Chapter 11

# Information Governance Framework to Achieve Information Hygiene in South Africa

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## ABSTRACT

*This chapter aims to develop an information governance framework to achieve information hygiene. In this study, information hygiene is defined as a process to achieve proper information. Information hygiene is developed to prevent any form of fake news. Fake news in this context is defined as misrepresentation of information, created to harm the person. Fake information developed extensively during the spread of COVID-19 in 2019. This chapter will use literature to review the content of the study.*

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to develop an information governance framework to achieve information hygiene. According to the Collins dictionary, Information hygiene is the careful evaluation of the information that one is consuming and disseminating. In

this chapter, information hygiene is defined as a process seeking to achieve authentic and reliable information. The development of Information hygiene is premised on the need to prevent any form of fake news and misinformation. Fake news in this context is considered as the misrepresentation of information created to harm a person or an organisation. Ho, Chan, and Chiu (2022), who draw on the views by Au et al. define "misinformation" as wrong information circulating on the Internet and social media, and "fake news" is "(online) news articles that are intentionally and verifiably false and misleading." The creation of fake news, as noted by Ho, Chan, and Chiu (2022) as found in Morgan, could be a deliberate attempt with a political intention, or based on purely financial incentives as there are possibilities of individual or company earnings of revenue from the deliberate spread of (fake) news and associated advertisements. People with a particular political agenda, not necessarily working on behalf of a government, may spread fake news and misinformation within their communities and across the national borders to influence other countries' politics. Finally, fake news may be deliberately circulated to affirm other people's own beliefs to the detriment of the larger society, as noted during the spread of misinformation during the 2019-2020 spread of Covid-19 while the disease ravaged global communities and continues to up to this day.

The embracing of information as a human right under a democratic principle occurring in various countries has witnessed a surge in demand for access to information. This rise in demand for access to information is based on societal awareness of their rights. An increased access and availability of information enables the achievement of outcomes, identification of opportunities, effective and informed planning, maximisation of value, management of risks, accountability and good governance, the creation, use, maintenance and sharing of information, knowledge creation, problem-solving, and decision making. However, Ryabova and Fesun (2021) argue that the increase in access and availability of information poses a high risk of the spread of fake information in media, and an accidental or on intentional misinformation of society as well as manipulation of public opinion. According to Ho et al. (2022), the Internet has, since the day it was invented, gradually risen to become a powerful means of producing and exchanging information and news. However, as observed by Varynskyi (2020), while technology, the Internet and social media platforms play an enormous role in facilitating access to information, the largest part of the information space of Internet media is fake information. In addition, a considerable part of the adult population receives its news primarily from social media. Thus, the question arises whether information sourced from the media outlets is trustworthy enough and hence, this study's focus on the need to develop an information governance framework to achieve information hygiene.

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