
National Social Information Technology Infrastructure: A Potent Mechanism for Waging Anti-Corruption War

Wilson Nwankwo, Olanrewaju Babatunde, Chinedu Paschal Uchenna, Olayinka Comfort

College of Natural and Applied Sciences, Wellspring University, Benin City, Nigeria

Email address:

wilson.nwankwo@yahoo.com (W. Nwankwo), bs.olanrewaju@gmail.com (O. Babatunde), drpuchinedu@gmail.com (C. P. Uchenna), tcolayinka@gmail.com (O. Comfort)

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Abstract: In the 21st century, Corruption evolved into a gigantic and almost infeasible phenomenon pervading the social and economic fabrics of societies across the globe to the extent of stalling social development, equity and fairness in the distribution of commonwealth. No State whether or not developed can boast of a corrupt-free society although countries with superior media advantage has used vehicles of propaganda and media supremacy to portray and pass the bulk to those societies that are disadvantaged usually the developing countries. However, it is not as if the developing countries to which the bulk are often passed are not culpable of the same virulent and corrosive vice. It is interesting to note that ware against corruption has become a global song. In on the foregoing note that this paper is conceived to address the various instruments of anti-corruption especially having regard to the digital age in which we live in. This paper adopts a socio-technical approach in studying the various forms of corruption in the Nigerian society as well as the present measures to combating it. It evolves an effective communication infrastructure driven by integrated and coordinated national social information technologies, that provide unified information exchange platform for the entire citizenry wherein vital information arising from events, social, political, and economic spheres from the public and private domains are exchanged on real-time thereby closing the information circulation gap usually exploited by corrupt officials in perpetrating corrupt practices.

Keywords: Social Information Technologies, Corruption, Sociopolitical Dynamics, Anti-Corruption Warfare

1. Introduction

Nigeria has not had it so good in its growth towards nationhood since its independence in 1960. The 30-month civil war from 1967 -1970 followed by over three decades of military rule is no doubt a major reference point in the socio-political and economic history of Nigeria. One of Nigeria's endowments is its unique socio-cultural diversity. A major crux of the nation's struggles and woes is more often than not attributed to its diverse multi-ethnic groups [1-3] numbering over 389 with about 371 distinct tribes, 510 distinct languages, with unique culture, dialect, isoglosses, and beliefs. Whether or not the foregoing assertion is generalizable has been perceived in various quarters as a matter of interpretation [4-5] owing to the fact that Nigeria ranks below Kenya, Tanzania, Cameroun, among others in terms of ethnic fractionalization index [6-9], and below

Cameroun and India in terms of cultural diversity. Be that as it may, the socio-political system of Nigeria in nearly two decades could be described at best as an incongruous and incoherent ecosystem where the social fabrics that would have held the society together is continuously in the brink of collapse as a result of the massive corruption entrenched over the years by public and military officers. Multi-ethnic and multicultural endowments have been held to be the cause of this quagmire that has hindered development and civilization [10] but promotes increasing collapse of patriotism across the socio-political spheres. However, it is evident that corruption has its root in many other factors such as poverty, greed, and selfishness.

Corruption in itself is a complex phenomenon with no universal definition. It has been defined as the totality of all the forms of improper or selfish exercise of power and influence attached to a public as well as private office [11]. In

the *Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act Cap C31, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004* which established the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC), corruption is defined to include: bribery, fraud and other related offences [12]. Offences punishable include: willful giving and receipt of bribes and gratification to influence a public duty, fraudulent acquisition and receipt of properties, deliberate frustration of investigation by the anti-corruption commission (ICPC), making false returns, making of false or misleading statements to the anti-corruption commission, attempts, conspiracies and abetments of offences under the Act. Simply put, corruption is the abuse of power for personal gains. As Osoba [13] puts it, corruptions is “anti-social behaviour conferring improper benefits contrary to legal and moral norms, and which undermines the authorities’ capacity to secure the welfare of all citizens”. According to Osoba [13], subsequent regimes after the colonial period have been pervaded by corruption. It may be rightly stated that the spate of corruption was propelled by increasing oil revenues in the 1970s till date resulting in corruption galore that manifests opens in the form of kleptocracy and graft. The ruling class has continued to promote the deadly vice notwithstanding the creation of anti-graft agencies and legislative frameworks supposedly aimed at tackling this vice. As helpless as it may look, it is interesting to note the growing poverty, misery and degradation among the mass of Nigerians in the midst of the heightened domination by the political bigwigs whose quest for greed, political cynicism and violence know no bounds while the economy and social institutions have been driven into decay.

In the midst of this socio-economic quagmire there remains a sheer optimism that with appropriate apparatuses driven by communication across the social strata that supports realtime exchange of information arising from experiences, that could be useful in addressing common problems as corruption by appropriate authorities, the society may be on its way to experiencing a birth of a national culture grounded on loyalty to the Nigerian State as against personal aggrandizement engineered by abuse of power and greed. Unarguably, such exchanges would require a platform that encourages the members of the society to express their opinions, and ideas without fear of persecution. In this regard, an effective all-inclusive communication platform would be necessary. Effective communication has been proven in different terrains as a vital catalyst in the formation of cohesive societies [14-18]. It is submitted that an effective and efficient communication platform driven by integrated and coordinated national social information technologies [19], that provide unified information exchange platform for the members of the society has the potency of closing the information circulation gap that creates misgivings across the social strata.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Communication pervades all aspects of human endeavor and affects productivity as well as socio-economic and socio-

political growth and national development. For large societies that are highly fragmented in relation to ethnicity, language, culture, customs and traditions, natural face to face communication is often difficult as one party must understand the language of communication of the other party before effective communication can take place. In the information age in which we live in, technology seems to have transcended ancient cultures and tradition by providing a near-universal platform through which members of the society can establish and maintain relationships regardless of their locations and ethno-religious affiliations. Presently, Nigeria is plagued with too many social problems ranging from widening social stratification, ethno-religious crisis, corruption, governance problems, lack of public trust to name a few. There is no gainsaying that lack of effective communication is a major contributor in the scheme of the present chaotic situation as the governed and the government appear to be on different sides of the divide and often on different pages leading to the evident erosion of public confidence and trust and subsequent failures in the implementation of supposedly public policies and programmes particularly influenced by corruption. Corruption is almost enthroned as a tradition with obvious manifestations in diverse forms such as: nepotism, bribery, diversion of public funds, abuse of power, abuse of discretion, abuse of office, fraud, stealing, misappropriation, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, extortion, molestation, to name a few.

