

INFS 111: INFORMATION IN SOCIETY

Session 10– INFORMATION ETHICS

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2014/2015 – 2016/2017

Session 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 live. 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.
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Session Objectives

By the end of this session, the student should be able to:

1. Understand and define the following terms:

- Values
- Code of Ethics
- Morals
- Digital Divide
- Ethics

2. Identify 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.

Session Outline

The key topics to be covered in the session are as follows:

- Topic 1: Nature of Information Ethics
- Topic Two: Ethics sources
- Topic Three: Professional codes of ethics
- Topic Four: Equitable access and information literacy

Reading List

- Debons, Anthony. (2008). *"Information Science 101"*. Plymouth, UK: The Scarecrow Press Inc.
- Debons Anthony, Esther Horne and Scott Cronenweth. (1998). *Information Science: An Integrated View*. Boston, MA: G.K. Hall.
- Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu. *"Technology, Media & Telecommunications."* 2006. TMT trends: Predictions, 2006, A Focus on the Technology Sector. London: Deloitte & Touche.
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(accessed December 2006).
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- Enakrire, R. T. and Onyenania, O. G. (2007) "Factors Affecting the Development of Information Infrastructure in Africa". *Library Hi Tech News*. Vol. 24 Iss: 2, pp.15 – 20. Available at www.emeraldinsight.com

Topic One:

NATURE OF INFORMATION ETHICS

Nature of Information Ethics

- Information ethics are extremely complex
 - Issues not about information or technology
 - Issues are about the context
 - Political, economic, cultural and in the use of information
- Complexity compounded by constant change in technology
 - challenges to privacy
 - computer hackers
 - creation of new professions
 - new ways of performing old tasks
 - Fake news
 - Sextortion

Related Terms: Definitions

- Value
 - a consistent belief that a specific way of behavior or conduct is personally or socially preferable to the opposite
- Morals
 - A set of mores, customs, and traditions derived from social practice or religious guidance
 - Values are a subset of morals
- Ethics
 - A branch of philosophy which deals with ways of life which are worth following and which actions are right or wrong
- Code of ethics
 - A set of principles that guide the practice of a profession
- Digital divide
 - The gap in understanding, capability, and access to technology in order to exploit digital information

Topic Two:

