



Session Outcome Document

WSIS Action Line C3 – Access to Information and Knowledge

UNESCO

29 May 2024, 11-11:45 CEST

<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2024/Agenda/Session/220>

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

- Key challenges and issues:
 - Private vs public access and their complementarity
 - Role of libraries and impact of emerging technologies for professionals and audience
 - Relation with other rights, such as freedom of expression, data privacy and safety
 - Measurement, availability of quality data is essential, but not sufficient
 - Need for standards and tools to ensure information remains accessible over time
 - Importance of multilingualism

Towards WSIS+20 and WSIS beyond 2025, please share your views on the emerging trends, challenges, achievements, and opportunities in the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines to date (5-8 bullets)

Achievements:

- Advancements in legal frameworks, digital technologies, and capacity-building initiatives that have expanded access to information globally.
- Importance of digital connectivity and the free flow of, and access to, information as a vital means to support an open international community that upholds stability, security, rule of law, prosperity, and promotes sustainable development.

Key Challenges:

- Persistent barriers such as lack of implementation, digital divides, threats to media freedom, and the spread of disinformation and misinformation.

- **Challenge 1:** Need to highlight more the relation of Access to Information and knowledge with other rights: such as freedom of expression, human rights
- **Challenge 2 :** Ubiquitous connectivity, strong mobility, intuitive and user-friendly interfaces and new transactions channels, look beyond the classical governmental services available online and/ or through mobile devices. These technologies raise bigger challenges of an open and equitable access for all citizens to the knowledge and benefits to be derived from the resulting important expansions of Public Sector Information and Data.
- **Challenge 3 :** An unprecedented open release of public information is nowadays coupled to a high-volume exchange of extremely sensitive and/or personal data across government agencies and citizens.
- **Challenge 4 :** Digital phenomena such as cloud computing, mobility, social media, big data, and artificial intelligence give rise to several complex security challenges as well as countless concerns for citizen privacy, with potential threats ranging from hacking or misinformation and disinformation to cyber-terrorism.
- **Challenge 5:** Ensuring all citizens are properly equipped with the digital and information literacy skills, with a particular attention to women, children and marginalized groups. Be mindful of generational gaps.

Opportunities

- Proactively address citizen-consumer complaints through independent regulatory authorities.
- Foster interdisciplinary research collaborations to effectively tackle societal challenges, improve research quality, and facilitate the education of new researchers.
- Establish a universal framework guiding AI legislation, prioritizing human rights, dignity, equality, and equitable access to AI developments.

Tangible outcomes (such as key achievements, announcements, launches, agreements, commitments, figures, and success stories (3-5 bullet points))

- On 18-20 February 2025, UNESCO will be holding a conference in Paris targeted at empowering civil servants for inclusive and sustainable governance.
- Since 2021, all Member States have approved the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of AI as a standard setting instrument on the ethics of artificial intelligence.



Actionable plan and key recommendations (2-5 points)

- Advocate for and raise more awareness how OHCHR recommendation mechanisms can be used for strengthening the implementation of the C3 action line.
- Proactively address citizen-consumer complaints through independent regulatory authorities.
- Foster interdisciplinary research collaborations to effectively tackle societal challenges, improve research quality, and facilitate the education of new researchers.
- Establish a universal framework guiding AI legislation, prioritizing human rights, dignity, equality, and equitable access to AI developments.

Suggestions for thematic aspects that might be included in the WSIS Forum 2025 (one paragraph)

- Improving the interrelationship between the different WSIS action lines