Though a host of social information technologies are available and are contributing substantially to the development of the society, majority of these technologies had remained in the hands of private individuals or authorities. The forgoing concern poses serious socio-economic and political issues arising from factors such as controllability, privacy, reliability of information, cohesiveness, manipulation, etc. These factors if left unchecked are potential sources of social havoc including discrimination, tribalism, religious extremism, disaffection, disintegration, etc. all of which are inimical to the growth and sustenance of any society. It is submitted that a coherent National Social Information Technology Infrastructure would reduce or eliminate these issues owing to the injection of centralization, uniformity, standardization, orientation, and public private participation.

1.2. Specific Objectives

- a. To explore the nature and impact of social information technologies on the socio-cultural, socio-economic, and socio-legal dynamics of the society with emphasis on phenomenal vices such as corruption.
- b. To identify the prospects of social information technology infrastructure towards reducing the spate of corruption in a socio-political entity as Nigeria
- c. To evolve a cohesive and adaptive model that could guide the government towards the implementation of a national social information infrastructure
- d. To identify the benefits of a thoroughly crafted

National Social Information Technology Infrastructure as it affects closing the gap between the governed and the government

1.3. Research Questions

In a bid to propound the creation of National Social Information Technology Infrastructure, the following questions were thrown:

- a. What is the nature of the existing social information technology and how does it operate? Is there any need to warrant the isolation and application of such a concept?
- b. Does social information infrastructure pose any socio-economic, cultural, political, psychological, and legal relevance to the fight against corruption in Nigeria?
- c. What are the challenges and problems confronting the existing social information technologies that prevent them from exerting positive influence on the growth and sustenance of the Nigerian society especially as it affects the war on corruption?
- d. Having regard to the decentralized control of global information network (Internet), is there any way of ensuring that vital information aimed for a particular

socio-political entity is protected from being abused?

1.4. The Information Infrastructure

Hanseth [20] defined Information infrastructure as “an awesome shared, evolving, open, standardized, and heterogeneous installed-base”. Pironti [21] has described it as a system which involves people, processes, procedures, tools, facilities, and technology all of which support the creation, use, transport, storage, and destruction of information. In Pironti’s perspective, Information infrastructure comprises technological and non-technological elements with their interrelationships. It is a system shapes work routines as well as the ways in which members of a group look at practices, attitudes, and changes within an environment. Modern information technologies rely on information infrastructure. The basic components of a modern Information infrastructure are Internet, health systems, corporate systems, and people. It is also consistent to include innovations like the social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Whatsapp, MySpace as a form of Information infrastructure [22].

Information infrastructure may be explained in terms of dimensions. These dimensions are shown in the diagram in Figure 1.

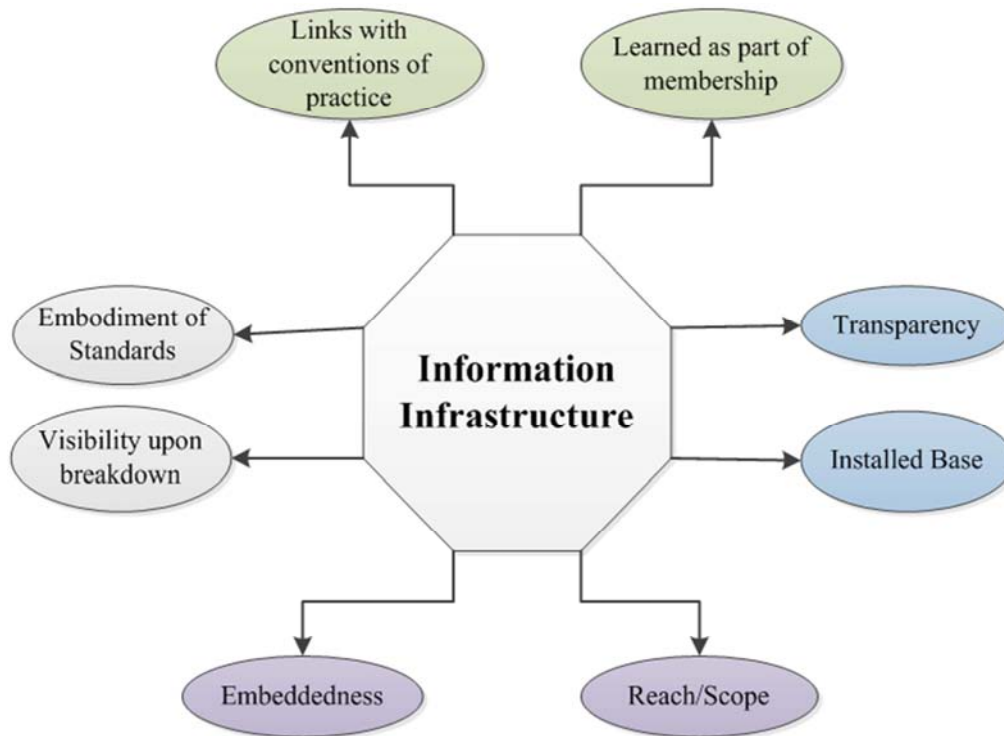


Figure 1. Information infrastructure expressed in terms of dimensions.

1.4.1. Information Technology as an Integral Component of Information Infrastructure

According to Sagarmay [23], IT is a technology used to store, manipulate, distribute or create information. The technology implied on the above context could be any mechanism capable of transforming raw data into useful information. Sargamay’s definition of IT may be said to be

very limited having regard to its evolving nature and the interface modern technologies have had with the society. This is illustrated in the diagram in figure 2 which represents the elementary components of IT. Modern IT is greatly influenced by one of its components, the Internet-a global network that has reduced the world to a village. Following the evolution of the ARPANET into the Internet, a public global information exchange system, the Information

Technology industry and the society have become enmeshed into a sociotechnical system in which case the affairs of the society are greatly shaped by technology. Thus IT has continued to play very dominant role in every sphere of our lives and it may not be unreasonable to aver that in the next two decades, it will become the primary determinant of the

scope of socio-economic affairs. The foregoing could be validated by the massive life-changing innovations in the realm of information gathering, distribution, global communication, and the ongoing integration of the Internet to all household and industrial apparatuses in what is termed the “Internet of Things”(IoT), a revolution so to speak.

