Big Data: Ethics, Privacy, and Standards

**Abstract**

Today computing is ubiquitous and the widespread ability to collect, integrate, and analyze massive amounts of data, creates important opportunities for increasing knowledge and solving fundamental problems of development.

Africa is rapidly catching up to the rest of the world in terms of big data. The immense volume, diversity, velocity, and potential value of data will have profound implications for privacy, the economy, and public policy in our respective countries and on the continent.

However, with big data come new challenges relating to privacy, ethics and data governance. For example, how can we harness big data’s potential for good, while maintaining essential privacy protections? Technology alone will not solve privacy problems; the law needs to keep pace. How can government, industry, consumers and citizens work together to craft a balance between beneficial uses of data and individual privacy.

This presentation uses the case of recent Ebola and use of mobile call data records to highlight the ethical, privacy and governance issues that dynamic big data poses in an African context and makes concrete suggestions to facilitate access to and use of big data that takes these concerns on board.