1. What can be done to reinforce the right to seek and receive information in the online environment?

The digital divide between the global North and South is narrowing, but instead there is an "access divide" to knowledge resources. Technical developments in recent years have increased bandwidth particularly in Asia but also Latin America and Africa, although there are still major discrepancies with the global North. Technology alone is not enough, however. In fact, the right to education includes the right to information, communication and knowledge. They can be seen as one human right as they are interlinked.

2. What mechanisms can develop policies and common standards for open-licensed educational resources and scientific repositories, and for the long-term preservation of digital heritage?

- Governments and international organizations to reinforce free and fair access to knowledge for developing countries;
- Governments to include support for open access repositories in Official Development Assistance, including training and support as well as infrastructure;
- Regulators to support the development of regional hubs that index open access repositories, distinguishing between full text repositories and those offering only metadata;
- Public and private actors to develop open access and open publishing initiatives in collaboration with institutions in the global South that include global visibility, accessibility, new ranking mechanisms, building impact factor metrics and local value attribution.

3. How can greater progress be made as regards inclusive strategies for women and girls as well as marginalized and disabled people?
Gender equality in access to information, communication, knowledge and decision-making is an important dimension of an inclusive and people-centre society. It includes ensuring parity in women’s representation in high levels and decision-making in the ICT:

- Public and private media institutions to care for cultural and lingual diversity of programmes;
- Building empowering capabilities of women and girls to use ICTs for education, formation and citizenship and for older persons in computer and internet literacy;
- Validate and include indigenous people’s values and knowledge;
- Policy makers to guarantee the freedom of expression while avoiding moral harm and violation of the integrity of persons.

4. How can accessibility be facilitated through increases in locally produced and relevant content in different languages?

5. What can be done to institutionalize Media and Information Literacy (MIL) effectively in national educational systems?

- Educational institutions to increase information ethics in the curricula and examine a “driving licence” for young adults for using the information highways (already practiced in test schools);
- Educational institutions to care for ethical aspects

6. What are the current and emerging challenges relevant to freedom of expression online?

Information and communication technologies are not just an expression of a globalising world, they are also the foundations on which globalisation has been built, including its economic, cultural or political aspects. In Geneva in 2003, WSIS highlighted the “Ethical Dimensions of the Information Society”: the need to uphold fundamental values, respect human rights and the fundamental freedoms of others, while dealing with the “abusive uses” of Information and Communication Technologies, through illegal and illicit actions. Such ethical questions raise the issues of regulation and regulatory frameworks. The ethical challenges transcend the “abusive uses” of ICTs, however, encompassing issues such as access to information and knowledge, capacity building, cultural and linguistic diversity, identity, local content and media pluralism. The global nature of ICTs suggests that a global approach is required. Yet while global decision-making structures in international fora may be able to deal with issues of technical standards, they are often not adapted to dealing with the ethical challenges of the information society. International regulatory agreements are subject to negotiations between governments that might have very different ideas about what constitute, for example, “illegal and illicit actions” or pluralism and diversity. Large transnational corporations may de facto
exercise greater influence than elected governments in developing policy and regulatory frameworks. In this context, parliaments, governments and strong civil society organizations need to exercise their respective roles in promoting and protecting communication rights, including the right for all to engage in transparent, informed and democratic debate. There is a balance to be faced between Internet freedom, which may risk exacerbating inequity and unequal access, and promoting an equity of access that requires regulation. The current regulatory structure for information and communication technologies risks favouring economic and commercial deregulation to the detriment of the wider interest of communities and the public commons.

7. **How can legislation in a diverse range of fields which impacts on the Internet respect freedom of expression in line with international standards?**

   • The United Nations in the WSIS+10 review process to reaffirm the foundational principles of the Information Society (Universal Declaration of Human Rights; freedom of expression and of association, “seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”), and for civil society organizations to remain vigilant about any threats to such principles;

   • UN instruments to promote the regulation and freedom of the cyber-sphere, including a UN Rapporteur on Human Rights and Internet;

   • International regulatory bodies for the information society including the ITU and the Internet Governance Forum to ensure a multi-stakeholder approach based on transparency, accountability and representativeness, to encompass the activities of transnational corporations, to address net neutrality and inequalities in Internet access.