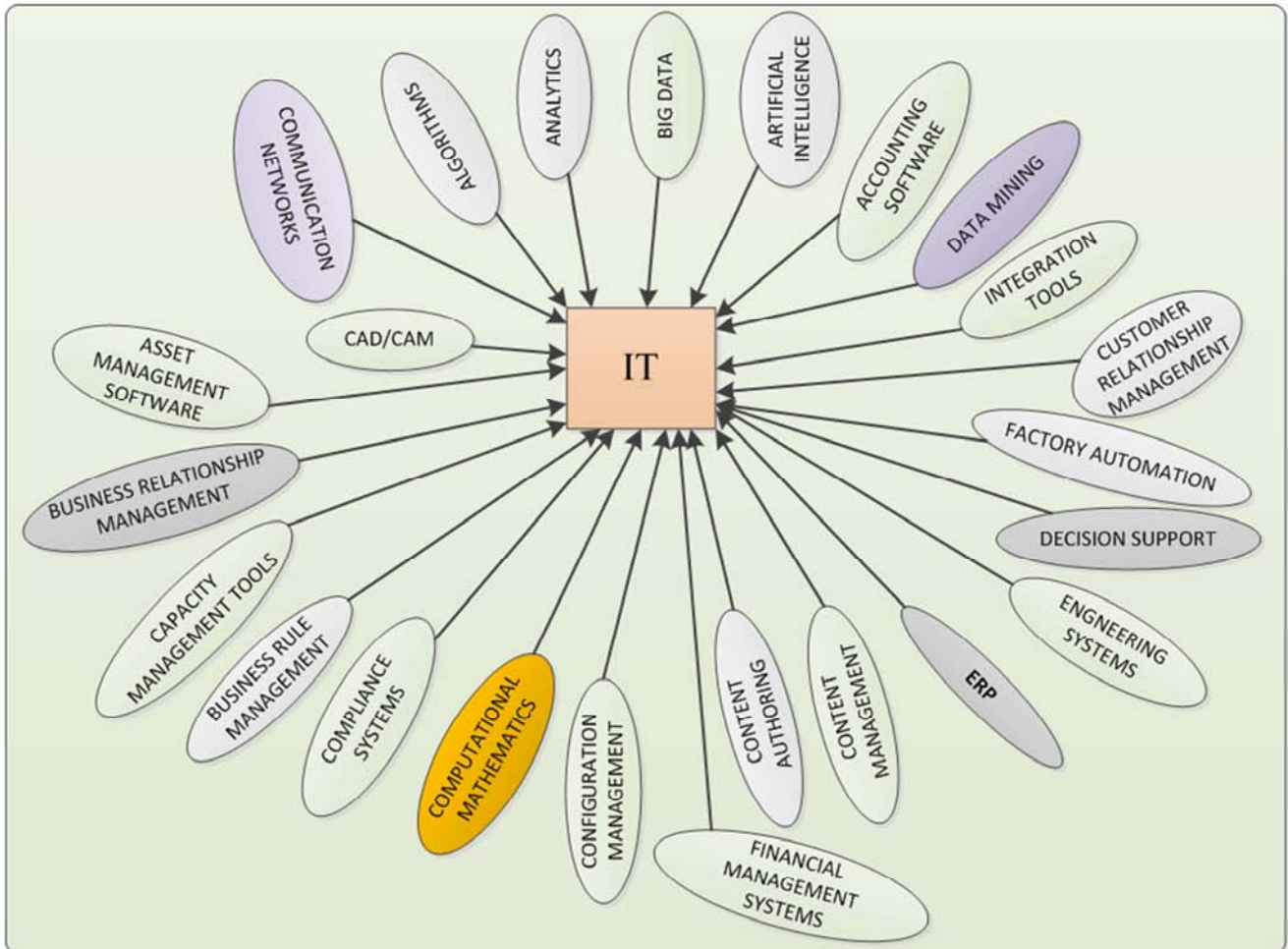


Figure 2. Elementary components of IT.

1.4.2. Social Information Technology (SIT) and the Web 2.0

Agreeably, there is no generally accepted definition for social information technology. However, there is a common context uniting the numerous perspectives of SIT. These uniting factors are expressed using the heptagon in Figure 3. In other words, the central theme of SIT is the creation and sustenance of a structured system that supports exchange of thoughts, ideas, opinion, facts, information, etc. between people in a centralized or self-regulating manner. Like its parent, Information Technology (IT), SIT may reflect any or all of the three things: product, process suite, field of study. Though in this paper, the emphasis is on SIT as a product and

process, the three elements are briefly discussed.

As a product, SIT refers specialized computing technologies adopted by individuals, social groups, and organizations which enable the creation, dissemination, manipulation, sharing, and storage of information through collaborative contributions directed at establishing and maintaining social relationships.

As a process suite, SIT includes tools, techniques, methodologies and associated equipment used to create, collect, process, present information, and share information directed at creating a sort of social relationships among social groups and organizations.

