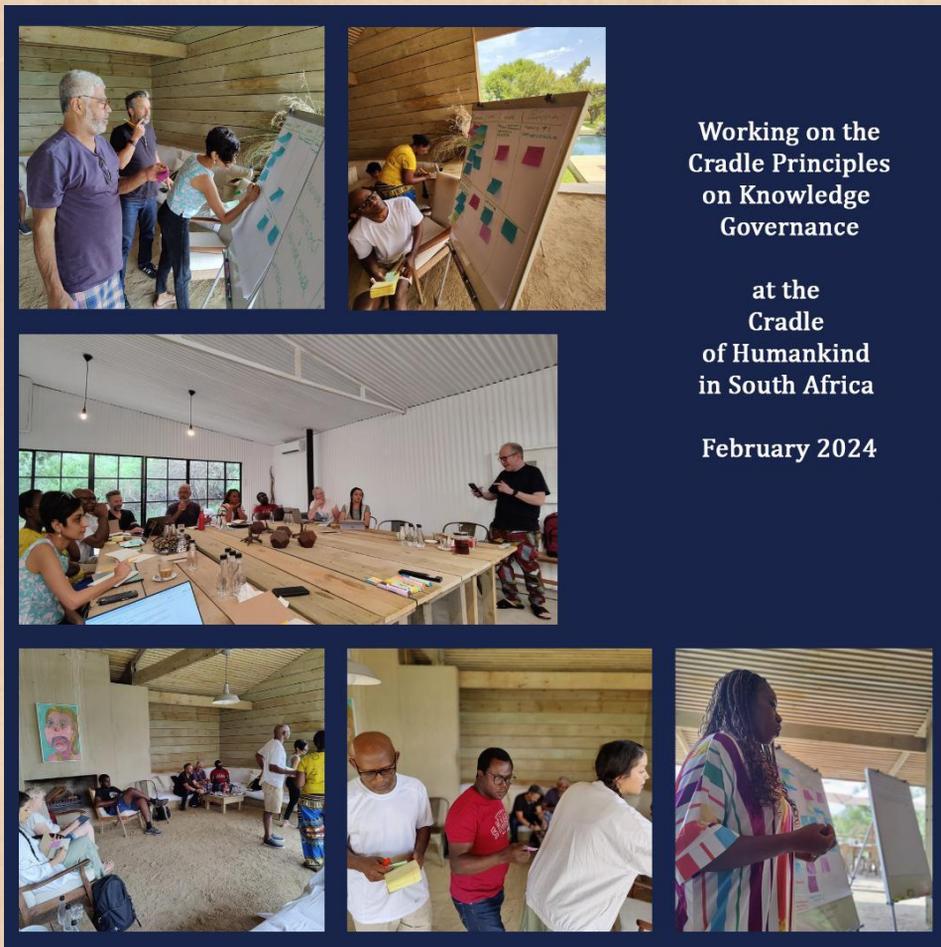


Cradle Principles on Knowledge Governance

Origin of the Cradle Principles

A group of copyright academics, stakeholders and computational researchers gathered for a policy retreat in the Cradle of Humankind, South Africa, February 23-25, 2024. The subject of the meeting was enabling African and other Global South uses of digital research tools without promoting “data colonialism” concerns, including wrongful uses of traditional knowledge and community-held information.

The retreat produced 5 principles, known as the the Cradle Principles on Knowledge Governance.



Cradle Principles

Knowledge Governance Systems

- **are composed of governmental regulations** from domains including international and constitutional law, traditional knowledge, intellectual property, media and telecoms law, privacy, competition and biodiversity. They also comprise cultural practices and norms, including traditional systems governing the use of community-held knowledge.
- **must promote the goals of sustainable development**, social justice and human rights, including rights to produce, receive and impart information; to create, produce, participate in and benefit from culture and science and to benefit from the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from scientific, literary or artistic production.
- **must provide balanced frameworks** that protect and promote access to information for research, scientific inquiry, analysis, translation, and preservation of cultures and languages, including through cross-border collaborations. Rights of researchers should extend to access and use privately-held information needed for the exercise of any fundamental right.
- **must promote the rights and interests of Indigenous peoples** and local communities in the knowledge economy, including rights to self-determination, inclusion, cultural integrity, data sovereignty, sustainable development and participation in decision making. Indigenous peoples and local communities must be able to actively participate in innovation, wealth creation, and research, and receive equitable access to the benefits arising therefrom. Researchers have a duty to respect and promote the custodian function of traditional communities over their knowledge and innovation systems.
- **must ensure sovereignty over knowledge resources** to combat unidirectional information resource extraction and misappropriation that aggravates inequalities and injustice in the ability to access information and knowledge, including by:
 - > preventing abuse and misuse of intellectual property rights or the resort to practices that unreasonably restrain trade, promote excessive pricing, or adversely affect the transfer of technology by rights holders;
 - > Giving due accreditation to custodial communities for any traditional knowledge or traditional cultural expressions generated from them;
 - > protecting against the commodification, misappropriation, enclosure, and dispossession of information by accumulation;
 - > striving to enhance functional access to digital resources, especially in the developing and least developed countries, and not escalating the digital divide, digital colonialism and other exclusionary tendencies in the global knowledge economy.

Cradle Principles

Cradle Principles on Knowledge Governance

The Cradle Principles were drawn up at a retreat organised by the Program on Information Justice and Intellectual Property (PIJIP) at American University and the Black Stripe Foundation with Support from the Arcadia Fund.

The participants included:

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