, that the shift towards information societies will increase the gap between the developed and the developing countries. To counter this, the World Bank has recently launched its Information for Development Initiative.

The impact of this information initiative can be described from three points of view. First, it is ICT base, it can be applied in a wide range of circumstances and can itself contribute to further technological change. Second, the capacity of the technology can help to increase production or services at an exponential rate without a sign of slowing down. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, it can influence the cost of technology to fall rapidly to a level an ordinary man on the street can purchase a piece of the equipment. These three factors have led an economist like Freeman (2003) to reason that information and communication technologies will trigger a new long wave of economic growth stimulating the development of information societies.

IMPLICATIONS OF WSIS FOR INFORMATION MANAGERS AND THE SOCIETY

Information Managers such as Librarians, Archivists, Statisticians, Teachers and Journalists have a specific responsibility to serve the public interest in providing people with authentic, accurate and unbiased information essential to democratic participation. In so doing, the information managers are decisively contributing to people's educational, political and cultural development. In this sense, quality information should be considered as public goods, and therefore, accessible and affordable for everybody. Such a vibrant and rich public goods are is an essential element for the growth of the information society.

Librarians are key actors in providing unhindered access to essential information resources for economic, political and cultural advancement, thus they contribute to the development of the information society. Archivists guarantee the authenticity and integrity of information. They encourage the reconstruction of the past and help the society to better deal with the problems of the present and future, thereby helping in the development of the information society. The journalists are in a position to provide citizen with unbiased information and plurality of opinions for democratic participation thereby helping to develop the information society.

Information managers should support and extend the existing global network of library and information services to make available the preserved knowledge and cultural heritage, to provide information access points and to develop the 21st century illiterates. These are essential to the realization of the information society.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

ICTs have the potential to do away with many human problems and sufferings. This is hardly the case; however, if ICTs are used as one part of a holistic strategy of poverty alleviation. WSIS acknowledges that ICTs are set of tools in development. However, the

impression created by the proponents of *Information Society* is that ICTs, if only implemented properly, will transform the world and bring peace and prosperity. If these were only that simple and possible.

The effect of WSIS in terms of addressing the *digital divide* is based on how the national government and other parastatals respond to its recommendations. WSIS has made a positive step in raising the profile of ICTs in both the developed and developing countries, but its simplistic, technologically deterministic framing of the Information Society and global digital divide debates may have negative consequences down the road.

On the whole the recommendation is for everybody whether ICT user or not in both the developed and developing countries to join hands to patronize emerging information technology. Whether they present as cell phones, computers, fax machine or satellite cable. Every country should develop and sustain their own information society by so doing, this little drop of water can make an ocean.

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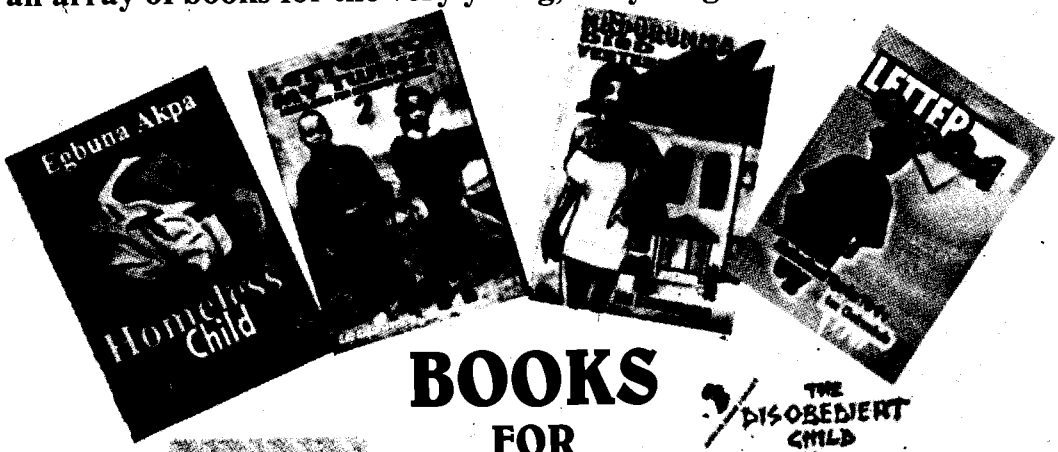

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