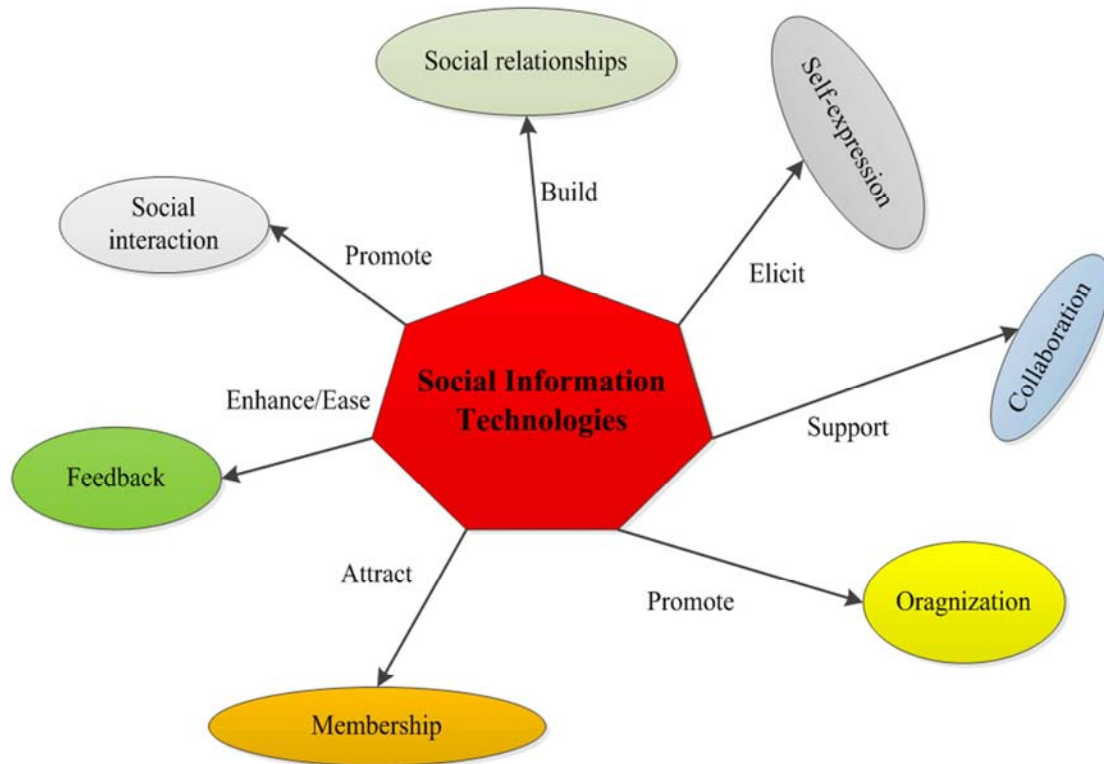


Figure 3. The Seven sides of Social Information Technology.

As a field of study SIT has been defined in various ways. Kling [24] defines Social Information Technology as "the interdisciplinary study of the design, uses, and consequences of information technologies that takes into account their interaction with institutional and cultural contexts". Kling, Rosenbaum, & Sawyer [25] expressed SIT as a synonym for Social Informatics (SI), the study of information and communication tools in cultural, or institutional contexts. However, this definition is a bit broad as information and communication tools may not necessarily involve the Internet.

The scope of SIT covers technology developments as it relates to its interactions with culture and society. Social information technology focuses on the economic, technological, social, cultural, educational and organizational conditions. SIT investigates the relations between systems development on the one hand, and decision making, power structures, legislation, learning effects, organizational aspects, media influence on the other having regard to contexts and situations. The watchword of SIT is relevance, ensuring that technological innovations are socially-driven rather than technology-driven.

SIT is closely related the Web 2.0 technologies. However, it may be submitted that though Web 2.0 applications is a substantial component of SIT, there are other components which do not necessarily use the web as their platform but also run through the Internet. Note that the World Wide Web, usually called the Web for short, is just an integral component of the Internet. SIT may be broadly divided into two groups: communication tools, and interactive tools. Communication tools typically handle the capturing, storing

and presentation of communication, usually written but increasingly including audio and video as well. Interactive tools are used to relay interactions between persons or members of a social group, the objective being the establishment and maintenance of connections among users, and facilitating the mechanics of conversation and talk [26].

On the other hand, Web 2.0 is an Internet-oriented technology that reflects the second generation of the World Wide Web whereby the dominant static HTML pages in Web 1.0 specification are replaced with a more interactive and dynamic web experience that allows collaboration and sharing of information in real-time through online platforms such as social media, blogging, Web-based communities, etc.

1.4.3. Social Media (SM) and Social Information Technology

These two terms have been highly used interchangeably to mean the same thing in the public domain. Technically and generally speaking, these are two different terms though related. The distinction lies in the fact that social media may exist without a technology in the right sense of it. SM like SIT has various definitions and it is submitted that there is no general definition as to the boundaries of social media. SM has been defined in the following ways:

Internet-based applications, platforms and other media that are aimed at enabling the creation and exchange of content, interactions and collaborations among users [27].

A web-based social outlet such as online websites that allow individuals to communicate and establish social networks such as Facebook and web-based videos like those viewed on YouTube [28]

Social media as a set of internet-based applications build on the technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that enable user-generated content to be created and exchanged [29]

Group of Internet-based applications or platforms used for create, share, or exchange information in the form of text, images and videos [30]

Technologies that facilitate social interaction, make possible collaboration, and enable deliberations across stakeholders [31].

Kietzmann et al [32] had suggested that social media be classified according to identity, conversations, exchange, presence, relationships, reputation and groups.

Kaplan and Haenlein have noted that researchers and practitioners do not agree on regard what is to be included under the umbrella of social media. Their assertion is evident

in the various definitions that have been given to social media.

Consequent upon the foregoing, applications which are hitherto grouped under social information technologies (e.g. blogs, podcasts, social bookmarking, etc.) are currently subsumed to social media. This has contributed to the popularity of social media. Nevertheless, it is evident from various perspectives of social media above that the technology behind social media is a part of the larger family of social information technology.

1.4.4. Classification of Social Information Technologies

It is imperative to note that there are so many technologies comprising social information technologies. The classification presented in this paper is not exhaustive. Figure 4 shows this classification.

