Exploring Information Ethics

A Metadata Analytics Approach

Ali Shiri

Abstract

Information ethics is a multi-faceted and multilayered concept that covers such issues as social responsibility, citizenship, global information justice, freedom of speech, copyright, and privacy, to name a few. The *International Review of Information Ethics* lists the Internet, computer science and library and information science as areas that are concerned with research and development in the discipline of information ethics. It is evident that the discussion and discourse of information ethics cuts across various scholarly and disciplinary boundaries. To provide a coherent and integrated perspective of the scholarly activities in information ethics, a comprehensive analysis and presentation of publication trends will prove particularly useful. This kind of analysis will make a contribution to the development of a knowledge map of scholarly activities in information ethics and encourage collaborative research and scholarship.

Information ethics is a subject area that has recently attracted substantial attention from various domains and disciplines. Researchers and scholars from various disciplinary backgrounds have discussed this topic. The *International Review of Information Ethics* (2005) published by the International Center for Information Ethics (ICIE) lists the following areas that are concerned with information ethics:



Journal of Information Ethics / Volume 25, Number 1 / Spring 2016 / pp. 17–37 / ISSN 1061-9321 / eISBN 978-1-4766-2189-0 / © 2016 McFarland & Company, Inc.

- Internet;
- computer science; and
- · library and information science

Capurro (2005) believes that information ethics deals particularly with ethical questions in

- the Internet (cyberethics, information ethics in a narrower sense);
- computer science (computer ethics);
- the biological and medical sciences (bioinformation ethics);
- the mass media (media ethics);
- the library and information science field (library ethics); and
- the business field (business information ethics) [p. 7].

As noted by Froehlich (2004), information ethics has evolved over the years into a multi-threaded phenomenon, stimulated in part by the convergence of many disciplines on issues associated with the Internet. It can now be seen as a confluence of the ethical concerns of

- media;
- journalism;
- library and information science;
- computer ethics (including cyberethics);
- management information systems;
- business; and
- Internet.

The above descriptions of the scope of information ethics allude to the multi-faceted and multi-disciplinary nature of the topic and the ways in which it is viewed by researchers from different domains and disciplines. It appears that conducting a study to examine the scope and variety of topics related to information ethics is particularly timely. Floridi (2005) notes that the term information ethics has come to mean different things to scholars from various disciplines, including computer ethics, business ethics, medical ethics, computer science, the philosophy of information, social epistemology and library and information science. This, he argues, has resulted in confusion about the nature and scope of information ethics. He further argues that a field-dependent, applied and professional ethics approach to information ethics is problematic and that a macro-ethical approach should be adopted.

Ocholla, Onyancha, and Britz (2010) explored the concept *information ethics* using the most common co-occurring terms in the information ethics literature as indexed in nine databases. They analyzed the subject terms in more than 1,000 bibliographic records. They found that the most common term was

ethics with 613 hits in the compound subject terms, followed by information, legislation, jurisprudence, research, access, technology, standards, health, computer, education, and library. Others that produced a high number of hits included Internet, economics, libraries, and privacy. While this study provides insight into the subject terms in the bibliographic records on information ethics, its aim was not to identify disciplines and domains that are concerned with information ethics.

The purpose of this paper is to shed light on the history, volume, variety, and topics of publications on information ethics as reflected in the Scopus multi-disciplinary database of article publications. To achieve this, metadata records for the article publications on information ethics will provide a representative source of information. Metadata records consist of titles, authors, publication dates, abstracts, author-provided keywords, index terms, authors' affiliations, and countries. These metadata elements are particularly useful for trend and topic analysis. The study also aims to visually demonstrate the key information ethics themes, topics, as well as the authors and organizations that have contributed to the research and developments in this area. The key questions that this study addresses are:

• what are the *publication trends* for articles on information ethics?;

• who are the *top authors* of information ethics articles?;

• what *countries* and institutions are active in research in information ethics?;

• what *disciplines and domains* are concerned with research on information ethics?; and

• what are the *most frequently used terms* and topics in the titles, abstracts, and author keywords of article publications?

Addressing the above questions requires various analytical approaches, including textual, authorship, and trend analysis. The next section will provide a description of the methods and tools used to conduct these analyses.

Methodology

The methodological framework for conducting this study consists of a description of the nature and type of data; search and retrieval experiments conducted; data analysis methods used; and the information visualization tools employed.

Database

For this study, Scopus, a multi-disciplinary database of peer-reviewed article publications was used. It is owned by Elsevier and is only available online

