

Issues in Information Policy: A Preliminary Overview

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to identify issues in information policy that were addressed in the literature. The study was desk-based involving a collection of secondary data from printed and electronic publications. 24 papers from different researchers ranging from the year 1985 to 2007 were analyzed. Document analysis method was used to analyze issues addressed in the literature and as a result a list of issues in the field of information policy is produced. Analysis shows that no standard categorization was obtained from the literature while the issue that was addresses by most of the researchers is access to information and several issues like pattern law and digital archiving were addressed by a single researcher.

Keywords

Information policy, issues in information policy

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Pajaro & Betancourt (2007) and Kularatne (1998) claim that information policy is unique for every country, but Moore (2004) and Rowland (1996) proved there are similarities in certain issues such as universal access, privacy, intellectual property protection, promotion of e-commerce activities.

In practice, information policy is widely used in the field of information technology (Priftis & Oppenheim, 1999). However, Nilsen, 2000 claim that information policy is a multi discipline field of study. Therefore, Browne (1997b) concluded that there have been a few researches to produce a unique issue or combination of issues to depict information policy field.

Inconsistent issues of information will result in a policy conflict in all levels of society, government and information industry (Browne, 1997b).

The statements support the justification and indicate the importance of the work to identify a set of issues in information policy and a framework for specific information policy (Rowlands, 1996). But it is beyond the scope of this study to provide a set of issues that claims to be standard issues in information policy.

The study involves an analysis of related literature in information policy field to produce a list of issues addressed by the researcher and presented according to the most addressed issues to the least.

The finding of the study will be used as a foundation to develop a set of normative information policy issues that can be used for future study especially to analyse the current situation of information policy in certain countries.

2.0 TERMINOLOGY

Previous literature shows various terms used to refer to issues in information policy such as Information Policy Components by Priftis & Oppenheim, 1999; Information Policy Values by Overman & Cahill (in Browne, 1997) & Maxwell, 2004; Information Policy Concept by Rowlands, Eisenschitz & Bawden, 2002; Information Policy Elements by James, 2001; Information Policy Scope by Moore, 2005; and Information Policy Field of Actions by Pajaro & Betancourt, 2007. The term use in this study is Issues in Information Policy as used by Trauth, 1986; Arnold, 2002; Lester & Koehler, 2003 and Smith, 2004.

3.0 FINDING OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH

The following are the finding of the previous studies regarding the national information policy. The findings are presented according to the researcher and year of publication.

3.1 Bustamante, 2007

Bustamante carried out a survey and analysed plan and action regarding national information policy in 19 countries in Latin America using the following framework. However, it is not stated how the issues were being derived.

- i. Policy regarding access to public library, promotion of books, reading & Laws on Book
- ii. Policy on scientific & technical information
- iii. Policy on mapping and statistic information

- iv. Policy on access to public information on government administration
- v. Policy on traditional information protection
- vi. Policy on information communication technology and information society.

3.2 Pajaro & Betancourt, 2007

Pajaro and Betancourt produced a list of fields of action in national information policy according to three guidelines i.e. millenium development goals of United Nation, Objectives produced by eLAC 2007 Action Plan on Regional Plan of Action and National development objectives.

i. Democratize Access

The issues are: information communication infrastructure; access to information; access cost; national information systems; application and software; public libraries and reading campaigns; distribution of scientific and technical information; public access centres; conservation of information and universal access.

ii. Developing Potential

The issues are: development of national content; digital literacy; innovation; research & development; technology transfer and protection of traditional information.

iii. Legal and Regulatory Framework

Area of action needed to be addressed is normative convergence.

3.3 The International Engineering Consortium (IEC), 2007

Traditionally, the information industry can be divided into three main components i.e. computer industry related to information storage and processing, industry related to work automation and information creation and display, and telecommunication industry. IEC produced a matrix to depict all forms of information i.e. text, voice, image, audio and video in the horizontal axis and related industries i.e. content creation industry, display industry, storage industry, process industry and distribution industry in vertical axis.