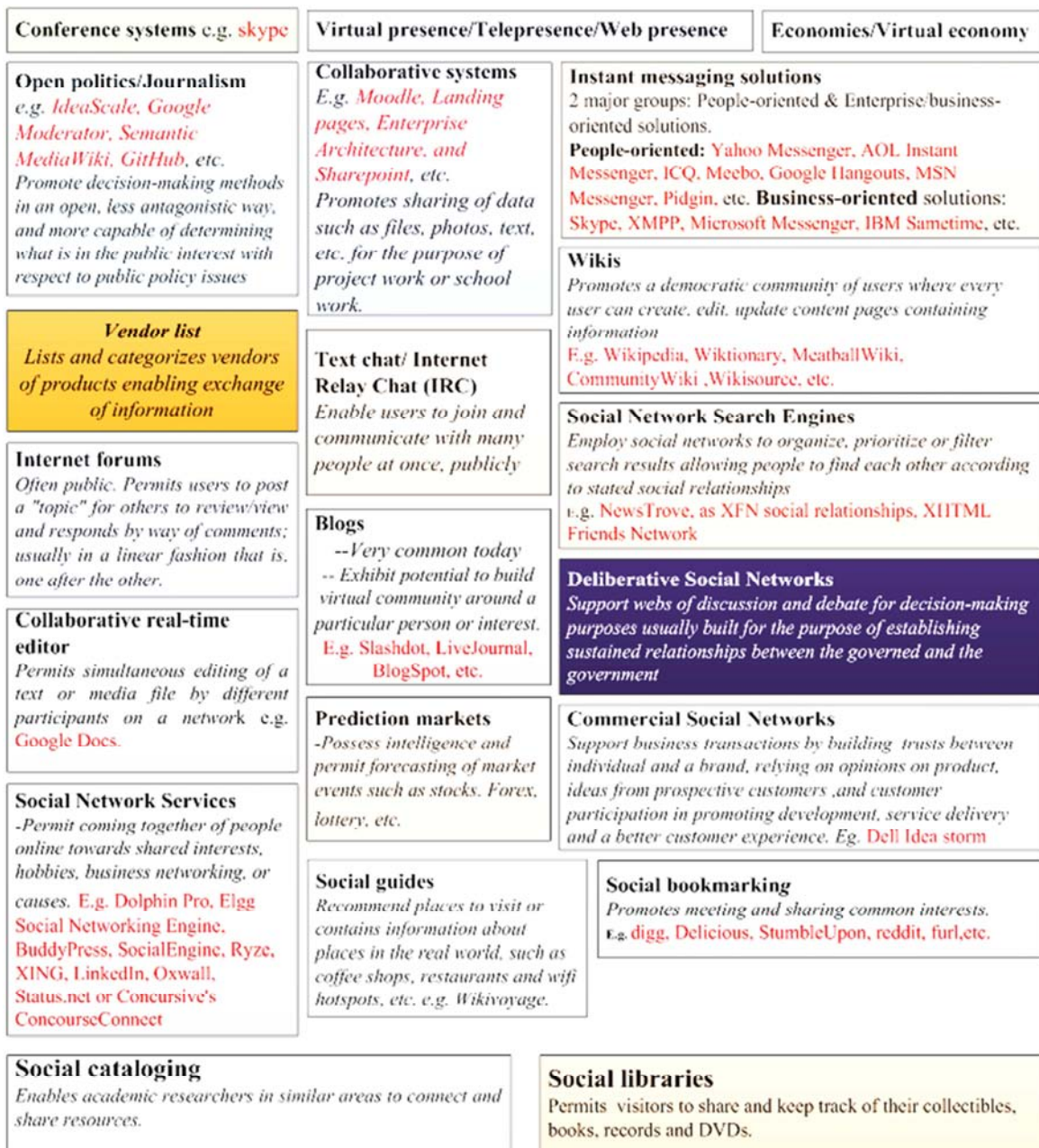


Figure 4. Classes of Social Information Technologies.

1.4.5. Social Information Technology and the Nigerian Society

Sustainability in a society may be expressed in terms of the potent factors that promote social cohesion in the society. Social cohesion may also be described in terms of how the members of a society (the governed and the government) relate on public matters from time to time. The said relationship is about information sharing. Social Information Technology is considered a marriage between social forces that shape the society and information technologies. It is a broad area that involves the integration of culture and information technologies as well the effect of such relationship on the socio-economic, socio-legal, and socio-cultural dynamics of the society. It captures the impact of Information Technology on social forces within social groups, political entities, economies, governments, culture, tradition, etc.

The Nigerian society is not alien to the global drive of Information Technology. Nigeria has often been labeled as one of the largest consumer of technology [33]. No less could be said in the area of social information technologies especially the social media. Public policy is a vital element of governance in all modern societies. The spread of social information technologies appears to be a potential vehicle for getting the people acquainted with current policies and what the people stand to gain from such policies. Recent studies have indicated that the information technology investments have improved the productivity of national economies and organizations [16, 23]. The growth of e-commerce businesses in Nigeria in the last decade and the use of SIT platforms to attract local and foreign clients is good evidence in support of the foregoing. Developing nations, such as Samoa, India, and New Zealand, have been able to leverage national development with advances in IT. Deployment of e-learning technologies as it relates to preserving and disseminating knowledge of the cultural heritage of the society. Justice delivery has also benefitted from trends in SIT. Application for social information technology in the public justice delivery could foster the quick dispensation of justice by enabling interaction among the stakeholders i.e. courts, judges, and litigants. Court stakeholders, can adopt SIT platforms to deal with emotional states, customs, workplace cultures, and the problems associated with solving private problems in public spaces.

One key area of growing importance in the use of social information technology is education. There is an increasing emphasis on the integration of information and communication technology to enhance the teaching and learning process within education. On-line tutorials, interactive multi-media and virtual reality are helping students succeed in their learning.

These technologies focus on the way in which users interact with new technologies and how the technologies aid in reshaping the society in medium- and long-term use through flexible education and training. Social information technology is a sustained method in understanding

educational and training issues in ways that do help improve the learning outcomes. Often the main drive for technology-enhanced education has resulted in national policies that are supported by the government, such as the recent e-learning strategy that has been proposed for the National Health Service in the United Kingdom (UK).

Unarguably, SIT has been used and misused. It is on this note of misuse that a Lagos Lawyer and Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Mr. Festus Kenyamo, in his recent remarks on the use of Social media on Channels Television [34] regarded Nigeria as operating two Republics one of which he regarded as “Republic of Social Media”. Notwithstanding the misuse and disuse SIT has tremendous benefits and potentials to the Nigeria society many of which are yet untapped. These benefits are addressed in section 4 below.

1.4.6. Social Information Technology, Anti-Corruption Agencies, and Legislations in Nigeria

Nigeria boasts of several institutions, agencies, and legislations for combating corruption. The frontline anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria include: The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Nigeria Police and other security agencies, Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Offences Commission (ICPC), Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB), Federal Character Commission, Public Complaints Commission, Judiciary, National Assembly, Code of Conduct Tribunal (CCT), Central Bank of Nigeria, etc.

In a similar vein, there are obviously sufficient legislations that are structured towards conquering the gigantic demon called corruption. These legislations include:

1. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) Cap C23, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004
2. Criminal Code Act Cap C38, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004
3. Penal Code Act Cap P3, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004
4. Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act, 2011
5. Economic and Financial Crimes Commission Act Cap E1, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004
6. Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Act
7. Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Act Cap C31, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004
8. Code of Conduct bureau and tribunal Act Cap C15, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004
9. Public Complaints Commission Act Cap P37, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004
10. Central Bank of Nigeria Act Cap C4, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004

Notwithstanding the plethora of agencies and legislations, it is sad to note that the war against corruption has not achieved much over the last decade. Enforcement of the said laws remains a serious pitfall in the arrest of the ill situation.