AuthorsTitle Var Source title Abstract Return F.A. Micary youths addres due to the and processed in preservation to two model and the address and the addres address and the address and the address and the add	A	æ	υ	٥	Э	L.	U
Considerations about the r 2013 All and Society Considerations about the r 2013 Ethics and Information T Effects of froncal judgemen 2013 Proceedings - Internation Development and appliciat 2013 Ethics and Information T Distributed Monality in an i 2013 Ethics and Information to Internation Distributed Monality in an i 2013 Ethics and Information Ethics Distributed Monality in an i 2013 Global Journal of Equineering ETHIC AND VALUE CONSID 2013 Information Ethics Distributed Monality in an i 2013 Global Journal of Equineering From culture 2 0 to a networ 2013 TipleC Patron privacy is a process, not a F 2012 Dormal of Findemis Communication Processionalism: Challengi 2012 Dormal of Human Lastat Post age matrix 2012 Dormal of Human Lastat Processionalism: Challengi 2012 Dormal of Human Lastat Processionalism: Challengi 2012 Dormal of Human Lastat Remotion ethics 2012 Dormal of Human Lastat Remotion ethics 2012 Dormal of Human Lastat Remotion ethics 2012 Dormal of Information Ethics Remotion ethics 2012 Dormal of Information Ethics	1 Author	s Title	Year	Source title		Author Keywords	Index Keywords
Effects of from and application 2013 Entroper and from the memory of the metal of formation the metal of information ethics in the c. 2013 Entrope and Engineering ETHIC AND VALUE CONSIDI 2013 Entroper and from the metal of information to the metal of proceedings - internation Distributed Monality in an incompating to the metal of information to the metal application and application 2013 Information Communication Ethiomation ethics in 2013 Science and Engineering From culture 2.0 to a network 2.013 Topical Journal of Engineering The necessity and challeng 2013 Journal of Information for the necessity and challeng 2013 Journal of Forensic Odon Professionalism: Challeng 2013 Journal of Forensic Odon Professionalism: Challeng 2012 Journal of Forensic Odon Professionalism: Challeng 2012 Journal of Forensic Odon Professionalism: Challeng 2012 Journal of Human Lastati Ethical aspects of participa an online and 2012 Journal of Information Ethical aspects of participa an analysis for a just cyber An analysis for a just cyber 2012 Journal of Information Sin Composition to Computer and Of Information Sin Composity of Information Sin Composity of Informations in Composity or an analysis for a just cyber Applying the practical inque 2012 Journal of Information Sin Composity and Information Sin Composity of Information Sin Composity of Information Sin Composity and Computer Sin Layer 2012 Journal of Information Sin Composity and Sin	_	Considerations about the r African vouths and the dan		3 Al and Society 3 Ethics and Information T	Ethics researches morality in respect to humans and animals. With rising numbers of Earshook Twitter and MXR users. Afre	Animal ethics; Animal-machine Culture-centered approach: Cut	Interaction; Information ethics; ber violence: Otherhulbine: Soc
Development and applicat 2013 Proceedings - Internation Information ethors in the c 2013 Ethose and Engineering ETHIC AND VALUE CONSID 2013 Steince and Engineering ETHIC AND VALUE CONSID 2013 Steince and Engineering Using cutural capital to an 2013 Steince and Engineering Form cuture 2 optia and programment of to measing the contraint of the communication stimplied 2013 Internation fittimplied Patron privacy in the 2.0 er 2013 Journal of Finglieering 2013 Journal of Finglieering Form cuture 2.0 to a network 2013 Journal of Forensic colorn 2013 Journal of Finglieering 2013 Communications in Information fit information strippic Professionalism: Challengi 2012 Proceedings New Securit Dournal of Forensic Colorn 2012 Dournal of Forensic Colorn For a signalism: Challengi 2012 Journal of Humanication strippic 2012 Tournal of Humanication strippic For a signalism: Challengi 2012 Journal of Information at Communications in Colorn 2012 Journal of Information strippic For a nandysis for a just cyber 2012 Journal of Information strippic 2012 Journal of Information strippic Ethiolicy an online and 2012 Journal of Information strippic 2012 Journal of Information strippic Ethiolicy route map for a just cyber 2012 Journal of Infor	-	ar Effects of moral judgemen		3 Proceedings - Internatio	The importance of information ethics has emerged with the it	emotional control; gifted stude	Int Emotional control; Influential
Information ethics in the c 2013 Ethics and Information Ti Distributed Mokality in an 2013 Global Journal of Engineering ETHIC AND VALUE CONSID 2013 Information Communications Thooght on nuclear physics 2013 Medecines Nucleaire From culture 2.0 to a networ 2013 TripleC 2013 Information Eth From culture 2.0 to a networ 2013 TripleC 2013 Information Eth Patron privacy in the 2.0 er 2013 Journal of Information Eth Information ethics. 2013 Journal of Information Eth Information ethics. 2013 Dournal of Fromeric Odon Privacy is a process, not a f 2012 Proceedings New Securit Posts Studenting an online and 2012 Proceedings New Securit Ethical aspects of participa 2012 Journal of Human Lastal Ethical aspects of participa 2012 Journal of Human Lastal Applying the prive Proceedings New Securit Policy route map for acade 2012 Journal of Information Et Applying the practical inque 2012 Journal of Information Et Espectroling and Computer 2012 Journal of Information Et Espectroling and Echicical research ed The ethical (Ferebersin of 2012 International Comf Assessing the treatment or 2012 Durunal of Information Et Information Ethical research ed The ethical (Ferebersin of 2012 Durunal of Information Et Information Ethical (Ferebersin of 2012 Durunal of Information Et Information Ethical (Ferebersin Statean appropriation 2012 Bhut Computers in Human Bel Applying the treatment or 2012 Durunal of Documentation Using diastification to con 2012 Journal of Documentation Using diastification to con 2012 Dournal of Documentati		n Development and applicat		3 Proceedings - Internatio	This study developed a tool to measure the level of informati	Education; Information ethical s	se College students; Componen
Distributed Mocality in an indermation Communication Communication Consults 2013 Information of Engineering ETHIC AND VALUE CONSIDI indermation Communication Structural Capital I can isolate a consulture. 2013 Information of Engineering cultural capital I can 2013 Information of Engineering Thron exiture. 2010 an exitor 2013 Journal of Engineering Transvort is a procession and challeng 2012 Journal of Information thic. Patron privacy In the 2.0 er 2013 Journal of Information thronoresion structure. 2013 Information thronoresis Patron privacy in the 2.0 er 2013 Journal of Information thronoresion structures. 2013 Journal of Formation Endition. Privacy is a process, not a F 2012 Journal of Forensic Odon Privacy is a process, not a F 2012 Annangement Student: 2012 Journal of Forensic Odon Privacy is a process, not a F 2012 Annangement Student: Does age matter? Student: 2012 Journal of Forensic Codon Privacy is a process of participa 2012 Journal of Forensic Codon Privacy is a process of participa Does age matter? Student: 2012 Journal of Information Et An analysis for a just Yoben 2012 Journal of Information Et An analysis for a just Yoben Policy route map for a just Yober 2012 Journal of Information Et An analysis for a just Yoben 2012 Journal of Information Et An analysis for a just Yober Policy route map for a just Yober 2012 Journal of Information Et An analysis for a just Yober 2012 Journal of Information Et An analysis for a just Yober Policy route map for a just Yober 2012 Journal of Information Et Anotro Yober 2012 Journal of Information Et Applyring the prevent i		g Information ethics in the c		3 Ethics and Information T	In this paper, we employ Extended Cognition as a background	Cognition; Law; Mind; Privacy; T	Te Cognition; Cognitive activitie
