INFS 111
INFORMATION IN SOCIETY

STUDY GUIDE
For Undergraduates Level 100

2014/15 – 2016/17 Academic Year

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Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the Ms. Monica Mensah of the Balme Library, University of Ghana and Ms. Vera Ohene, the Teaching Assistant who played a critical role in the development and editing of this study guide and the development of the course slides and presentation of the course module on the University of Ghana Sakai Learning Management System.
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

1. COURSE WEBSITE

http://sakai.ug.edu.gh/XXXXXXXXXXX

2. INSTRUCTOR

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Email: sndtackie@ug.edu.gh

S. Nii Bekoe Tackie is the corresponding instructor.

3. Support Contact Information

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Legon, Accra

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Email: scdese@gmail.com
4. OVERVIEW

The general objective of this course is to introduce students to information studies, and ensure that students see the importance of information in society. The specific objectives are to help students:

- Recognize the impact of information in society.
- Distinguish between the types of information.
- Describe the information and the communication process.
- Understand the cyclical nature of information.
- Identify the current trends in information and communication technology.
- Understand the economics and ethics of information use.
- Identify the role information plays in national development and the need for national information policies.
- See the implications of intellectual freedom, copyright, censorship and the future of information.

Now that you have been introduced to the course objectives, let me tell you what the course is about. This course introduces you to the notion of information and the process of communication. It shows you how information is generated, transmitted and disseminated, in both traditional and modern societies. The course gives you an overview of everything that you will learn and do as an information manager. So, as we go along, you will realise that every other course you take comes out of this course. Information, in the world today, is a resource which is as important as the traditionally recognized factors of production – land, labour, capital and entrepreneurship.

Have you realised how much we depend on information? Many people never think about it. To demonstrate how dependent we are on information, consider the following scenario:

A plot to stop the spread of information in Ghana has been uncovered. Some unknown persons have managed to convince the government to pass a law prohibiting the dissemination of information. What do you think will be the effect of such a law, if it is passed and enforced? Government will no longer publish any information, so there will be no more economic indicators, no parliamentary proceedings and no new laws. Government regulations will remain unchanged, because it will be illegal to collect information which will be used to assess anything. Politicians and public officials will refuse to talk to reporters. We will have no news of what is happening in Ghana, and the world at large.

The news media, both electronic and print, will vanish because there is nothing to report from government and about government, and there will be no local news to report too. Libraries, Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges and Schools will be forced to close down as a result of the law. All computer and communication companies will be forced to close down. Ghana Telecom (GT), Scancom (MTN), Network Computer Services (NCS) – Africa Online, will be no more.
As a result of the shutdown, there will be massive unemployment. There will be no transportation system, because the automobile industry will shut down; there will be no flights, because there will be no companies manufacturing spare parts to replace old parts. All industries will vanish because of the collapse of the transport sector. People will be forced to stay at home and try to eke out a living by growing their own food and making their own tools and materials. But for how long can people live under such conditions? The only kind of communication that will be left is conversation between people who live in the same area, but that does not constitute information.

It is important for you to take this course because information manifests itself in the society, without which society will cease to exist. Simply put; without information you will not be taking this course and/or other courses, because you would have had no information about the existence of the course.

For ease of study, I have structured this course into sessions. The topics to be covered include: Introduction to INFS 111, the Impact of Information in Society, Definition and Types of Information, Information and the Communication Process; Barriers to Information Transfer, the Information Cycle; Information Creation, Distribution, and Management Institutions, The Information Technology Revolution, Current Trends in Information and Communication Technology, Economics of Information; Information Ethics, Information and National Development, National Information Policy, Intellectual Freedom, Copyright, and Censorship, and the Future of Information. Student will also be engaged in group assignment.

5. PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING APPROACH

Problem-based learning (PBL) is a student-centered pedagogy in which students learn about a subject through the experience of problem solving. The goals of PBL are to help the student develop flexible knowledge, effective problem solving skills, self-directed learning, effective collaboration skills and intrinsic motivation. This course will use a problem-based learning approach.

Working in groups, students identify what they already know, what they need to know, and how and where to access new information that may lead to resolution of the problem. The role of the instructor/lecturer/tutor is to facilitate learning by supporting, guiding, and monitoring the learning process. The tutor will help build students’ confidence to take on the problem, and encourage the students, while also stretching their understanding.