8. **Is there a need for specific protections for freedom of expression for the Internet?**

   See answer to question 7.

9. **To what extent do laws protect digitally interfaced journalism and journalistic sources?**

10. **What are the optimum ways to deal with online hate speech? How can Media and Information Literacy empower users to understand and exercise freedom of expression on the Internet?**

11. **What are the optimum systems for independent self-regulation by journalistic actors and intermediaries in cyberspace?**
• Associations and network of professionals (e.g. journalists, publishers, librarians) to ensure the promotion and strengthening of ethical codes in the production, distribution and archiving or information, communication, and knowledge;

• Associations and network of professionals to develop and promote respective codes for consumers who become more and more also producers of media content (bloggers, citizen journalists, citizen photographers etc.)

• Governments to ensure a legal framework that offers space for corruption-free and honest journalism;

• Governments and society as a whole to protect information professionals and to take clear legal actions against killing, intimidation and other violations of the freedom of expression;

• Governments, content producers, media owners and consumers to ensure cultural, linguistic and religious diversity;

• Training institutions of media professionals to include ethics courses as mandatory in the curricula;

• Training institutions to provide training in digital safety for journalists, both off-line and online.

12. What principles should ensure respect for the right to privacy?

Privacy is a human right, not a commercial concession. Views on privacy rights differ between the US, UK, Continental Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America and political structures. Threats to privacy are constantly arising - especially from the commercial and security sectors and social networks. Reasonable balance needs to be struck between privacy and security needs. The WSIS process should support the safeguarding of privacy, in coherence with open access to information.

Different political systems and historical experience lead to different privacy policies. Companies, in their pursuit of profit, must respect the privacy of individuals.

Proposals:

• Governments to enact and enforce reasonable privacy safeguards for their citizens;

• Companies to develop software and collecting data to ensure greater attention to the ethical dimension of business, including a genuine respect for the privacy of individuals;

• Internet intermediaries to be more transparent about requests they receive from governments for data access.

13. What is the relationship between privacy, anonymity and encryption?
14. What is the importance of transparency around limitations of privacy?

15. What kinds of arrangements can help to safeguard the exercise of privacy in relation to other rights?

16. How can openness and transparency of data be reconciled with privacy?

17. What may be the impact of issues relating to big data on respect for privacy?

18. How can security of personal data be enhanced?

19. How can Media and Information Literacy be developed to assist individuals to protect their privacy?

20. How can ethical principles based on international human rights advance accessibility, openness, and multi-stakeholder participation on the Internet?

There are various approaches to developing an ethical framework related to Information and Communication Technology such as international declarations, processes for developing codes of ethics, and expert recommendations.

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), held in two sessions in Geneva (2003) and Tunis (2005), offers an example of the first approach. With more than 11,000 registered participants at the Geneva session, a four-paragraph section in its “Declaration of Principles” refers to the “Ethical Dimensions of the Information Society”: What is striking about these four paragraphs is both how widely, and how narrowly, the “ethical dimensions” of the Information Society are defined: beyond the need to uphold fundamental values, respect human rights and the fundamental freedoms of others, the ethical dimension is largely confined to the “abusive uses of ICTs”, related to illegal and illicit actions. In fact, other parts of the declaration also have an ethical dimension, such as access to information and knowledge, capacity building, cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content, and the place of media. This illustrates that the issues that form part of a global communications ethic are not necessarily those labelled the “ethical dimension”.

A second example to develop an ethical framework for information and communication is the attempt from 2000 onwards within UNESCO to develop of a “Code of Ethics for the Information Society”, which received added impetus from the responsibility given to UNESCO to follow up the WSIS line of action on the ethical dimensions of the information society. The process brought together participants from a wide range of countries and backgrounds to elaborate
principles to “facilitate broader and fairer access to information … while protecting human dignity in the digital age”. This process was complemented by regional meetings organised by or in collaboration with UNESCO. The result was a 19-point Code of Ethics offering “a set of values, basic rights and obligations in the information society which should guide the actions and be observed by the members of the information society” and which was presented to the UNESCO General Conference in October 2011. The draft emphasised that this was not intended to be “of a binding nature” but “is addressed to all stakeholders of the information and knowledge societies and outlines a number of universal values and guiding principles”.