ETHIC AND VALUE CONSIDI 2013 Information Communica Unge Cutrat Logatial to an Thought connuclear physici 2013 Global Journal of Engines. From culture 2.0 to a networ 2013 TripleC 2013 Global Journal of Engines. From culture 2.0 to a networ 2013 Journal of Engines. 2013 TripleC Patron privacy in the 2.0 et 2013 Journal of Engines. 2013 TripleC Patron privacy in the 2.0 et 2013 Journal of Enderrept 2012 Journal of Enderrept Prosoptisa process, not a F 2012 Journal of Forensic Odon 2012 Journal of Human Lactati Prosopt is a process, not a F 2012 Journal of Human Lactati 2012 Journal of Human Lactati Estidat a spects of patricipa 2012 Journal of Human Lactati 2012 Journal of Human Lactati Estidat a spects of patricipa 2012 Journal of Human Lactati 2012 Journal of Human Lactati An analysis for a just type 2012 Journal of Information Et 2012 Journal of Information Et Analysis for a just type 2012 Journal of Information Et 2012 Journal of Information Et Delity route map for a catde 2012 Journal of Information Et 2012 Journal of Information Et Papitying the patricial and 2012 Journal of Information Et 2012 Journal of Information Et		Distributed Morality in an I		3 Science and Engineering	The phenomenon of distributed knowledge is well-known ini	Distributed morality; Informatic	on and communication technolc
Using cultural capital to an 2013 Global Journal of Engines From culture 2.016 a network 2.013 Medecine hydelance From culture 2.016 a network 2.013 Mournal of Information Et from culture 2.016 a network 2.013 Journal of Information Et The necessity and challeng 2.012 Journal of Fonesic Colon Protessionalism: Challengi 2.012 Journal of Humation Et Etablishing an online and 2.012 Zournal of Humatication Etablishing an online and 2.012 Journal of Human Lastit Ethical aspects of participa 2.012 Journal of Human Lastit Ethical aspects of forticipa 2.012 Journal of Human Lastit Averbyyears of Informatic 2.012 Journal of Information Et Applying the practical inque 2.012 Journal of Information Et Applying the practical inque 2.012 Journal of Information Et Applying the practical inque 2.012 Journal of Information Et Epses well Juste to w 2.012 Journal of Information Et Epses well Juste to w 2.012 Journal of Information Et Epses well Juste to w 2.012 Journal of Information Et Epset well under 2.2012 Journal of Information Et Epset well and 2.2012 Journal of Information Et Epset well and 2.2012 Journal of Information Et Epset well and 2.2012 Journal of Information Et Epset well under 2.2012 Journal of Information Et Epset well and 2.2012 Durnal of Information Et Epset well and 2.2012 Pharmacotherapy Information Et Epset 2.2012 International Confet Anternet rewariality: Ethical 2.2012 Pharmacotherapy Information Et Epset 2.2012 Durnal of Information Et Epset 2.2012 Pharmacotherapy Information Et Epset 2.2012 Durnal of Information Et Experited publications in t 2.2012 Pharmacotherapy Information Et Expertited Physician 2.2012 Durnal of Information Et Expertited Physician 2.2012 Durnal of Information Internet rewariality: Ethical 2.2012 Durnal of Information Internet rewariality: Ethical 2.2012 Durnal of Information Internet rewariality: Ethical 2.2012		V ETHIC AND VALUE CONSIDI		3 Information Communica	This paper continues the exploration of network society ethic	ecological; ethics; interactional	agency; relational
Thought on nuclear physic 2013 Medecine Nucleaire Patron exiture. 20 to a network patron exiture. 20 to a a network patron exiture. 20 to a a network patron privacy in the 2.0 to a network patron privacy in the 2.0 to 2013 The Hastings Center report The necessity and challeng 2013 The Hastings Center report 2013 Dournal of Formation B. The necessity and challeng 2013 Dournal of Formation B. 2014 Dournal of Formation B. The necessity and challeng 2012 Journal of Formation B. 2015 Dournal of Formation B. Does age matter? Students 2012 Journal of Human Lastai Ethical aspects of participa 2012 Cancer Does age matter? Students 2012 Journal of Human Lastai Ethical aspects of participa 2012 Communication B. Does age matter? Students 2012 Communication B. 2012 Communication B. Policy route map for a just tycher 2012 Lournal of Human Lastai Ethical aspects of participa 2012 Communication B. Policy route map for a just tycher 2012 Lournal of Information B. 2012 Lournal of Information B. Policy route map for a just tycher 2012 Lournal of Information B. 2012 Lournal of Information B. Policy route map for a just tycher 2012 Lournal of Information B. 2012 Lournal of Information B. Policy route map for a just tycher 2012 Lournal of Information B. 2012 Lournal of Information Tinformat	9 Meng HJ.,	H Using cultural capital to an		3 Global Journal of Engine	This study investigated the digital learning of children living it	Cultural capital of parents; Digit	tal divide; Digital learning
From culture 2.0 to a netwo information ethics. The necessity and challeng prodessionalism: Challeng prodessionalism: Challeng prodessionalism: Challeng prodessionalism: Challeng prosects of particlea is it "about us"? self-repre Ethical aspects of particlea An analysis for a just cyber An empoint for more ethic Applying the practical inqu information ethor percept formation ethor percept formation ethor and cultural effects on percept information ethics in a skis information ethics in a skis internet teutrality: Ethical faith, hype, and chairty. The role of references in is internet teutrality: Ethical framework for understra- d framework for understra A framework for understra- using classification to comy	10 Dutler A.	Thought on nuclear physic		3 Medecine Nucleaire	Nuclear medicine physicians are very involved in French's on i	Cancer diagnosis; Information e	eth anxiety; cancer diagnosis; doe
	11 Wong PH.	From culture 2.0 to a netwi		3 TripleC	There is never a shortage of celebratory and condemnatory p,	Andrew keen; Axiology; Charles	s ess; Clay shirky; Digital media;
	12 Zimmer M.	Patron privacy in the 2.0 er		3 Journal of Information E	As libraries begin to embrace Web 2.0 technologies to serve p	atrons-ushering in the era of LI	brary 2.0-unique dilemmas arise
	13 Kaebnick G.	E Information ethics.	2013	3 The Hastings Center rep	[No abstract available]		access to information; editori
	14 Ragains P.	The necessity and challeng		2 Communications in Infor	[No abstract available]		
	15 Ozar D.T.	Professionalism: Challenge		2 Journal of Forensic Odor	While countries varies significantly in the financing of dental	Aesthetic dentistry; Dental adve	ertising; Dental insurance; Dent
	16 Morton A.,	Si Privacy is a process, not a F		2 Proceedings New Securi	Privacy research has not helped practitioners - who struggle to	Framework; Privacy; Security; Tr	ru Data protection; Design Princ
	17 Hsieh PH.,	I Does age matter? Student:		2 Asia Pacific Managemen	As pervasive computing applications advance, issues of infor i	Information ethics; Intellectual	property; Unauthorized softwai
	18 Killoran J.B.	Is It "about us"? self-repre		2 Technical Communicatio	Purpose: This article explores the purposes, character, and ef	"About us" Information; Ethics;	Independent contractors and cc
	19 McCann A.D). Establishing an online and		2 Journal of Human Lactati	Women of childbearing age, especially in industrialized natic	olog; breastfeeding; engageme	intarticle; breast feeding; consu
	20 Peppercorn	JEthical aspects of participa		2 Cancer	BACKGROUND: The rapid pace of genetics research, coupled '	Database of Genotypes and Phe	en article; bioethics; female; ger
	21 Taddeo M.	An analysis for a just cyber		2 2012 4th International Co	This article focuses on the ethical analysis of cyber warfare, to	cyber warfare; information ethi	ic: Conceptual analysis; Cyber w
	22 Koskinen J.S	5. A viewpoint for more ethic		2 Communications in Com	Healthcare is a field where the influence of ethics needs to be	e-Government; e-Health; health	hc e-Government; Ehealth; Heal
	23 Koulouris A.	., Policy route map for acade		2 Journal of Librarianship	This paper presents a policy decision tree for digital information	Academic libraries; access; copy	right; digital content; digital inf