6. COURSE FORMAT

The course content will be delivered online through the SAKAI Learning Management System (Sakai LMS). The Sakai LMS will be used to deliver:

- Video Lecture Sessions
- Session Slides
- Session Reading Materials
- Assessments – Tests, Quizzes and Assignments (including a Problem-based Term Paper)
- Group activities – Discussions and Presentations

Announcements will be posted to the course website and/email accordingly. It is the responsibility of students to check on announcements made in class, on the Course Website, and through email.
7. LEARNING OUTCOMES

The learning outcomes for the course are outlined along three strands: knowledge, skills and outcomes.

7.1 KNOWLEDGE

Students must have knowledge on:

1. Information and its environment
2. the various types of information devices
3. the current information technology
4. the interaction between information profession and professionals
5. forms of information regulations

7.2 SKILLS

Students must be able to:

1. Identify the uses of information in daily activities
2. Identify the various information devices used by people on a daily basis
3. Recognize the different categories of the information profession and professionals
4. Identify information creation, distribution and management institutions
5. Understand the economics and ethics of information use
6. plan and carry out a literature search

7.3 COMPETENCE

Students should in the future be able to:

1. Identify the information needs of information users
2. Initiate and lead information searches for information seekers
3. Impart information literacy skills to their clientele
4. Ensure unfettered access to information bearing in mind issues of copyright

ASSESSMENT

The assessment for this course has been designed to help all students to maximize their individual and group/team learning opportunities. A summary of the assessment tasks is provided below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>FORM OF ASSESSMENT</th>
<th>DELIVERED</th>
<th>MARKS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Assignments</td>
<td>Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)</td>
<td>Alongside Sessions</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Assignments</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>Alongside Sessions</td>
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<td>Written Examination</td>
<td>Semester Examination</td>
<td>End of semester</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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7.4 Individual Assignments

Individual assignments will be provided at end of sessions. These assignments will be in the form of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs), and group presentations. Deadlines will be provided for each assignment with respect to scheduling of the sessions.

7.5 Group Presentations.

Select a television commercial of your choice; and find an ad for the same product or service in a newspaper. Use the outline provided in Appendix A to complete the assignment.

Submission Guidelines: Each group presentation should be presented with a cover page which should state out the title of the assignment and also outline the name, index number and email address of students in the group. The assignment should be single-spaced, font-size 12, Times New Roman. Submit online through Sakai LMS by the end of the 12th Week.

Each assignment, therefore, should be carefully edited for grammar, typos, and/or spelling mistakes. Appropriate citations should be provided using the American Psychological Association (APA) format. The following website offers information about writing and formatting papers in the APA style including general format, reference of the works of others in your texts, reference list, examples, notes, and additional resources:

- http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/apa/index.html

8. RECOMMENDED TEXT

RECOMMENDED TEXT


Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) (2003) AISI: An Action Framework to build Africa’s Information and


9. SCHEDULE OF SESSIONS

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<th>Week</th>
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<td>Sessions 13</td>
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9.1 SESSION 1 – THE IMPACT OF INFORMATION IN SOCIETY

9.2 Overview

We are inundated by information to the extent that information has become like the air we breathe. Every day, we receive and deal with information consciously or unconsciously. To help you understand and realize the pensiveness of information in the world we live in, this session deals with information activities in our daily lives which we may or may not be conscious of.

9.3 Goals and Objectives

By the end of the session, you should be able to:

1. Identify information devices people use every day.
2. Match devices for use or management of information to the mode in which the information is received.
3. Describe how information is used in society to control and influence behavior.
4. Discuss how individuals differ in the ability to access and use information.
5. Explain how the use of information is changing in the world today.

9.4 Activities and Assignments

This week, complete the following tasks:

1. Log on to the UG Sakai LMS course site
2. Watch the Video on the Topic - Course Introduction
3. Visit the Chat Room and introduce yourself while discussing expectations for the course
9.5 **SESSION 2 – DEFINITION AND TYPES OF INFORMATION**

9.6 **Overview**

You have been exposed to all sorts of information. We use information for different purposes. For example, you read the newspaper for information. You read a textbook to gain knowledge, and you inform someone about a project to be undertaken. But do you know that there are different types of information? In this unit, you will learn about what information is, the different types of information and the sources of information.

9.7 **Goals and Objectives**

By the end of this section, you should be able to:

1. Understand the concept of information.
2. Distinguish between the types of information.
3. Identify the various sources of information.