3.4 Shaeffer in Moore, 2005

Sheldon Shaeffer produced three main areas in information policy i.e. connectivity, content and competency. Other issues are:

- i. Building basic telecommunication infrastructure.
- ii. The need for policy to support the development of the information sector in the economy.
- iii. The need to support the education and training of information specialist, as distinct from ICT-specialist.
- iv. The need to move from ICT literacy to information literacy.

3.5 Moore, 2005

Moore admitted that the scope of information policy is broad. It consists of the collection of policies and strategies that are designed to promote the development of an information society. He produced seven categories of information policy as listed below:

i. Overall policy and vision

Government should produce overall document that provide a vision, scope of policy framework and specify the measures that will be employed to achieve the policy goals.

ii. Telecommunication infrastructure

The issues are: network development; public and private sector roles; pricing policy; universal access and regulation.

iii. Information sector

Issues under this category are: information content; information delivery and processing.

iv. Information and Organizations

The issues are: the public sector and e-government, private sector and e-commerce and enabling policy.

v. Information in society

The social use of information covers the policies and measures that are concerned with the provision and use of information by individuals in their roles as citizen and as consumer. The issue is generally known as overcoming the digital divide.

vi. Legal and regulatory framework

Issues in this category are: intellectual property rights; data protection; access to information and censorship.

vii. Skills and Competencies

Issues in this category are: information literacy; general information handling skills and information specialists.

3.6 Maxwell, 2004

Maxwell admitted that it is not easy to develop the taxonomy of information policy. Nevertheless, he proposed two-dimensional space to identify information policies. The first dimension consists of differentiations between individual and communal obligation and the second dimension maps the policy's relevance to four primary realms: the sovereign (national information concern), transformation (individual creativity and happiness), production of information and dissemination, and global trade and cultural exchange.

3.7 Smith, 2004

Smith produced 12 issues regarding information policy which were identified by 7 panels i.e. American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, American Psychological Association, National Agricultural Library, BIOSIS, Chemical Abstracts Services, American Meteorological Association, and Defence Technical Information Centre. The issues are: copyright; intellectual property; database protection; security and privacy; information integrity; digital archiving; open and universal access to

government information; standards for accessing data; international standards; pricing; information resource management; protection against unwanted delivery; role of libraries in the electronic age; and depository libraries.

3.8 Uhlir, 2004

Uhlir urged that the following key procedural elements should be taken into account in developing the national information policy framework.

- i. The policy framework must reference all supporting reports and laws.
- ii. Analytical factors that need to be considered are: legal; economic; institutional; social and culture; research and education.
- iii. Specific applications areas such as health, environment, energy, transportation, finance and defence, also need individual consideration.

3.9 Arnold, 2004

Arnold's research aims and focuses on development of national information policy for developing countries. Therefore, it should be linked to socioeconomic development.

- i. Policy related to information life-cycle.
- ii. The relevance of public policy on the application of information.
- iii. The relevance of the application of information.
- iv. Access to and the availability of information.
- v. Social factors
- vi. Economic factor linked to the information economy of a country.

3.10 Lester & Koehler, 2003

Lester and Koehler produced three main fields of the national information policy as follows:

- i. Policy linked to generation and production of information. Legislations are copyright; patent; trade mark and business secrecy.
- ii. Policy linked to dissemination and access to information including policy related to access to government information and government owned information.
- iii. Policy linked to distribution of information.

3.11 Arnold, 2002b

Arnold produced a list of 17 issues of national information policy typically addressed in 39 countries in Europe, North America, Latin America, The East and Africa. The issues are: the north-south divide; information content, industrial competitiveness and innovation; literacy; computer literacy; education and skills training; information society development; telecommunication issues; copyright; industrial property right; government communication; access to information; censorship;

information ownership; freedom of speech; privacy; intellectual freedom; libraries and other issues.