	24 Alfino M.	Twenty years of informatic		2 Journal of Information E	This paper presents an historical overview of IE and the Journa	al of Information Ethics.	
	25 Liu CJ., Yar	ng Applying the practical inqu		2 Computers and Educatio	The goal of this study is to better understand how the study pl	Distance education and telelear	rn Bloom's taxonomy; Distance
2012 Journal of Computer Inic 2012 Journal of Information Et 2012 Journal of Memation Et 2012 Pharmacotherapy 2012 International Information 2012 Research tvaluation 2012 BMJ (Clinical research ed 2012 BMJ (Clinical research ed 2012 ACM International Confe 2012 ACM International Confe 2012 ACM International Confe 2012 Computers in Human Bel 2012 Lournal of Documentatio	26 Spinello R.	Information and computer		2 Journal of Information E	This paper reviews the intriguing history of information and o	omputer ethics. Information eth	hics began as a branch of applier
2012 Journal of Information Et 2012 Journal of Mental Health 2012 Pharmacotherapy 2012 International Information 2012 Research Evaluation 2012 Research Evaluation 2012 Buld (Clinical research ed 2012 ACM International Confe 2012 ACM International Confe 2012 ACM International Confe 2012 Journal of Documentatio 2012 Unitral of Documentatio	27 Hsieh PH.,	I Cultural effects on percept		2 Journal of Computer Infe	In most prior cross-cultural studies, which explored the antech	Information ethics; Intellectual	p Cross-cultural study; Cultural
2012 Journal of Mental Health 2012 Pharmacotherapy 2012 Research Evaluation 2013 Research Evaluation 2012 Research et 2012 BMJ (Clinical research et 2012 BMJ (Clinical research et 2012 BMJ (Clinical research et 2012 ACM international Confe 2012 ACM international Confe 2012 Journal of Documentatio	28 Samek T.	I guess we'll just have to w		2 Journal of Information E	This article provides a condensed chronological record of the	formation of the Information Et	thics (IE) Special Interest Group I
2012 Pharmacotherapy 2012 International Information 2012 International Information 2012 Philosophy and Technolic 2012 BMJ (Clinical research ed 2012 The virtual mentor : VM 2012 ACM International Confe 2012 ACM International Confe 2012 Lotural of Documentatio	29 Davey Z., Sc	h E-Psychonauts: Conducting		2 Journal of Mental Health	Background "Legal highs" are becoming increasingly common	Drug forums; Novel psychoactiv	recreational drug; article; con
	30 Samp J.C., S	c Retracted publications in t		2 Pharmacotherapy	Recent studies have suggested an increase in the number of 1	Drug information; Ethics; Evider	nc article; controlled study; drug
2012 Research Evaluation Scientific papers are often cited because they were selected Citation analysis; impact factor; in 2012 Philosophy and Technolic This paper investigates the ethical issues surrounding the cor Computer ethics; internet neutral 2012 The virtual mentor : VMI (No abstract available) 2012 The virtual mentor : VMI (No abstract available) 2012 ACM international Confe Today, the Google Books project is at a relative standstill - lav access to information; ethical des 2012 ACM international Confe Today, the Google Books project is at a relative standstill - lav access to information; ethical des 2012 ACM international Confe As libraries begin to embrace Web 2.0 technologies to serve information ethics; intellectual fr 2012 Lubri 2012 Lubri The structuation ethics codes phy a virtue in a darifying the rest Confuction ethics; intellectual fr 2012 Lubri Occumentatio between the of this paper is to explore the important Acriwal description and 2012 Lubri	31 Shaheen M.	A Information ethics in Pakis		2 International Informatio	This study examines the practice of information ethics of the	Email discussion groups; Inform	nation ethics; Intellectual proper
2012 Philosophy and Technolc This paper investigates the ethical issues surrounding the coi Computer ethics; internet neutral 2012 BMI (Clinical research ed [No abstract available] 2012 The virtual menor : VM. [No abstract available] 2012 AGM international Confe Today. The Google Books project is at a relative standstill - favaccess to information; ethical dee 2012 AGM international Confe day. The Google Books project is at a relative standstill - favaccess to information; ethical dee 2012 AGM international Confe das libraries begin to embrace Web 2.0 technologies to serve information ethics; intellectual fr 2012 Libri 2012 Libri The Tumma Bell information ethics codes play a vital ione in daritying the rest Confusion ethics and guant cutu. 2012 Libri The Uniternation ethics ethergoes of this paper is to explore the important knournability; Archival description 2012 Jubri The Uniternation ethics ethergoes of this paper is to explore the important Accountability; Archival description		A The role of references in su		2 Research Evaluation	Scientific papers are often cited because they were selected i	Citation analysis; Impact factor;	Information ethics; Journal self
2012 BMJ (Clinical research ed [No abstract available] 2012 her virtual menior : VM. [No abstract available] 2012 ACM international Confe (adsy, the Gouge Books project is at a relative standstill - la access to information; ethical des 2012 ACM international Confe As libraries begin to embrace Web 2.0 technologies to serve information ethics; intellectual fr 2012 ACM international Confe As libraries begin to embrace Web 2.0 technologies to serve information ethics; intellectual fr 2012 ACM international Confe As libraries begin to embrace Web 2.0 technologies to serve information ethics; intellectual fr 2012 Libri The study of information ethics declation in Africa is elaitively new and has yet to gain an emp 2012 Jubri Obcomentatio Deprose: The purpose of this paper is to explore the importan Accountability, Archival description	33 Turilli M., V.	a Internet neutrality: Ethical		2 Philosophy and Technoli	This paper investigates the ethical issues surrounding the con-	Computer ethics; Internet neutr	rality; Network neutrality
2012 The virtual mentor : VM (No abstract available) 2012 ACM international Confe Today, the Google Books project is at a relative standstill - lavaccess to information; ethical der 2012 ACM international Confe As ilbraries begin to embrace Web 2.01 technologies to server information ethics, intelletual fr 2012 Computers in Human Bellinformation ethics codes play a virtole in clarifying the resp. Confucian ethics and gurant cult. 2012 Ubit Total Substrate Definition ethics education in Africa is relatively new and has yet to gain an emp 2012 Ubit Occumentatio Utropose: The purpose of this paper is to explore the important Accountability, Archivad description		Faith, hype, and charity.	2012	2 BMJ (Clinical research ec	[No abstract available]		article; consumer health infoi
		The patient, the physician,		2 The virtual mentor : VM	[No abstract available]		article; consumer health infor
	36 Zimmer M.	The ethical (re)design of th		2 ACM International Confe	Today, the Google Books project is at a relative standstill - lave	access to information; ethical de	es access to information; Ethical
Chang C.LH. How to build an appropriat Douglass K. A framework for understar Caswell M. Using classification to conv	37 Zimmer M.,	E Assessing the treatment of		2 ACM International Confe	As libraries begin to embrace Web 2.0 technologies to serve li	information ethics; intellectual	fr Anecdotal evidences; Informi
Douglass K. A framework for understar Caswell M. Using classification to conv	38 Chang C.LF	4. How to build an appropriat		2 Computers in Human Be	Information ethics codes play a vital role in clarifying the rest	Confucian ethics and guanxi cult	tu Chinese companies; Confucia
Caswell M. Using classification to conv	39 Douglass K.	A framework for understar		2 Libri	The study of information ethics education in Africa is relativel	y new and has yet to gain an en	npirical and normative footing. I
	40 Caswell M.	Using classification to conv		2 Journal of Documentatic	Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to explore the importai,	Accountability; Archival descrip	tion; Archives; Archives manage

