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Editorial Note to AJIC Issue 15

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EDITORIAL NOTE TO *AJIC* ISSUE 15

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The study of informatics and ICT for development (ICT4D) has progressed immensely in the past decade, 2005 to 2015. Each of these fields is broad in its own right, and they have converged to offer an even broader platform for research and investigation. From educational informatics and ICT for education (ICT4E) to data analytics, Internet presence and the Internet of Things and People, researchers can establish a rich tradition of research in this emerging field for the African continent.

There is already extensive scholarly publishing on informatics and ICT4D, charting the contours of early stage digital transformation in Africa. This issue of *The African Journal of Information and Communication (AJIC)* publishes a collection of articles developed from papers presented at the 44th Southern African Communications Lecturers Association (SACLA) Conference, held on 2 and 3 July 2015 at Open, Maboneng Precinct, Johannesburg. The theme of the conference was "Renewing ICT teaching and learning: Building on the past to create new energies". The emphasis on renewal offers an important message to academics and universities to push forward with change, in an era where change inertia has set in in many parts of the higher education environment and where a reminder is needed that, in the 21st century, change is the only constant. Digital technologies will only create value in the university experience when used for active innovation in teaching and learning, rather than passive availability. Investment in university Internet access, where most ICT spending has historically focused, offers only the foundation for educational informatics, not the digital learning experience. Educational futures require investment in the creative side of digital media use for teaching, learning and research.

Issue 15 also publishes a range of unsolicited articles relevant to this thematic area, carefully reviewed, revised and edited. These articles illustrate the breadth of the field of informatics and its importance for future development, as well as the new research problems in the fields of informatics and ICT4D. The topics of cyber-bullying and the people-centered Internet are not new, but deserve increasing attention as the challenges of ICT access and effective usage, and the issues of user protection, require more in-depth, qualitative analysis and new perspectives on the intractability of the negative consequences of Internet use and the digital divide. Research also needs to pose alternatives to such long-term negatives.

Of particular interest are the scholarly contributions from the CyberAbuja2015 conference, the International Conference on Cyberspace Governance held in Abuja from 4 to 7 November 2015, on the theme "The Imperative for National and Economic Security". The proceedings for this IEEE conference included papers on social networking, digital forensic analysis, e-voting and other topics. Organised by the Centre for Cyberspace Studies at Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria, and the local IEEE chapter, the conference provided a valuable platform for encouraging knowledge sharing amongst African academics and the postgraduate research community.

The publication of an annual thematic journal issue on informatics and ICT for development aims to draw contributions that engage with the growing research agenda and the many and varied research topics under investigation in this field, including educational and health informatics, e-government and e-governance, the history of the Internet in Africa, the emergence of an African development software sector, and more. Articles will be published online first, following which an annual journal thematic issue will be consolidated in the December of each year.