10.7 **Activities and Assignments**

This week, complete the following tasks:

1. Log onto the UG Sakai LMS course site
2. Review Lecture Slides: Session 2
3. Visit the Chat Room and discuss the Forum question for Session 2
4. Complete the Individual Assignment for Session 2

10. **SESSION 3 – INFORMATION AND THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS**

10.1 **Overview**

Information activities are closely linked to language, and in human communication language represents the largest of the symbols through which man (the human being) has observed, related to and tried to understand the world around him. The relationship between information and communication is, therefore, recognized as necessary in any information activity. The two concepts, i.e., information and communication are, therefore, interdependent but they are also different. The main difference between them is that communication is always interpersonal and interlined with emotions, values, expectations and perceptions, while information is impersonal purely format and devoid of perceptions and emotions.

There has to be a system of communication in place before information transfer can be effective because, in its raw form, information will not give meaning. This implies that, information has to be communicated in order for it to become meaningful.

10.2 **Goals and Objectives**

By the end of this Session, you should be able to:

- Distinguish between information and communication and the relationship between them.
- Understand the theories through which they are related.
- Explain the different methods of communicating information.
- Explain the communication process and what causes message distortion in the course of this process.
• Appreciate in what ways the problems in the communication of information are related to the work of information providers and handlers (e.g. librarians and archivist).

10.3 Activities and Assignments
This week, complete the following tasks:
1. Log on to the UG Sakai LMS course site
2. Watch the Videos on the topic – Information and the Communication Process
4. Visit the Chat Room and discuss the Forum question for Session 3
5. Complete the Individual Assignment for Session 3

11. SESSION 4 – BARRIERS TO INFORMATION TRANSFER
11.1 Overview
As in most situations in life, there are barriers or challenges to the effectiveness of any communication process. These barriers must be properly overcome, if effective communication is to take place. You therefore need to know each one of them in order to enhance your communication process.

11.2 Goals and Objectives
At the end of the session, the student will:
• Narrate the problems of information dissemination.
• Describe the barriers to communication.
• Explain how information experts can disseminate information.

11.3 Activities and Assignments
This week, complete the following tasks:
1. Log on to the UG Sakai LMS course site
2. Watch the Videos on the topic - Barriers to Information Transfer
3. Review Lecture Slides
4. Read Onyango (2000) in the Recommended Text
5. Visit the Chat Room and discuss the Forum question for Session 4
6. Complete the Individual Assignment for Session 4

12. SESSION 5 – THE INFORMATION CYCLE
12.1 Overview
Welcome to session 5. In the previous session, you were exposed to the problems that affect the effective access to and use of information. In this session, I will talk about the information cycle and who are involved in the cycle. This session will cover the following topics: the cyclical nature of information, components of the information cycle, information producers, information infrastructure institutions, information professionals and professional associations.

12.2 Goals and Objectives
At the end of the session, the student will:
1. See how the generation, processing and the use of information is interwoven.
2. Identify information producers and how they generate information.
3. Identify institutions that process and provide information services.
4. Learn about information professionals and their training.
5. Know about the different levels of associations that exist within the library and information science profession.

12.3 Activities and Assignments
This week, complete the following tasks:
1. Log on to the UG Sakai LMS course site
2. Watch the Videos on the topic - The Information cycle
3. Review Lecture Slides: Session 5 - The Information cycle
4. Read Stair and Reynolds (2006) in Recommended Text
5. Visit the Chat Room and discuss the Forum question for Session 5
6. Complete the Individual Assignment for Session 5

13. SESSION 6 – INFORMATION CREATION, DISTRIBUTION, AND MANAGEMENT INSTITUTIONS

13.1 Overview
From the beginning of recorded history (and perhaps even before that), there have been individuals, institutions and agencies that have facilitated the creation, distribution and accessibility of information records. These various entities make it possible for information to be transferred from the source of the information - a person, an organization, or a piece of equipment - to the recipient of the information. In this session, we will discuss these agencies from the past to the present and how their activities affect the information record before it gets to the end user of the information.

13.2 Goals and Objectives
At the end of the session, you will be able to:
1. Trace the development of institutions that create, distribute and management information.
2. Analyse the major functions of those institutions.
3. Compare and contrast the differences in the clientele they serve.

