Internet Access and Usage in the African World: Articulating a Progressive African Centered Digital Ecosystem

This special edition was organized around a widely-distributed "Call for Papers" titled 'Internet Access and Usage in the African World' focused on Internet access and usage via people of African heritage around the world concerning issues and challenges presented by digital content development and growth. And secondly, the Call for Papers solicited papers that focus on the idea of providing a solution-focused platform for discussion particular to an African centered digital ecosystem.

After some organizing and re-organizing, we proudly present this important theme packaged in nine articles and a review of women in information technology innovation in Africa. We begin with a selective African look at the 2016 Internet Society report as it related the open development, evolution, and use of the Internet for the benefit of all people throughout the world.

Next Tonderayi Mukeredzi presents a guest editorial titled "Uproar Over Internet Shutdowns: Governments Cite Incitements to Violence, Exam Cheating and Hate Speech" which concerns the Cameroonian government suspended services after Anglophone teachers, lawyers and students went on strike over alleged historical biases in favor of its Francophone population (the suspension started in January this year and ended in March, the longest period of Internet disruption by an African government). Third, *A:JPAS* editorial board member Badmus Bidemi G. in "Internet Diffusion and Government Intervention: The Parody of Sustainable Development in Africa" argues that the current attacks on Internet access in terms of legal constraints, political intimation, Internet shutdown, unlawful arrest of Internet users, and the purposeful disruption of Internet services by government agents will become more pronounced unless African nations technologically develop public institutions to compete favorably with private Internet service providers, in terms of information communication.

Moving into national politics, Oluwabunmi O. Oyebode and Adeyemi Adegoju in "Appraisal Resources in Select WhatsApp Political Broadcast Messages in the 2015 Presidential Election Campaign in Nigeria" examine appraisal resources deployed by the Nigerian online community to air their views, construe attitudinal meanings and steer public perception about the representations of presidential candidates during the 2015 election.

Then moving across the continent to Ethiopia, Habtamu Dugo in "The Powers and Limits of New Media Appropriation in Authoritarian Contexts: A Comparative Case Study of Oromo Protests in Ethiopia" uses a comparative case study approach to analyze and synthesize social media appropriation by pro-democracy social movements in multiple countries, primarily focusing on new media appropriation in Oromia and Ethiopia during Oromo protests from 2014-2017 as it also critically examines comparative cases where new media and social media technologies have or have not had significant impact.

Juxtaposing the African experience in Africa, we have Mark-Shane Scale in "Internet Access to Caribbean Government Information on Homeschooling: A Preliminary Case Study of Barbados," a report on a preliminary study investigating access to government information obtainable on the Internet about homeschooling in Barbados, a nation in the Caribbean with one of the highest use of the Internet (80% of the population of Barbados consist of people of African descent). Continuing is award winning (2014 Diopian Institute for Scholarly Advancement) author Abdul Karim Bangura in "African-Centered Internet Literacy: An Ubuntugogy Metadata Approach" which provides a summary of the presuppositions and requirements for Ubuntugogy metadata applications, and a discussion concerning an Ubuntugogy metadata mining approach that can be useful in advancing African-centered Internet literacy.
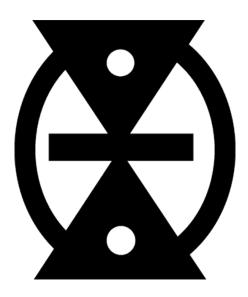
And concluding this issue, we have Bassey Nsa Ekpe in "Social Media: Towards the Realisation of a Global Stance for the African Voice" suggest that social media usage has presented another platform for the African voice to be heard all over the world wherein African people have the medium to tell their own story to the world; Abdul Karim Bangura in "Teaching Afrocentricity Through E-Clustering" which suggest that e-clustering can help to teach about Afrocentricity and thus, participants in an Afrocentricity-cluster can be networked by processes more standardized and supported by online applications; Musa D. Hassan present "Information Seeking Behavior among Undergraduates Students Engaged in Twitter" which focuses on available literature on how undergraduate students engage in information seeking and sharing behavior on Twitter as the means of communication in the academy, and social activism within the larger society; Mercy Kolawole provide a paper that interrogates mobile phones in the context of online patronage and ease of Internet access in Nigeria as she adopts an exploratory and sociological research design wherein data was collected qualitatively through interviews and focus group discussion and analyzed descriptively using the interpretive method based on findings that show that mobile phones are popularly portrayed as potent allies in the quest for democracy and development; we feature six women involved in information technology innovation in Africa consisting of a lady from Kenya who established a computer software company when she was 24 years old, now focused on electronic government and business software services; a person featured on the cover of *Forbes Africa* by the age of 30, now an entrepreneur and thought leader; a chief executive officer of an information technology consulting and digital products company in West Africa and Europe (she was named one of the.

Top 5 Women impacting IT in Africa) and founder of Women in Tech Africa, the largest women in tech group with members in over 30 Africa nations and throughout the world; the chair of the African Center for Technology Innovation and Ventures based in Cameroon; and the executive director of a Pan African network of over 50 technology innovation hubs across 24 African nations founded in 2011 to build a community around the rapidly emerging tech hubs in Africa; a synopsis of eight relevant books, and finally, we include an executive summary on fixed and mobile broadband in Africa by Henry Lancaster.

Recognizing that the content herein is only a fraction of the issues and challenges that confront the African world community, it is my hope that new technology action and discourse continue in aiding the liberation of consciousness, space and time.

Hence, we recognize in this special issue the importance of a liberation consciousness that in 2015 gave us #RhodesMustFall (#RMF) via social media (Twitter) youth activism in South Africa that began at the University of Cape Town which focused on the decolonization of education and the removal of the statue of British colonialist Cecil John Rhodes.

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Mmere Dane, an Adinkra symbolizing
'time changes', change, and life's dynamics.