Table 1: Raw data on a search for *information ethics* in the Scopus database.

Journal of Information Ethics, Spring 2016

by subscription. Scopus covers more than 21,000 publications of which around 20,000 are peer-reviewed journals in the, technical, medical, and social sciences, and arts and humanities. It currently has more than 53 million records, mainly from 1995 onward (Elsevier, 2014).

Searches Conducted

An exact phrase search was conducted on the term *information ethics* in the title, abstracts, author keywords, and indexed keywords of publications indexed in the Scopus database. There were 313 records retrieved on December 20, 2013. The metadata records for the 313 records were downloaded onto an Excel file for later analysis. The author is aware of the limitations of this kind of search. For instance, searches could have been conducted on such terms as *library ethics* or *social responsibility in librarianship* or *ethical librarianship*. However, as the aim of this paper was to specifically examine how the term *information ethics* has been treated and approached in the publications, the search was confined.

The metadata elements that were examined for analysis in this study are the following:

- author;
- title;
- author keywords;
- indexed keywords (MeSH, Emtree, Engineering controlled term);
- abstract;
- publication date;
- publication source; and
- author's country.

Table 1 shows a screenshot of raw data in an excel spreadsheet.

Data Analysis Methods

The following text analysis and visualization tools were utilized to analyze and create visual and graphical representations of the retrieved data:

- OpenRefine;
- TAPOR (Text Analysis Portal);
- AutoMap;
- Many Eyes (IBM); and
- Visual Understanding Environment (VUE).

The first step in the analysis of data was related to data cleaning and preprocessing. OpenRefine was used for this task. OpenRefine is a powerful open source tool that allows cleaning of messy data and its transformation from one format into another. The application provides sophisticated clustering features that are useful for detecting similar terms that are separated as a result of parts of speech, such as *information ethics* and *ethics of information*. These terms may be separated alphabetically, but OpenRefine detects similar patterns, clustering them accordingly. This is useful for large data sets.

All author keywords that contained semicolons were removed and stored in a text file. Text Analysis Portal (TAPOR) tools and Automap were used to analyze the text of titles, abstracts, author keywords, and indexed keywords. These two tools provide a wide range of text analysis functionalities, such as term extraction, term frequency, analysis of parts of speech, keyword-in-context analysis, and stop word lists. TAPOR and Automap were used to identify authors' most frequently used terms.

Data Visualization

In order to provide various visual representations of the analyzed metadata records, a number of visual tools were used. IBM Many Eyes was used to create bubble charts, geographic representations of countries, and high frequency term representations. The Scopus database also provides visualization of search results known as *Analyze search results*. The visualization of source counties for the publications on information ethics as well as document type distribution were obtained from the Scopus database. The Visual Understanding Environment (VUE) was used in this paper to visualize the broad thematic categories for information ethics as reflected in the analyzed metadata records. It is an open source tool project based at Tufts University. It creates flexible tools for managing and integrating digital resources in support of teaching, learning, and research. This methodological framework provides a generalizable approach for conducting topic and trend analysis for many different subject areas and domains.

Findings

In the following, findings are arranged in the order of the study research questions presented above: publication trends, top authors, source countries for publications on information ethics, disciplines and domains concerned with information ethics, most frequently used terms and topics, and the thematic categorization of information ethics.

Journal of Information Ethics, Spring 2016

Publication Trends

The first question of this study was *what are the publication trends for articles on information ethics?* This broad question aimed at providing an overarching picture of the publications on information ethics. To this end, two specific sources were consulted to identify the pattern of publications. The first source was the Google Books Ngram Viewer, which is a freely available web-based application that makes use of more than 5 million books to show book publication trends for various topics. For this study four search terms were entered *information ethics, Information Ethics, Information ethics* and *INFORMATION ETHICS. Figure 1* shows the Google Ngram viewer for these terms.

As can be seen from this graph, the publication of books on information ethics dates back to the early 1980s. Another observation is that the highest frequency of occurrence of the term is associated with the lower case, i.e., *information ethics* as shown by the line. It should be noted that the Google Books Ngram Viewer only shows book publications until 2012.

To gain a comparative perspective of article publications for the term *information ethics*, the Scopus database was used to ascertain the longitudinal trend for non-book publications. *Figure 2* shows a graph from the Scopus database of the distribution of publications over the course of 37 years.

Figure 3 depicts how the publication of articles, reports, and conference papers on information ethics started in the 1980s, with an incremental growth in the 1990s, and then in the 2000s. The year 2011 has the highest number of publications on the topic. These two graphs indicate that the term *information ethics* started *appearing* in books, journal articles, and conference papers in the 1980s.

Top Authors

As part of the mapping of the literature on information ethics, the question *who are the top authors of information ethics publications?* was formulated. It should be noted that only the articles indexed in the Scopus database were used and that only first authors were considered for this analysis. The author acknowledges that this decision may be viewed as a limitation for this analysis. However, given the limited number of publications, it was important to identify the authors with higher number of publications. Based on this analysis there were 42 authors who had two or more publications. *Figure 3* shows a bubble chart of the top 42 authors. The top five authors in this list are Floridi, Capurro, Ess, Smith and Buchanan. A complete list of all the 42 authors is provided in the Appendix.