Nevertheless, a critical look at the modus operandi of these

agencies listed above reveals that each effort made towards fighting corruption is driven by the information made available to the agency in question. The EFCC, ICPC, CCB, all operate by “tip-offs”, petitions, etc. made to it. For instance, the mandate of the ICPC is to receive and investigate reports of corruption and in appropriate cases prosecute the offender (s), to examine, review and enforce the correction of corruption prone systems and procedures of public bodies, with a view to eliminating corruption in public life, and to educate and enlighten the public on and against corruption and related offences with a view to enlisting and fostering public support for the fight against corruption. The EFCC also has a similar mandate though in a different sphere, its operation being restricted economic crimes. One thing is common among the agencies, i.e. information. In other words, an agency may be handicapped if the information it requires to drive its operation is to be formalized, for instance via petitions, legal suits, etc. Such may cause a delay or even stall the investigation or

prosecution. However, it is interesting to note that some agencies especially the security agencies, for instance, the Nigeria Police is currently operating social media channels (e.g. Whatsapp) dedicated to information exchange with the public, the essence of which is to enhance realtime reporting of unlawful events taking place even in the remote areas.

1.4.7. Problems and Challenges of SIT

Some of the problems posed social information technologies are summarized in Figure 5. They include:

- a. Spread of falsehood and fake emergency alerts
- b. Fraud/Crime
- c. Lack of cohesiveness
- d. Controllability issues
- e. Legal framework and enforcement of extant laws may be difficult
- f. Promote hatred, bias, and socio-cultural affiliations that may harm the unity of the State

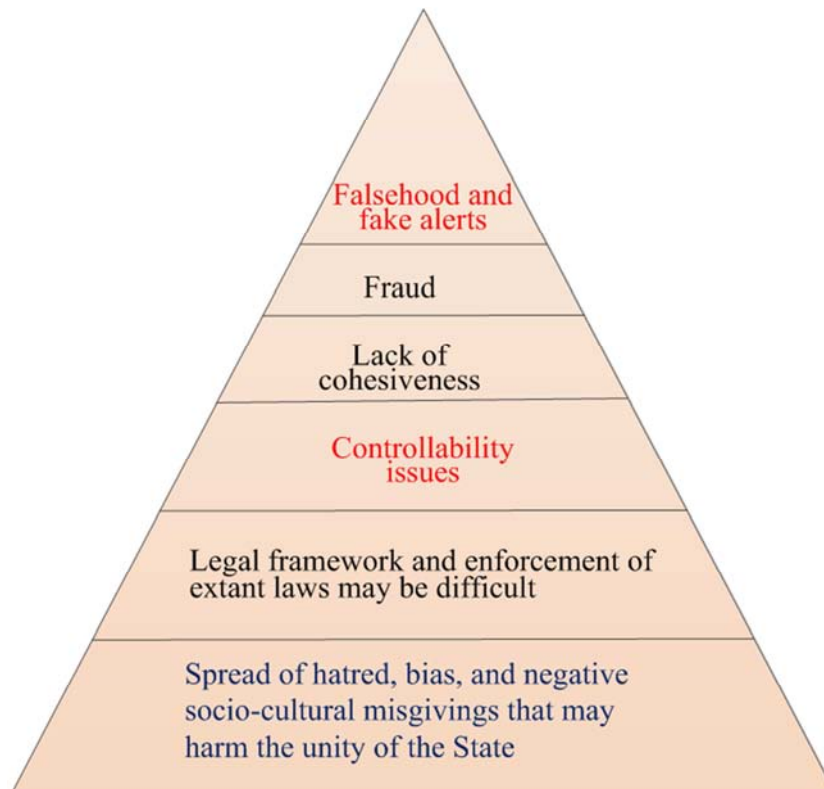


Figure 5. Problems and challenges posed by SITs.

2. Evolving a National Social Information Technology Infrastructure

One of the greatest concerns about social information technology is the lack of cohesiveness and controllability issues associated with it. In other words, there is no reasonable central control of the existing social technologies and this has made its reliability often questioned. Consequent

upon this lapse, the nation needs a cohesive framework not owned and exploited by private entities but a public platform that is jointly owned by the government and the public. The platform would support the exchange of information through specific channels or social sub-networks all driven by the public network regulated and domiciled within the Nigerian cyberspace. Unlike the conventional social media which spreads and promotes the circulation of all manner of information, the NSITI will streamline the nature of information to be shared through the various channels it would support.

Presently, there are agencies in Nigeria saddled with the responsibility to develop, regulate and coordinate information technology in Nigeria such as the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), National Communications Commission (NCC), Nigeria Broadcasting Commission (NBC), amongst others, but it appears much is left to be done in the creation and maintenance of a cohesive architecture that would engender cohesion, and control of the exchange of social information.

Simply put, an Information Technology Infrastructure (ITI) may be described as a collection of hardware, software, networks, data centers, and relevant equipment used to develop, test, operate, monitor, manage, support information technology services. The ITI addresses: business activities and processes, data sets and information flows, applications and software, and technology. The implementation of an ITI does not imply a change in the systems and policies of the organization in question.

In the social perspective, a National Social ITI would refer to a suit of technology apparatus that drives how the government and the governed work together to accomplish the very purpose that necessitates the existence of governance.

Borrowing a cue from Chapter 2 of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution [as amended] in Section 15 bordering on Fundamental objectives and Directive principles of State Policy which provides as follows:

(1) Accordingly, national integration shall be actively encouraged, whilst discrimination on the grounds of place of origin, sex, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic association or ties shall be prohibited.

(2) For the purpose of promoting national integration, it shall be the duty of the State to:

(a) provide adequate facilities for and encourage free mobility of people, goods and services throughout the Federation.

(b) secure full residence rights for every citizen in all parts of the Federation.

(c) encourage inter-marriage among persons from different places of origin, or of different religious, ethnic or linguistic association or ties; and

(d) promote or encourage the formation of associations that cut across ethnic, linguistic, religious and or other sectional barriers.

(3) The State shall foster a feeling of belonging and of involvement among the various people of the Federation, to the end that loyalty to the nation shall override sectional loyalties.

It could be rightly submitted that a well-crafted NSITI would provide a good framework towards realizing the provisions highlighted above and consequently a cohesive

and united society.