3.12 The Library Association, 2002

Policy and Resources Committee of The Library Association has endorsed the report and recommendation of the Policy Advisory Group (PAG) on National Information Policy and produced seven categories of information policy as listed below:

i. Social aspect

The issues are: learning society; developing world; quality of life; human rights act; European community; lifestyle changes; globalization; creative industries; competitiveness; and knowledge economy.

ii. Library and information profession

The issues are: Information skills & competencies; library & information sector staff; user communities; organizational capacity; workforce planning or supply of information specialist; necessity of information skills to an effective NIP; how the community sector can manage its information needs.

iii. Other Issues

The issues are: content delivery; interoperability; freedom of information; privacy or confidentiality; heritage or legacy; authentication; e-commerce; networking; standards or protocols; e-government; ebusiness; social inclusion; legal deposit; conservation; universal access; quality; metadata; content creation, and intellectual property right.

3.13 Rowlands et al., 2002

Rowlands et al. used the political economy frame to make better understanding about national information policy issues. They provided five information policy sub-domains as follows:

- i. Information protection.
- ii. Information market.
- iii. Broadcasting and telecommunication.
- iv. Public access to official information.
- v. Information society and infrastructure.

3.14 James, 2001

James urged that several elements should be considered when formulating information policy as follows: The right to communicate; legal and regulatory framework; freedom of expression and information exchange; diversity of content, ownership and control; the licensing and control of intellectual property; privacy; global, regional and national governance of ICT infrastructure; and rights awareness and realisation of right.

3.15 Other Researchers

Issues addresses in the field of information policy were also derived from other prominent researchers in the field

of information policy such as Priftis & Oppenheim, 1999; Browne, 1997b; Overman & Cahill, in Browne, 1997b; Webster in Browne, 1997b; Cornellá, 1997; Rowlands, 1996; Montviloff, 1990; and Wesley-Tanaskovic, 1985.

4.0 RESULTS

Literature in national information policy did not show any consensus among researchers in terms of issue categorization. Nevertheless, several issues were shared among the researchers as shown in the table 1.

Table 1: List of issues addressed in information policy literature and the researcher

Issue	Researcher
Access to Information	Bustamante, 2007; Pajaro & Betancourt, 2007; Moore, 2005; Maxwell, 2004; Arnold, 2002; Rowlands et al, 2002; Overman & Cahill, 1990; Rowlands, 1996; Montviloff, 1990
Policy on information society	Bustamante, 2007; Moore, 2005; Schwuchow, 1999; Lester & Koehler, 2003; Maxwell, 2004; Arnold, 2002; Library Association 2002; Rowlands, 1996
Intellectual property Right/ Information Ownership	Moore, 2005; Maxwell, 2004; Smith, 2004; Arnold, 2002; Library Association, 2002; James, 2001; Overman & Cahill, 1990; Rowlands, 1996
Privacy	Maxwell, 2004; Smith, 2004; Arnold, 2004; Arnold, 2002; Library Association, 2002; James, 2001; James, 2001; Overman & Cahill, 1990
Copyright	Maxwell, 2004; Smith, 2004; Arnold, 2004; Lester & Koehler, 2004; Arnold, 2002; Rowlands et al, 2002; Wesley-Tanaskovic, 1985
Policy on Public Library	Bustamante, 2007; Pajaro & Betancourt, 2007; Smith, 2004; Arnold, 2004; Arnold, 2002; Library Association, 2002; Rowlands, 1996
Policy on Access to Public Information on Government Administration/ Freedom of information	Bustamante, 2007; Smith, 2004; Rowlands et al, 2002; Maxwell, 2004; Library Association, 2002; Rowlands et al, 2002; Overman & Cahill, 1990
Policy regarding Information Communication Technology	Bustamante, 2007; Pajaro & Betancourt, 2007; Moore, 2005; Arnold, 2004; James, 2001; Webster, 1995; Montviloff, 1990
Protecting Traditional Knowledge including heritage/ legacy/ oral tradition	Bustamante, 2007; Pajaro & Betancourt, 2007; Maxwell, 2004; Library Association, 2002; Wesley-Tanaskovic, 1985.
Policy to Support Information Industry including creative industry	Int. Engineering Consortium, 2007; Moore, 2005; Arnold, 2002; Library Association, 2002; Rowlands, 1996; Wesley-Tanaskovic, 1985
Universal Access	Pajaro & Betancourt, 2007; Moore, 2005; Library Assoc., 2002; Rowlands et al, 2002; Priftis & Oppenheim, 1999
Telecommunication infrastructure	Moore, 2005; Arnold, 2002; Rowlands et al, 2002; Montviloff,