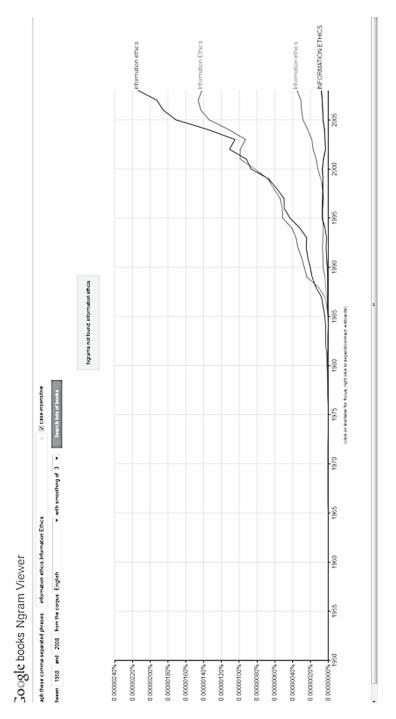


Figure 1. Google Books Ngram Viewer graph for information ethics

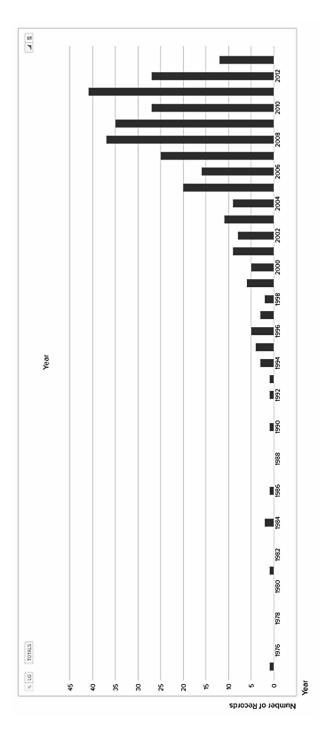


Figure 2: Scopus articles on *information ethics* distribution over 37 years (1976–2013)

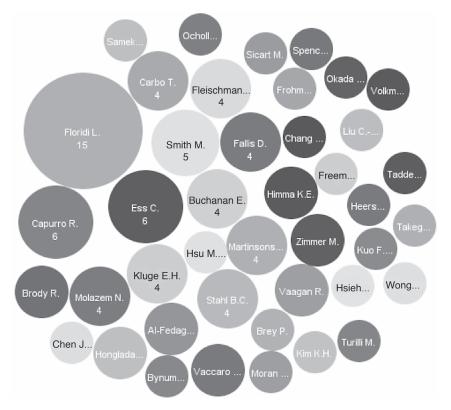


Figure 3. Top 42 authors of information ethics publications as reflected in the Scopus database

Source Countries for Publications on Information Ethics

One of the research questions in this study aimed at identifying the main source countries for publications on information ethics. *Figure 4* shows the top 15 countries that have contributed most of the publications in the area of information ethics.

In addition to source countries, it is useful to identify the top source publications in which information ethics papers have appeared. There are 37 publications that have published 2 or more papers on information ethics. *Figure 5* shows the top 11 publications. *Ethics and Information Technology* and the *Journal of Information Ethics* are the two journals with a particular focus on publishing information ethics papers.

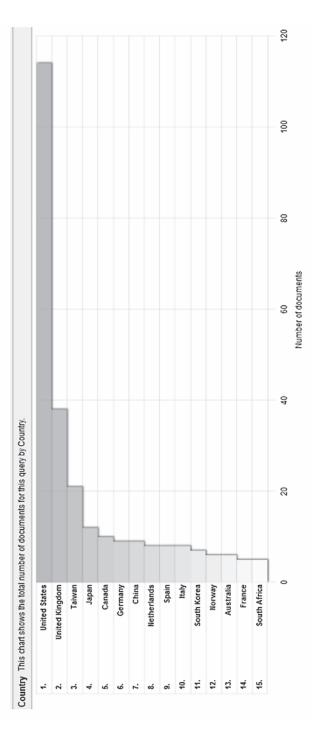


Figure 4. Top 15 source countries for information ethics publications



Figure 5. Publications with the highest number of information ethics papers

Disciplines and Domains Concerned with Information Ethics

As was stated earlier, information ethics is a multi-disciplinary domain that cuts across several subject areas. One of this study's key questions focused on the identification of domains and disciplines that contribute to information ethics. The *Analyze search results* feature in Scopus was used to identify the subject categories *information ethics* papers have been assigned.

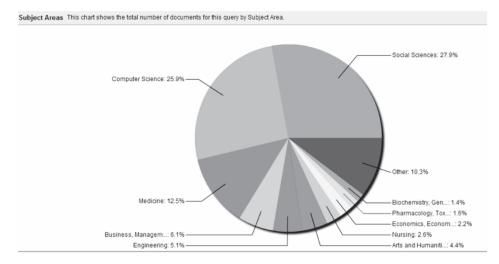


Figure 6. Scopus subject categories for publications on information ethics

Figure 6 shows a pie chart of the Scopus subject categories assigned to information ethics publications. As *figure 6* shows, the main subject categories include social sciences, computer science, medicine, business and management, engineering, followed by arts and humanities. Although this categorization is broad in nature, it does provide an overview of the multi-disciplinary nature of information ethics publications.

Most Frequently Used Terms and Topics

One of the key research questions raised in this study was to examine the most frequently used terms in the publications on information ethics. A number of tools were used to textually analyze the titles, abstracts, author assigned keywords, and indexer assigned keywords to identify frequently used terms in the metadata records for information ethics papers. *Figure 7* shows the most frequently used terms in the titles of publications on information ethics.