13.3 Activities and Assignments
This week, complete the following tasks:
1. Log on to the UG Sakai LMS course site
2. Watch the Videos on the topic - Information creation, distribution, and management
3. Visit the Chat Room and discuss the Forum question for Session 5
4. Read Chapter Debons (2008) in Recommended Text
5. Complete the Individual Assignment for Session 5
14. SESSION 7 – THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REVOLUTION

14.1 Overview

The advent of information technology revolutionized the generation and distribution of information. This session is concerned with the evolution of communication systems from oral tradition through writing to publishing and telecommunications.

14.2 Goals and Objectives

By the end of this section, you should be able to:
1. Trace the development of communication systems for transmission of information.
2. Explain how the differences in information transfer through various communication systems have affected the use of information in society.
3. Explain the importance of standardization and information communication and transmission.

14.3 Activities and Assignments

This week, complete the following tasks:
1. Log on to the UG Sakai LMS course site
2. Watch the Videos on the Topic – The information technology revolution
3. Review Lecture Slides: Session 7 – the information technology revolution
4. Read Deer (1985) in Recommended Text
5. Visit the Chat Room and discuss the Forum question for Session 7
6. Complete the Individual Assignment for Session 7

15. SESSION 8 – CURRENT TRENDS IN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

15.1 Overview

Change in the technological environment of information generation, transfer and use is occurring at a rapid pace such that it is becoming difficult to keep pace with the rate of change. This session is a follow up discussion on the functions and use of technology to create, read, transmit, solve and retrieve data and information.

15.2 Goals and Objectives

At the end of the session, you should be able to:
1. Define the following acronyms that are common to ICT:
POTS     URL     VR     BPL     ISDN
HTML     IP      ARPANET   LAN    GUI
OPAC;    WAIS    DELS    WAN    RSS
OCR

2. Identify current information technology used to create, read, store, retrieve and transmit data and information.
3. Discuss the most critical current problems of information technology.
15.3 Activities and Assignments

This week, complete the following tasks:
1. Log on to the UG Sakai LMS course site
2. Watch the Videos on the Topic – Current trends in information and communication technology
3. Review Lecture Slides: Session 8
4. Read Lester and Koehler (2007) in Recommended text
5. Visit the Chat Room and discuss the Forum question for Session 8
6. Complete the Individual Assignment for Session 8

16. SESSION 9 – ECONOMICS OF INFORMATION

16.1 Overview

Information is one regarded as a commodity that can be sold and bought. Information therefore now has economic value. Indeed, information and economics have some common relations - for example the role of information in economic decision making; another relationship is how information activities contributes to the economy: in our parts of the world people are hardly willing to pay for information. People will not even buy newspapers to read about what is happening in their society. This session will, therefore, examine information as an economic good.

16.2 Goals and Objectives

At the end of the session, you will be able to:
1. Define the following terms:
   - Public good
   - Experience good
   - Private good
   - Externality
   - Merit good
2. Identify in a given situation whether information and information records would be defined as a public good, private good or merit good.
3. Identify the ways in which value for information is determined.
4. Describe the factors considered in pricing of information and information goods.

16.3 Activities and Assignments

This week, complete the following tasks:
1. Log on to the UG Sakai LMS course site
2. Watch the Videos on the Topic – Economics of Information
3. Review Lecture Slides: Session 9 – Writing Up Research
4. Read Alemna (2000) and Deer (1985) in Recommended Text
5. Visit the Chat Room and discuss the Forum Question for Session 9
6. Complete the Individual Assignment for Session 9
17. SESSION 10 – INFORMATION ETHICS

17.1 Overview
Ethical behaviour is an intrinsic part of human society. Therefore, every discipline and every culture has ethics by which practitioners of that discipline or culture needs. So it is with the discipline of information. Changes in the information environment have made information ethics a contemporary issue. Thus, the ethics, values and legal obligations and responsibilities among the information profession is the focus of this session.

17.2 Goals and Objectives
At the end of the session, you will:

1. Understand and define the following terms:
   - Values
   - Code of Ethics
   - Morals
   - Digital Divide
   - Ethics

2. Identify the following the following acronyms and explain the relationship of each to information ethics: COPA, CIPA, FERPA, HIPAA, USAPA, WSIS.

