

THE ROLE OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM PROGRAMME IN TANZANIA

Paper presented at the XXI Bi-Annual East and Southern Africa Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (ESARBICA) General Conference on Access to Information: Archives and Records in Support of Public Sector Reform in Context, Maputo, Mozambique, 6-10 June 2011

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Abstract

This paper discusses the findings of the study conducted on the government ministries of Tanzania which examines the current state of records management practices in fostering accountability in the implementation of the Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP) in Tanzania. The management of public sector records is a critical aspect of the Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP), because they enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the public service. However, African governments face major challenges with regard to the management of records. The reforms cannot succeed without proper, reliable and readily available records, a fact which has not been recognized by most developing countries. Data for the research were obtained through interviews with senior ministerial officials and National Archives personnel and a questionnaire conducted to the 120 registry personnel. The study revealed that although the introduction of the PSRP had resulted in some efforts in reforming the records management practices in the government ministries, records in the government ministries were not well managed. The findings of the study established that current records management practices in the government ministries were accorded low priority, registry personnel were not adequately trained and the absence of specific budgets allocated to registry sections hindered the effective operations of the registries. The records surveys were conducted irregularly and the majority of government registries lacked records retention and disposition schedules which lead to the congestion of records which were also disorganized and poorly managed. In order to ensure the effective implementation of the PSRP, the paper recommends the enactment of records management policies, allocation of dedicated budgets for registry sections and training of registry personnel to enhance the proper management of records and to accommodate the changes brought by technology. The study further recommends that records survey should be conducted regularly in order to ensure that records are well managed to facilitate the implementation of the PSRP objectives.

Key words: Accountability; records management; public service reform; Tanzania

RECORDS MANAGEMENT AS A MEANS TO FIGHT CORRUPTION AND ENHANCE ACCOUNTABILITY IN BOTSWANA

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Abstract

Records and information play a critical role in fighting corruption; protecting citizens' rights; in ensuring transparency; accountability and good governance. As such governments should recognise sound records management as one of the priority areas. In spite of their significance, studies by the Chebani (2005); International Records Management Trust [IRMT] (2003); Keakopa (2006); Kenosi (2010); Mnjama (2007) Tough (2009) and among others, suggest that recordkeeping systems in Botswana in particular and in Africa generally have either collapsed or are in a state of disarray. Neglected records in these countries have become a major barrier to development. Poor record keeping systems as argued by the IRMT and the World Bank has led to corrupt practices and lack of accountability and poor governance structures. There are numerous studies on corruption and lack of accountability by governments in Africa and how that has impacted negatively on socio-economic development. While reports by the corruption watchdogs, Transparency International and World Economic Forum, rank Botswana among the least corrupt countries in Africa, there are concerns that corruption is becoming endemic. Recently very important citizens including a minister, public enterprises chief executives, lawyers and top civil servants have been prosecuted for corruption and economic crime. Focusing on Botswana and citing general research and cases in a number of African countries, the paper argues that corruption and poor accountability is influenced by lack of proper record keeping in the public sector. The paper concludes by arguing that Botswana should take stringent measures to modernise record keeping in the public sector as this would help consolidate democratic values and principles which it is associated with. The paper specifically suggests that the country should adopt a national records management policy. Recommendations are made on measures that the government of Botswana should take to revamp its anti-corruption strategy.

Keywords: Records management; corruption; accountability and good governance

FOSTERING TRANSPARENCY, GOOD GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING THROUGH RECORDS MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

Good governance, accountability and transparency have now been established as the basic principles of governing public institutions. These principles are hinged about the availability of information to members of the public as well as being open about how the institutions are governed and decisions are made. Institutions of higher learning, particularly universities, are public institutions. They are funded from the public fiscus hence they are accountable to the taxpayer. The way they are governed, their rules and regulations and the decisions they make are public property and should be publicly accessible. In South Africa, universities come into existence as a result of a legislative process which culminates into an Act of Parliament. This Act provides for the structures and processes that must be in place for accountability. Records which are maintained in a properly established records management system are an instrument for establishing transparency and accountability. Yet few universities have in place a robust records management system in place. This paper argues that records management programme is the tool for universities to establish their transparency and accountability. Without a robust records management in place universities cannot claim to be accountable and transparent. A good records management programme ensures that the institution meets its records keeping requirements by ensuring that the university captures and preserves the evidence required to establish its accountability. Universities are public institutions on account of being funded by public moneys. As such they have an obligation under the provisions of the Public Entities Management Act, to manage their resources prudently. An effective records management programme ensures that the institution does not waste valuable resources providing storage space, expensive equipment and costly human resources to keep records and documents that may no longer needed. Records management therefore represents best practice in management of resources and is therefore good governance. An institution where records are poorly kept and maintained easily attracts inefficiency, corrupt practices and even fraud. There can be no transparency, accountability or good governance where records cannot be found when they are needed. There can be no transparency where institutions cannot comply with the requirements of legislation such as the promotion of Access to information Act (PAIA). Major challenges to establishing accountability include the general shift of records creation and management to the transparency and individual employee whose primary interest is information for the present. The individual employee may not prioritise future or the past interest and is quite often is poorly equipped in record keeping. Although institutions can hide behind the veil of academic freedom, the citizenry is becoming