As can be seen in figure 7, terms such as privacy, global issues, health, edu-

		online		access
information	anddi.dolutu . 181	libraru	-	practices
ethics	andd.lluludt. 154	IIDI GI Y		annorth
ethical	allad nallam, 38	theory	_	approact
nrivacy	1. 27	science	9	philosophy
(analised		using	9	age
computer		practice	9	issue
research	13	value	9	pluralism
study	13	design	9	foundation
social	12	technology	9	just
issues	12	management	9	perspective
global	12	challenges	9	islamic
health	10	students'	9	electronic
model	6	intellectual	9	university
society	6	property	9	personal
education	6	decision	5	africa
data	6	framework	5	searching
perspectives	6	values	5	applying
internet	6	drug	5	human
business	8	role	5	riaht
development	8	introduction	5	control
students	8	challenge	5	view
use	8	medical	5	intercultural
systems	8	century	5	hased
teaching	8	context	5	en
la	8	cultural	5	software
web	7	making	5	confidentiality
digital	7	public	5	clinical
security	7	floridi's	5	conciderations
moral	2	patient	5	renort
rights	7	direct-to-consumer	5	life
professionals	7	reflections	5	problem
future	7	objects	5	china
	,	access	ď	

4 4 4

4 4 4 4

4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4

4 N N

Figure 7. Most frequently used terms in the titles of publications on information ethics

Journal of Information Ethics, Spring 2016

30

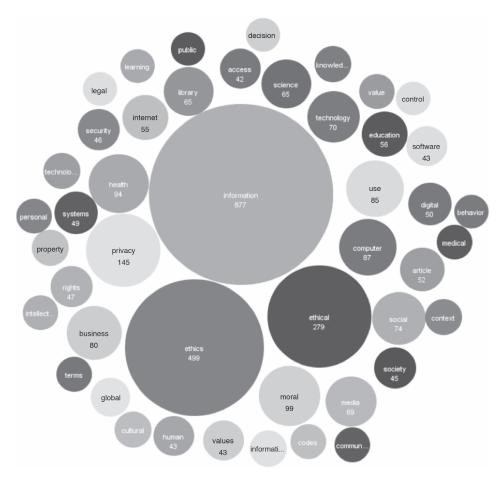


Figure 8. 46 Most frequently occurring terms in the abstracts of publications on information ethics

cation, teaching, and *Internet* are among the most frequently used terms in the titles by authors.

Figure 8 shows the 46 most frequently occurring terms in the abstracts of publications on information ethics. Evidently, the terms information, ethics, and ethical are among the most frequently occurring. What is also interesting is the occurrence of terms such as *privacy*, *health*, *moral*, *computer*, *digital*, *technology*, *business*, and *library*.

The keywords assigned by authors of the analyzed publications provide insight into some of the conceptual underpinnings of information ethics. *Figure 9* shows a list of the 50 most frequently assigned keywords to the publications by authors.

Information ethics	104	ethical pluralism	3
ethics	31	globalization	3
privacy	28	information assurance	3
computer ethics	18		
infosphere	7	information ethics education	3
Dusiness ethics	6	informational privacy	3
information	6	intellectual freedom	3
ontology	6	internet	3
professional ethics	6	kant	3
education	5	level of abstraction	3
information literacy	5	plagiarism	3
information technology	5	robot ethics	3
intellectual property	5	security	3
intrinsic value	5	software piracy	3
philosophy of information	5	theory of planned behavior	3
copyright	4	uniqueness debate	3
ethical decision making	4	virtue ethics	3
library and information		access	2
sciences	4	accuracy	2
trust	4	administration	2
autonomy	3	advertising	2
axiology	3	agents	2
censorship	3	applied ethics	2
distributed morality	3	aristotelian ethics	2
e-health	3	artificial agents	2
entropy	3	bibliometric mapping	2

Figure 9. 50 most frequently assigned keywords by authors

It is useful to examine the indexer assigned terms from the perspective of frequency of their occurrence. *Figure 10* shows the top 40 indexer assigned terms.

As *figure 10* shows, we note that frequently occurring terms include those that have medical, informational, technological, educational, or business focus. These terms occur in the frequently occurring terms in titles, abstracts, and author assigned keywords.

Thematic Categorization of Information Ethics

Having analyzed and visualized the titles, abstracts, author assigned keywords, and indexer assigned terms, a question remains to be answered: What can we learn from these analyses? In other words, can we use the terms appearing in different metadata elements to infer broad categories that would characterize information ethics as a subject area? A close examination of the above analyses may provide a broad conceptualization of information ethics and its various aspects or dimensions. Using the Visual Understanding Envi-

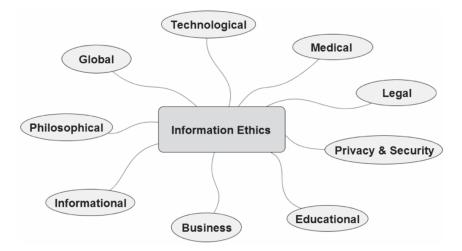


Figure 10. Top 40 indexer assigned terms to information ethics publications

ronment (VUE) tool, *figure 11* depicts the 9 aspects or dimensions of information ethics.

Figure 11 is the outcome of the analysis of term frequency using various metadata elements for information ethics publications. These aspects or dimensions may be viewed as different subject areas, domains, or disciplines. What is important in this figure is the multi-dimensionality and multi-faceted nature of information ethics as a subject area. In order to further contextualize these broad themes, a more detailed account of each theme is presented in *figure 12*. This type of conceptualization will assist in providing a more comprehensive view of the subject of information ethics.

In addition, the knowledge organization scheme depicted in *figure 12* provides a basis for a detailed analysis of the specific aspects of and topics related to information ethics as reflected in the analyzed metadata records.

The study reported here contributes to our understanding of the multifaceted nature of the area of information ethics. Teaching of and conducting research into information ethics requires a comprehensive and inclusive coverage of the subject area. This study is a step towards mapping the publications and scholarly work on information ethics for research, teaching, and education purposes. The research questions addressed in this study are fundamental as they explore how information ethics is perceived, understood, and researched by scholars.

While the analytical framework presented in this study is useful and can be applied to other topic and trend analysis studies, it has its own limitations. One such limitation is that the Scopus database, used in this study, does not cover all the publications on information ethics. Another limitation lies in the restrictive use of the term *information ethics* for the searching and retrieval of

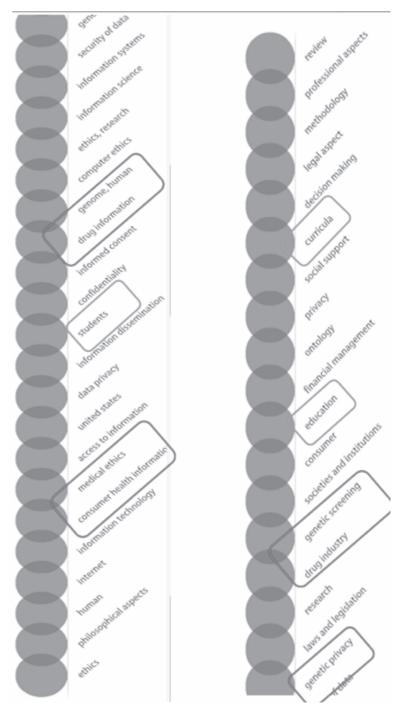


Figure 11. Broad thematic aspects and dimensions of information ethics

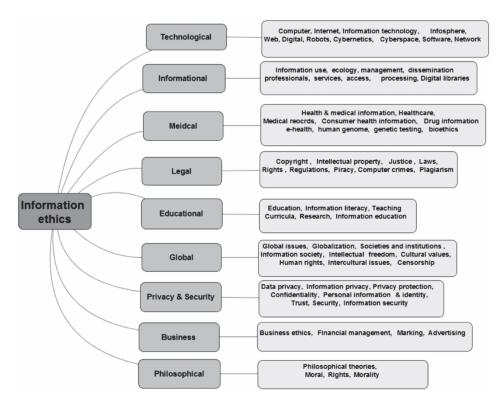


Figure 12. Information ethics thematic categories

publications on information ethics in this study. Some studies and projects may not necessarily use the term information ethics to refer to this multi-faceted and multi-disciplinary area.

