Josine Overdevest's vast experience across two continents and both sides of the digital divide give her a unique perspective on people, organisations and the ever-changing society we live in. Convinced that 'it isn't either/or but both and then some more' she inspires and guides projects across the digital divide, strategy and implementation, people and technology, business and social, the familiar and the unfamiliar.

Her experience has taught her that across our differences we are much more alike than we often think we are and that in the darkest places the greatest resources can be found. She uses these insights to turn dystopian views of our technological future into positive, ethical ones using 'what if, then how' as guiding questions.

Josine is the MD of Flying Cows of Jozi, guides to a purpose-focused and profitable digital future, non-executive director of the Institute of Information Technology Professionals South Africa (IITPSA) and chair of the IIPSA Social & Ethics Committee.

She is the winner of the 2023 David O'Leary Award presented by IFIP IP3.

Experience

The potential of technology to narrow or widen divides first fascinated her when she wrote her space law thesis at Leiden University on the United Nations Principles Relating to Remote Sensing of the Earth from Outer Space in 1992. This fascination inspired her to emigrate to (digitally) divided South Africa in 2003 following a 10 year career at Dutch telco KPN.

Although she initially aimed to find employment at one of the South African mobile operators, she quickly found that being an independent entrepreneurial consultant suited her much better. Josine has worked on strategy projects in (rural) telecommunications, e-agriculture and e-education for clients ranging from corporates to tech start-ups.

Ever since her consultancy work on EduNet for the South African Department of Communications in 2004, she recommends public-private collaboration in bringing digital transformation to the basic education sector. From its inception in 2011 until 2018 she brought this idea into practice in the Vodacom Mobile Education Programme that in partnership with the Department of Basic Education digitally equipped District Teacher Development Centres nationwide and capacitated the centre managers and e-education specialists running them.

Excited about the potential of innovative digital solutions in the education sector and increasingly concerned about the slow adoption rate in the majority of South African schools, Josine established Flying Cows of Jozi late 2017. The company aims to inspire a purpose-focused and profitable digital future and has a specific focus on guiding pivotal investments in digital literacy and 21st century skills in basic education.

Since August 2021 Josine is a non-executive director on the board of the Institute of Information Technology Professionals South Africa (IITPSA). As chair of the Social & Ethics Committee she contributes to the realisation of IT professionalism and ethical digital transformation in the country.

The company name Flying Cows of Jozi is inspired by Josine's insights from life in inner city Johannesburg, colloquially called Jozi, where she moved in 2013. This oldest part of the City of Gold pulsates with the dreams, creativity and resilience of entrepreneurs who flock to it from all over the world. Josine shares her love for what she calls the City of Wander, City of Wonder by inviting people to join her on immersion walks and by sharing her vignettes of inner city life.