A third example of developing an ethical framework for communication and information is that of recommendations of an expert group, in this case the Opinion of the “European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies to the European Commission” on the Ethics of Information and Communication Technologies” and presented to the European Commission in February 2012. As the report of an expert group, rather than the result of a World Summit or even an multi-stakeholder consultation process such as that undertaken under the auspices of UNESCO, this is a much more detailed review of the ethical issues of information and communication technology. At its core, however, the ethical basis of the recommendations is derived from the context of the fundamental rights and values stated in the Treaty on European Union, and particularly issues of human dignity, respect of freedom, respect for democracy, participation and citizenship, respect of privacy, respect of autonomy and informed consent, justice, and solidarity.

21. What conceptual frameworks or processes of inquiry could serve to analyse, assess, and thereby inform the choices that confront stakeholders in the new social uses and applications of information and knowledge?

At first sight, the UNESCO approach (see question 21) appears to have the most potential. The Code of Ethics was an attempt to go beyond the reaffirmation of basic values in order to set out the implications for the polity as a whole. While not intended be of a “binding nature” would provide guiding principles addressed to “all stakeholders of the information and knowledge societies”. However, there is often the situation, as in this case, of achieving consensus at the level of political decision making.

What is necessary, however, is to have an iterative inter-cultural process, as part of which the ethical challenge is not simply to establish a global code of ethics, but to promote a global discussion on ethical issues

22. How does ethical consideration relate to gender dimensions of the Internet?

The gender dimensions of the Internet do not only require codes of ethics, normative and legislative measures to ensure full gender access to receiving and disseminating information via the Internet, but also require mechanisms that include full participation by women as well as men in the elaboration of such frameworks, through actively ensure balanced gender participation and the involvement of organisations promoting gender rights.
23. How can ethics, - i.e. the simultaneous affirmation of human rights, peace, equity, and justice - inform law and regulation about the Internet?

Law and regulation of the internet must be informed by fundamental principles of ethics such as:

- Justice/equity based on the inalienable human dignity of every human being and on their equality. Justice grows when people cultivate a deep respect towards each other. Fair and equal chances of access to information are a precondition for mutual understanding.

- Freedom of access to information, of expression, of belief and of decision is core for human dignity and human development. Freedom, equity and responsibility balance each other.

- Care and compassion is the ability for empathy, respect and support of the other. It leads to solidarity.

- Participation is the right and ability to participate in societal life and in decisions of concern.

- Sharing leads to, enables, and sustains relationships between human beings and strengthens communities. The ITCs enable in an extraordinary way the sharing of information and knowledge.

- Sustainability as long term perspective for green technologies.

- Responsibility is accountability for one’s own actions. The level of responsibility has to correspond to the level of power, capacity and capability. Those with more resources bear greater responsibility.

All these values are interconnected and balance each other.

24. What international, regional and national frameworks, normative guidelines and accountability mechanisms exist of relevance to one or more fields of the study?

It is necessary to distinguish civil society, the institutional political system (government), and the broader framework of political society as a complex of actions and initiatives which aim to influence institutional policies. All three areas together constitute the “public space” of a political community. In this international, regional and national frameworks elaborating normative guidelines and accountability mechanisms need to take account of all three areas of public activity.

25. How do cross-jurisdictional issues operate with regard to freedom of expression and privacy?
26. What are the intersections between the fields of study: for example, between access and freedom of expression; ethics and privacy; privacy and freedom of expression; and between all four elements?

27. What pertinent information materials exist that cut across or which are relevant to the four fields of the study?

28. What might be the options for role of UNESCO within the wider UN system in regard to the distinct issues of online Access to information and knowledge, Freedom of Expression, Privacy and Ethical dimensions of the information society?

The specific role of UNESCO as a specialised agency is to hold together the various areas of "public space" (see q 24) not only at national but also at the international level in developing an iterative approach towards the online Access to information and knowledge, Freedom of Expression, Privacy and Ethical dimensions of the information society.

29. What might be options for the role of UNESCO in relation to stakeholders outside the UN system?

30. For each study field, what specific options might UNESCO Member States consider?