3. Materials and Methods

In this paper, the sociotechnical approach is adopted for the development of the NSITI due to the fact that it takes into consideration the interrelationships between technology, individuals, organizations and society in the environment. Thus the following elements must be considered carefully: hardware, software, social, psychological, political, policy and legal systems that comprise the overall sociotechnical system. First and foremost, the existing communication patterns and existing social technologies have been reviewed above. Based on this review, it is clear that there is no national social information architecture. To evolve one, the following steps as captured in figure 6 are adopted.

Figure 6 shows the various steps that may be taking to evolve a NSITI. Seven procedures are identified. The first stage involves the definition of the vision, objectives, and principles underlying the proposed social Information Technology Infrastructure. The next stage is the identification of certain baselines, for instance; the current trends in information dissemination, the challenges, the actors and recipients in an information network, the kind of information that should be supported, the technologies through which the information should be conveyed, the connectivity and plurality of technologies, control, etc. once the baselines are clearly stated, the target architecture could be developed and reviewed. The target architecture takes care of detailed description and relationships between the various components of the architecture such as activities of users, data sets and information flows, applications and software, performance measures, technology, Security and privacy considerations. Opportunity and gap analysis constitute important aspect of the development and would involve the critical documentation of viable opportunities socially, politically, and economically which the said architecture could help in harnessing and harvesting for the benefit of the public. For instance, each vendor of the existing discrete technologies e.g. Skype, Facebook, WhatsApp, etc. derives immense benefits from such inventions and public agencies like NCC and NITDA could leverage on such known benefits. Vital social issues like governance, nepotism, security, corruption, conflict management, etc. are many of the opportunities that are to be duly analyzed in order to craft an architecture that will realize the stated objectives. In addition, the gaps created by the existing mass media, social media, broadcast media, etc. need be identified in the process. Of much importance is the consideration of a platform that could support majority of the members of the society regardless of one's social class or ethnic affiliation.

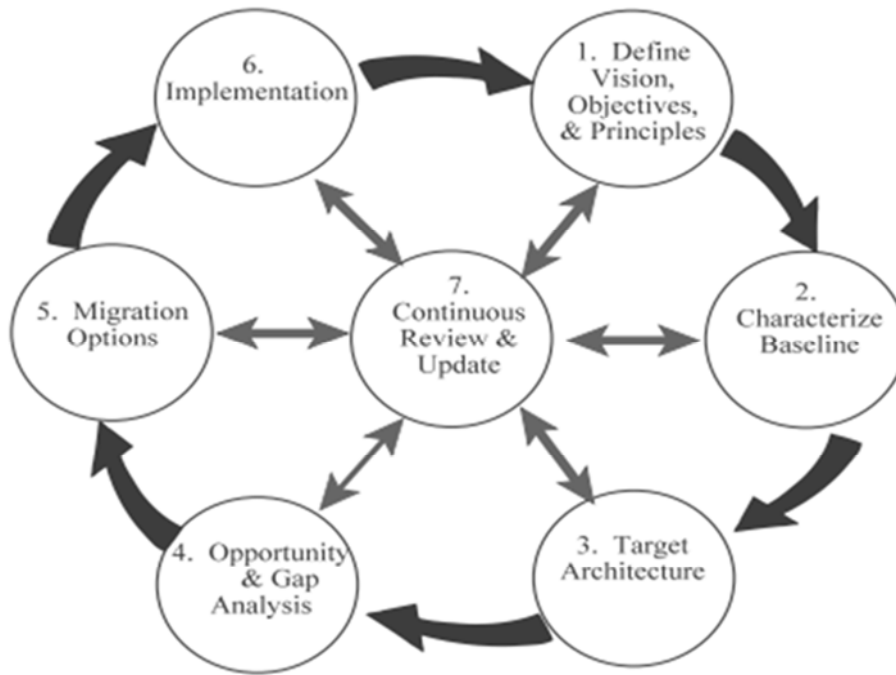


Figure 6. Steps in developing the NSITI.

Figure 7 shows the proposed NSITI. It is divided into three sections: social, information, and technology architectures respectively.

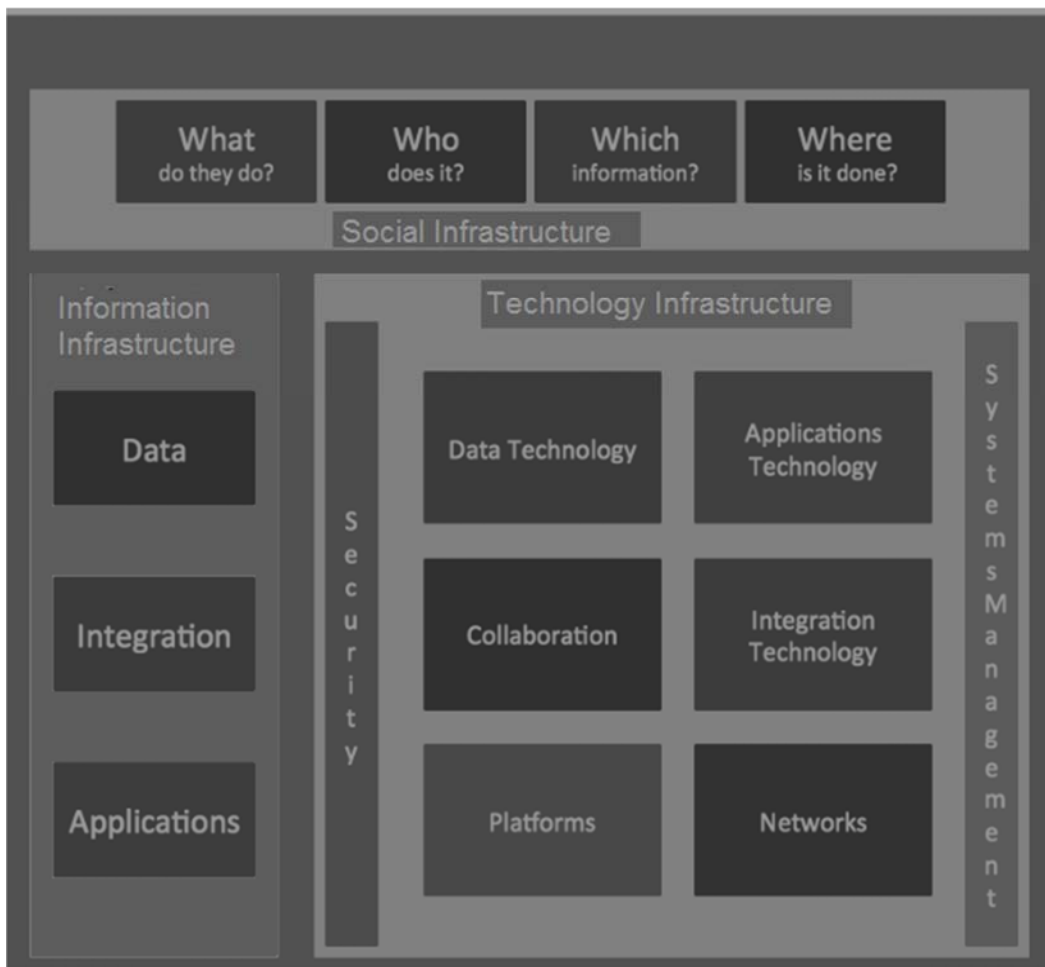


Figure 7. The NSITI.