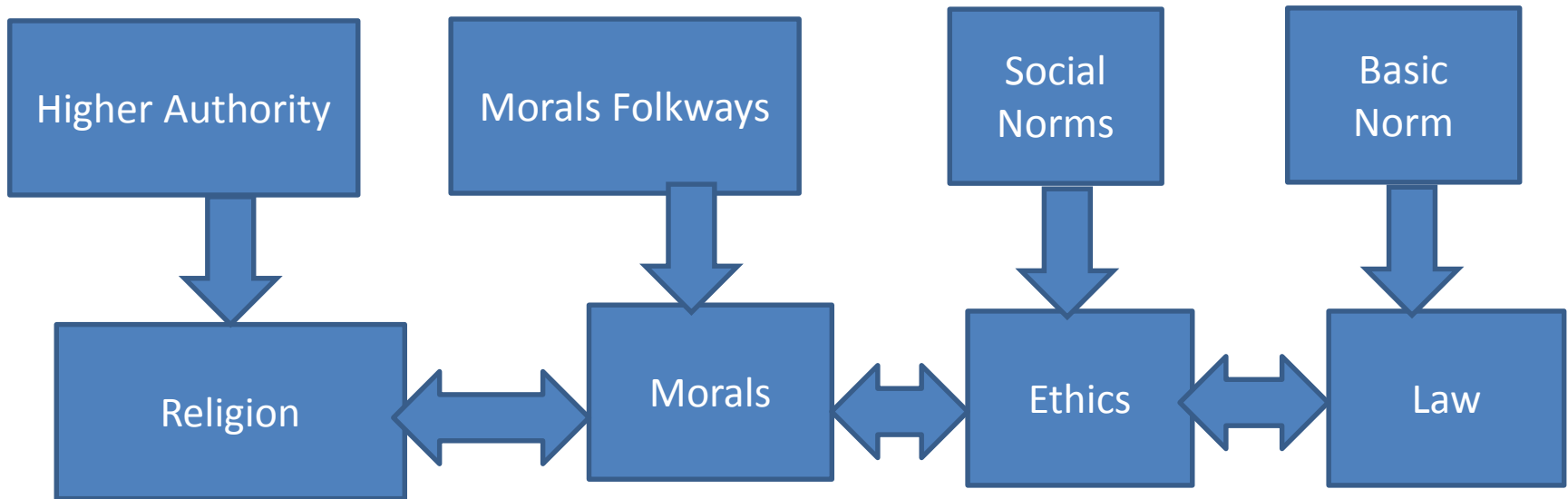
ETHICS SOURCES

Ethics Sources

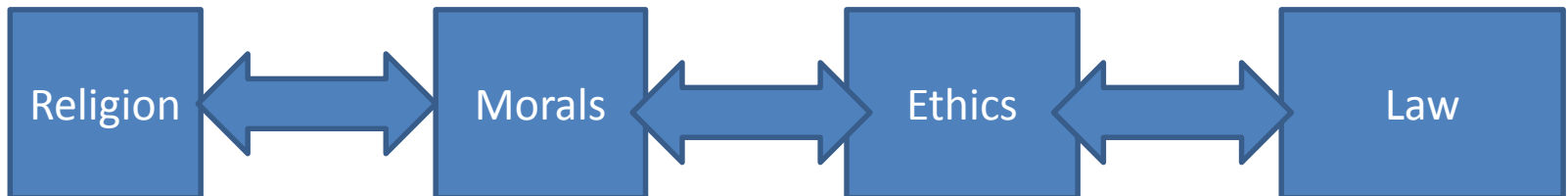
- Transcendent to human beings
 - issues of
 - right and wrong
 - morality and law
 - ethics and duty
 - good and evil
 - just and unjust
- Human base which may be individual or social models of ethical sources

Models of Ethical Sources

Multiple Sources



Single Sources



Topic Three:

PROFESSIONAL CODES OF ETHICS

Professional codes of ethics

- Intellectual freedom
- Protecting users right to privacy/ confidentiality
- Intellectual property right
- Professional neutrality
- Preservation of the cultural record
- Equity of access

Issues in Information Ethics

- Privacy
 - personal privacy
- Cultural differences
 - different treatment of private person/public person
- Workplace privacy
 - background check of employees, use of employer-supplied communications
- Internet privacy issues
 - easy breach of privacy on the internet

Issues in Information Ethics Cont'd

- privacy of records
 - public records
 - births, marriages, deaths, asserts, convictions, real property transfers
- other public records
 - driver's licenses, professional licenses, vehicle registrations, probated Wills etc.
- confidential records
 - medical and health records
 - HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act)2003
 - FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) 1974.
 - for protection of students' grades and other educational records
 - census data, fax

Issues in Information Ethics Cont'd

- Communication privacy
 - USAPA
 - United States of America Patriots Act, 2001
- Intellectual freedom
 - COPA
 - Child Online Protection Act
 - CIPA
 - Child Internet Protection Act

Topic Four:

EQUITABLE ACCESS AND INFORMATION LITERACY

Equitable access and information literacy

- Individual responsibilities
- Governmental responsibilities
- The digital divide

Gap in understanding, capability and access to technology in order to exploit digital information

Equitable access and information literacy Cont'd

Exploration of the digital revolution

- two topologies
 - domestic
 - 'have' and 'have not' in the country
- Countries or regions
 - Information infrastructure
 - Physical infrastructure
 - Training and education of human resource

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- Debons, Anthony. (2008). *"Information Science 101"*. Plymouth, UK: The Scarecrow Press Inc.
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