	1990; Wesley-Tanaskovic, 1985
Information specialist/ occupational	Moore, 2005; Library Association, 2002; Webster, 1995; Montviloff, 1990; Wesley-Tanaskovic, 1985
Data Protection	Moore, 2005; Smith, 2004; Arnold, 2004; Rowlands et al, 2002; Rowlands, 1996
Information literacy/ Digital Literacy	Pajaro & Betancourt, 2007; Moore, 2005; Arnold, 2004; Arnold, 2002
Policy related to Culture	Lester & Koehler, 2003; Arnold, 2004; Library Association, 2002; Webster, 1995
Policy related to scientific and technical information	Bustamante, 2007; Pajaro & Betancourt, 2007; Kularatne, 1998; Streotmann & Schwuchow 1992
Information handling skill	Moore, 2005; Arnold, 2002; Library Association, 2002; Montviloff, 1990
Censorship	Moore, 2005; Maxwell, 2004; Arnold, 2004; Arnold, 2002
Policy related to legislation and regulation	Pajaro & Betancourt, 2007; James, 2001; Wesley-Tanaskovic, 1985
Standards for accessing data	Smith, 2004; Arnold, 2004; Library Association, 2002
Free Speech/ Right to Communicate	Maxwell, 2004; Arnold, 2002; James, 2001
Connection/ networking	Library Association, 2002; Webster, 1995; Wesley-Tanaskovic, 1985
Government secrecy/ National Security	Maxwell, 2004; Smith, 2004; Overman & Cahill, 1990
Global village	Maxwell, 2004; Library Association, 2002
Social Contract	Maxwell, 2004; Library Association, 2002
Information integrity/ authentication	Smith, 2004; Library Association, 2002
Information resource Management	Smith, 2004; Montviloff, 1990
Trans-border data flow	Arnold, 2004; Montviloff, 1990
Content delivery	Library Association, 2002; Wesley-Tanaskovic, 1985
Information Exchange/ Resource Sharing	James, 2001; Montviloff, 1990
North/ South Divide/ Digital divide	Maxwell, 2004; Arnold, 2002
Cost and Benefit/ funding	Overman & Cahill, 1990; Wesley-Tanaskovic, 1985
Usefulness	Overman & Cahill, 1990
Education policy	Rowlands, 1996
Freedom of establishment	Rowlands, 1996
Tax /employment law	Rowlands, 1996
Acquisition of foreign publication	Wesley-Tanaskovic, 1985
National bibliographies	Wesley-Tanaskovic, 1985
Patent Law	Wesley-Tanaskovic, 1985
Legal deposit	Library Association, 2002
Freedom of Expression	James, 2001
Quality of Life	Library Association, 2002
Human Right	Library Association, 2002
Depository Libraries	Smith, 2004
Digital Archiving	Smith, 2004

The issue mostly addressed in information policy literature is access to information that was addressed by

nine researchers, the second issues mostly addressed were policy on information society, intellectual property right or information ownership, and privacy as addressed by eight researchers. Whilst, third mostly addressed issues were copyright, policy on public library, policy on access to public information on government administration or freedom of information, and policy regarding information communication technology. These were addressed by seven researchers.

In contrast, issues addressed by a single researcher are: education policy; freedom of establishment; tax or employment law; acquisition of foreign publication; metadata; national bibliographies; patent law; legal deposit; freedom of expression; quality of life; human right; depository libraries; and digital archiving.

5.0 CONCLUSION

It was agreed among researchers that information policy is needed by all the governments in the world. However, the study shows that there is no consensus among researchers on the categorization of issues in information policy. The study also shows that some issues are shared by different researchers and some are addressed by a single researcher. Issues that are addressed by most of the researchers can be used as a set of normative issues in information policy. This set of issues might be used as a benchmark when analysing the current status of information policy in a country.

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