4. Discussion

The NSITI is a classical architecture that is aimed at supporting the Government's desire to have a united and progressive society as well as the citizen's desire to be closer to the government and participate in the making and execution of policies geared at development of the general masses. Section 4.1 highlights the benefits of the architecture while section 4.2 examines briefly the challenges that may be witnessed in the process of implementing the architecture.

4.1. Benefits of SIT

Information Technology infrastructure has positively impacted our society, the entire world [23]. The same is true for SIT. The list of the benefits of NSITI presented below is not exhaustive.

1. Self-expression
2. Surveillance
3. Governance/Security: Government agencies can collate and monitor statistical information that they can use to combat fraud and manage the economy in a more informed manner. Sufficient intelligence could be gathered through these technologies and harnessed to manage social conflicts.
4. Anti-corruption agent: Davies and Fumega [35] have identified eight kinds of ICT interventions that hold potential for preventing, detecting, analyzing, and addressing corruption: Transparency portals—platforms that offer timely publication of key government documents online. Open data portals—platforms that provide free access to data sets in machine-readable formats. Service automation—platforms that replace discretionary decision-making by public officials with auditable software processes. Online services—platforms that allow citizens to self-serve for public service access. Online right-to-information requests—platforms that allow citizens to file right-to-information requests. Crowdsourced reporting—platforms that allow citizens to report corruption or grievances and publicly share data on reports and trends. Online corruption reporting—platforms that allow citizens to report corruption or grievances. Issue reporting—platforms that allow citizens to report problems with public services. The first 4 interventions are usually government-led. (Interventions 1 and 2 seek primarily transparency reforms; interventions 3 and 4 aim at automating transaction with government reforms.) The other four are generally civil society-led. (Interventions 5 and 6 seek transparency reforms; interventions 7 and 8 aim at transaction reforms.)
5. Transparency/Accountability: these are central elements in achieving good governance as well as in the fight against corruption. Enikolopov et al [36] had demonstrated that an anticorruption blog can have a measurable, sizable impact on accountability. Working

with civil society to fight corruption, agencies can integrate SIT interventions for online right-to-information requests, crowdsourced reporting, online corruption reporting, and issue reporting across a broad spectrum of outreach activities that foster institutional environments, promote cooperation, encourage a broad mobilization, and develop capacities.

6. Cost-effective channel for managing emergency situations such as disease outbreaks, disaster management, etc.
7. Risk management
8. Identity management
9. Health and Stress management
10. Conflict resolution medium [negotiation and mediation]
11. Collaboration
12. Product promotion
13. Public private engagement: the involvement of the citizenry and the government in the process of public policy making and socio-economic planning in a view to direct the government's efforts and programmes towards the development of the communities.
14. Ease of Communication; In their study on social media and corruption, Kumar and Sarangi [37] had noted that open multi-channel information sharing platforms such as Facebook. They had established a link between social media and corruption across more than 150 countries that conclusively asserts the complimentary role and impact of social media even in countries that are oppressive.
15. Education, Knowledge sharing and Socio-cultural integration: It is argued that social information technologies which exploit the Internet are very important tools for reducing corruption in the society. Starke et al [38] had argued the foregoing on three grounds: the difficulty in censoring and controlling the Internet by any single authority; the existence of multi-channel platforms of communication over the Internet that enables communication across all social groups irrespective of class and social status; the ease of circulation of local and foreign information on corruption across borders.
16. Distribution channel for products and services
17. Healthy competition
18. Politicking, Policy information relay, and Feedback elicitation and control
19. Promotion of socio-cultural heritage, tourism, etc.
20. Revenue earner

4.2. Challenges Posed by NSITI

Nigeria is blessed with sufficient human and material resources. In addition, the democratic dispensation in which Nigeria is enables it to tackle social problems confronting the state by way of promulgating and enforcing laws. The prominent challenge that will militate against the evolution of such architecture is political will. The Federal Government

has the ministries which can serve as vehicles for executing the project. Another lesser issue which could be overcome by political will is infrastructure. Agreeably, Nigeria is a developing nation with multitude of Infrastructural problems. Nevertheless, the development of a good plan and prioritization in project execution could help realize the project over a short time.

5. Conclusion

This paper dwells on some principal issues underlying the growth and sustainability of the Nigerian socio-political ecosystem with particular emphasis on the role of a national social information technology infrastructure in reducing corruption. First, it identifies Nigeria as a multi-ethnic society that is plagued by a lot of socio-political bugs and ills that have the potency of tearing the nation apart in a short time. Secondly, it identifies effective communication especially social information technologies as vital element capable of being deployed as a potential vehicle towards boosting the war on corruption. Having regard to the successes and problems recorded against existing social information technologies in Nigeria, it is concluded that:

Nigeria's multi-ethnic stature presents more opportunities contrary to its being blamed as the source of Nigeria's woes. However, there is no doubt that nepotism, a major component of corruption is widely promoted by ethnocentrism. Creating a cohesive national multi-channel information exchange infrastructure that exploits the inherent capabilities of the existing public networks would go a long way to reducing the growing trend of corruption by informing the general public as well as government authorities on corrupt practices. The national social information infrastructure is not dependent on existing technologies but exploits their successes in promoting real-time messaging and communication of events as they occur. It should support all social classes and provide a single channel that fosters communications between the governed, government, and relevant anti-corruption agencies at all times. It is submitted that the implementation of such infrastructure would assist in curbing social ills such as corruption that manifests in governance failure, nepotism, divergence of funds, etc.

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