Conclusion

In this paper, a metadata-based knowledge organization approach was adopted to examine the literature of information ethics as reflected in the Scopus multi-disciplinary database. A detailed textual analysis of metadata records for information ethics publications demonstrated that information ethics is a multi-disciplinary subject that has been approached from various perspectives. These perspectives include global, legal, medical, technological, informational, philosophical, educational, business, and privacy and security. Furthermore, frequency term analyses conducted in this study found that information ethics is finding its way into such areas as education, health, and business. As the critical importance of information ethics becomes increasingly evident, the thematic categorization presented in this study will be useful for education and research purposes. For instance, the thematic categorization could serve as a basis for developing courses and educational materials for various purposes. Furthermore, scholars and other researchers may find the knowledge organization approach presented in this paper useful for developing an inclusive and comprehensive perspective of different aspects and dimensions of information ethics both as a research and/or practice endeavor.

References

- Capurro, R. (2005). Information ethics. Computer Society of India (CSI) Communications, 28(12), 7–10.
- Elsevier (2014, November 3). Retrieved from http://www.elsevier.com/online-tools/ scopus. http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/1111646.1111649
- Floridi, L. (2005). Information ethics, its nature and scope. ACM SIGCAS Computers and Society, 35(2), 3-31.
- Froehlich, T. (2004, December). A brief history of information ethics. Retrieved from http://www.ub.es/bid/13froel2.htm
- Google Books Ngram Viewer: https://books.google.com/ngrams

IBM Many Eyes: www.ibm.com/manyeyes

- International Review of Information Ethics: http://www.i-r-i-e.net/about_irie.htm
- Ocholla, D.N., O.B. Onyancha, and J. Britz (2010). Can information ethics be conceptualized by using the core/periphery model? *Journal of Informetrics*, 4(4), 492–502. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.joi.2010.05.001
- OpenRefine: http://openrefine.org/

Visual Understanding Environment (VUE): http://vue.tufts.edu/

Appendix

Top 42 authors of information ethics papers as reflected in the Scopus database (based on the number of papers published)

Floridi L.	15	Stahl B.C.	4
Capurro R.	6	Al-Fedaghi S.	3
Ess C.	6	Brody R.	3
Smith M.	5	Himma K.E.	3
Buchanan E.	4	Hongladarom S.	3
Carbo T.	4	Vaagan R.	3
Fallis D.	4	Vaccaro A.	3
Fleischmann K.R., Koepfler J.A.,		Zimmer M.	3
Robbins R.W., Wallace W.A.	4	Brey P.	2
Kluge E.H.	4	Bynum T.W.	2
Martinsons M.G., Ma D.	4	Chang C.LH.	2
Molazem N.	4	Chen J.V., Pfleuger, P., Jr.	2

Freeman L., Peace A.G.	2	Okada M., Yamamoto K.,	
Frohmann B.	2	Watanabe K.	2
Heersmink R., van den Hoven J.,		Samek T.	2
van Eck N.J., van Berg J.d.	2	Sicart M.	2
Hsieh PH., Lee TK.	2	Spence E.	2
Hsu MH., Kuo FY.	2	Taddeo M.	2
Kim K.H.	2	Takeguchi K., Kikuchi A.	2
Kuo FY., Hsu MH.	2	Turilli M.	2
Liu CJ., Chang SM.	2	Volkman R.	2
Moran G.	2	Wong PH.	2
Ocholla D.	2		

Ali Shiri, School of Library and Information Studies, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AL, Canada. <ashiri@ualberta.ca>.

bers in accessing legal information. Her research is in the human right to information in general and legal information in particular. <kam59@dsl.psu.edu>.

Ke Lin, Ph.D., is a lecturer at the Center for Citizenship and Moral Education, Beijing Normal University. She studied for her doctorate at UCL Institute of Education, London. Her research interest lies with citizenship education and media literacy education. She has acted as a representative of the International Centre for Education for Democratic Citizens. Her publications refer to youth cyber civic participation, virtual ethnography, university media culture, moral and value education, and the teaching profession. linke0058@163.com>.

Kathleen Lowrey is an associate professor of anthropology at the University of Alberta. She has worked with Guarani-speaking indigenous communities in Bolivia and Paraguay since 1997 and has published on themes of shamanism, traditional knowledge, cultural and intellectual property, and indigenous politics and history. More recently she has begun to research disability-related care work in contemporary Canada. She also has a long-standing interest in historical and contemporary debates around the relationship of evolutionary theory to anthropological knowledge. <klowrey@ualberta.ca>.

Michael B. McNally is an assistant professor at the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alberta. His research interests include intellectual property and its alternatives, user-generated content, radio spectrum management, rural broadband policy and government information policy. He is Standing Member of the Van Horne Institute's Centre for Information and Communication. He has a PhD and MLIS from the University of Western Ontario. <mmcnally@ualberta.ca>.

Toni Samek is a professor and chair at the School of Library and Information Studies, University of Alberta. Toni's books include *Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility in American Librarianship*, 1967–1974 and *Librarianship and Human Rights: A Twenty-First Century Guide*. Toni received the debut Library Journal Teaching Award in 2007, a Faculty of Education Graduate Teaching Award in 2009, and in 2012 she was one of 10 professors in Canada to receive the 3M National Teaching Fellowship from the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. <toni.samek@ualberta.ca>.

Ali Shiri is a professor at the School of Library and Information Studies in the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada. He teaches in the areas of digital libraries and digital information organization and retrieval. His research areas include user interaction with digital information, digital libraries, search user interfaces and big data. His current federally funded research project focuses on the development of a digital library infrastructure to address information needs in Canada's northern regions. <ashiri@ualberta.ca>.

Lynette Shultz, Ph.D., is associate dean (international) and director of the Centre for Global Citizenship Education and Research at the University of Alberta. She has published widely on the topics of social justice and global citizenship education. She teaches courses on the topics of education governance

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.