3. Explain the historical and current issues in information ethics.

17.3 Activities and Assignments
This week, complete the following tasks:

1. Log on to the UG Sakai LMS course site
2. Watch the Videos on the Topic – Information Ethics
3. Review Lecture Slides: Session 10 – Information Ethics
4. Read Debons, Home and Cronenweth (1998) of Recommended Text
5. Visit the Chat Room and discuss the Forum question for Session 10
6. Complete the Individual Assignment for Session 10

18. SESSION 11 – INFORMATION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

18.1 Overview
The session introduces you to the need to have some ideas on how information can be used for national development.

18.2 Goals and Objectives
By the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

1. Explain how information can be used for national development.
2. Discuss the role of information in agriculture development.
3. Explain the impact of information in national development.
4. State the legal aspects of information for national development.
18.3 Activities and Assignments

This week, complete the following tasks:
1. Log on to the UG Sakai LMS course site:
2. Watch the Videos on the Topic – Information and National Development
3. Review Lecture Slides: Session 11 – Information and National Development
4. Read Onyango (2000) in Recommended Text
5. Visit the Chat Room and discuss the Forum question for Session 11
6. Complete the Individual Assignment for Session 11

19. SESSION 12 – NATIONAL INFORMATION POLICY

19.1 Overview

Session 12 will deal with policy matters on information creation, organization, and dissemination or transfer. It will also focus on the infrastructure that provides the framework for establishing information systems and services at the national, sub-regional and regional levels. The session will comprise the following: the right to information; information as a national resource; the need for a national information policy; stakeholders in the development of information policy; national information policy; and the African Information Society Initiative (AISI).

19.2 Goals and Objectives

On completion this session you should be able to understand that:
1. Information is regarded as a human right.
3. The right to information presupposes that there is information in the public domain and that this should be made available to a user on request, as a right.
4. This right is violated and made unenforceable by many factors including some national laws and regulations; difficult access to official government documents due to bad management practices; lack of viable national information systems and services and ignorance of this right on the part of citizens.
5. The main impediment to the exercise of this right is the absence of a legislation on the Right to Information.
6. The Parliament of Ghana has had a Right to information Bill on the table since 2005.

19.3 Activities and Assignments

This week, complete the following tasks:
1. Log on to the UG Sakai LMS course site
2. Watch the Videos on the Topic – National Information Policy
3. Review Lecture Slides: Session 12 – National Information Policy
5. Visit the Chat Room and discuss the Forum question for Session 12
6. Complete the Individual Assignment for Session 12
20. SESSION 13 – INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM, COPYRIGHT, AND CENSORSHIP

20.1 Overview

Freedom of expression and freedom of information are considered to be part of the natural rights of human feelings and they are enforced in the United Nations Charter on human rights. Yet, there are other equally important aspects of human existence that seem to be in contradiction with the levels of freedom of information and intellectual freedom. These are the issues of copyright and censorship. In this session, the focus is on how the issues of copyright and censorship hinder the free access to information and free speech.

20.2 Goals and Objectives

At the end of the session, students will be able to:
1. Explain the terms - copyright and censorship
2. Understand the implications of ‘fair use’ in copyright
3. Identify the various types of censorship
4. Understand the various levels of intellectual property.

20.3 Activities and Assignments

This week, complete the following tasks:
1. Log on to the UG Sakai LMS course site
2. Watch the Videos on the Topic - Intellectual Freedom, Copyright, and Censorship
5. Visit the Chat Room and discuss the Forum question for Session 13
6. Complete the Individual Assignment for Session 13

APPENDIX A

GROUP ASSIGNMENT

Select a television commercial of your choice; and find an ad for the same product or service in a newspaper. Use the outline provided in Appendix A to complete the assignment.

Submission Guidelines: Each group presentation should be presented with a cover page which should state out the title of the assignment and also outline the name, index number and email address of students in the group. The assignment should be single-spaced, font-size 12, Times New Roman. Submit online through Sakai LMS by the end of the 12th Week.

Each assignment, therefore, should be carefully edited for grammar, typos, and/or spelling mistakes.

1. Cover page
   a. Each group assignment should be presented with a cover page which should state out the title of the topic and also outline the name, index number and email address of student.

2. Instructions for assignment:
a) Identify any ‘information’ conveyed in a television commercial that is different from that in the ad.

b) What was the advertiser trying to get the watchers of the commercial to think/believe/do?

c) Was the advertiser trying to get the same result from the print ad?