more literate and more interested in the operations of institutions. The press is becoming more liberal and beginning to ask questions thus raising the expectations of the public. The paper will be based on literature review and case studies including personal research conducted by the researcher. It will also be based on the personal experiences of the author while setting up an archival and records management programme at the University of the Western Cape.

Keywords: Accountability; institutions of higher learning; records management; universities

ROLE OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES IN THE PROMOTION OF FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PRIVACY ACTS: EXPERIENCES FROM THE DEVELOPED WORLD AND LESSONS FOR AFRICAN COUNTRIES

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Abstract

This paper draws from case studies of successful implementation of FOI. It seeks to determine the role national archives play in information governance in the few countries which have implemented FOI in sub-Saharan Africa. It examines the relationship between records management and freedom of information (FOI) and it identifies the challenges national archives are faced with in their effort to implement FOI legislation. The paper argues that FOI legislation is premised on good records management because good records management promotes transparency, openness, accountability and good governance. Using the United Kingdom's (UK) Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000 and the Code of Practice on Records Management, the paper attempts to determine the extent to which selected national archives meet/or fail to meet standard FOI legislation requirements. It carries out extensive case studies of various national constitutions and FOI Acts with a view to determining the role national archives play to facilitate compliance to FOI legislation. The paper concludes that archival institutions in the region are still struggling with the implementation of FOI due to failure to include records management processes in the implementation processes.

Keywords: Freedom of information, access, records and archives management

ACCESS TO INFORMATION THROUGH LEGAL DEPOSIT LIBRARIES IN SOUTH AFRICA: SOME ISSUES OF CONCERN

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Abstract

Legal depositories in South Africa are intended to ensure that the sources of the country's heritage are collected, controlled bibliographically, preserved and made accessible for present and future generations. The guarantee of access to legal deposit materials depends on a number of factors affecting legal deposit libraries in South Africa. These factors include implementation of the Legal Deposit Act, other legislation affecting access to legal deposit, collection and preservation of materials and methods of accessing the materials. Access has changed as a result of opportunities for access motivated by human rights and freedom of information considerations are examined. In a democratic South Africa the South African Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 gives everyone the right of access to information placing more demands on records in whatever form and their curators. However, the range of freedom of access to information symbolic of liberation from apartheid is under threat with the draft of the current Protection of Information Bill that has been put before parliament. Technological developments are examined including how they affected operational practices and procedures associated with collecting, preserving and accessing cultural heritage, however South Africa like many other countries is hindering access to many electronic documents since online documents are not currently being collected and preserved.

Keywords: Legal deposit; access; preservation; South Africa

THE PROTECTION OF INFORMATION BILL AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION IN SOUTH AFRICA: AN INFORMETRIC STUDY OF THE MEDIA COVERAGE

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Abstract

Increased prominence and repetition of names of people, issues and organisations through media coverage has the potential to raise public recognition and attitudes towards the subject. The issues regarding access to and protection of information are no exception. Massive media coverage of these subjects can increase the public knowledge and raise awareness on the subject of access to and protection of information. The purpose of this study is to analyse in a qualitative and quantitative manner, the national print media coverage on legislative issues relating to the access to and protection of information in South Africa between 1981 and 2011. The study extracted data from the SA Media database, which is one of the databases hosted by SABINET (South African Bibliographic and Information Network). Adopting an advanced search strategy of combining various search terms resulted in a total of 392 articles which were analyzed using different analytical tools and computer software to obtain frequencies of occurrences of the most common title words, subject terms, and subject categories. Other variables that were analyzed included the most productive newspaper (media). The trend of media coverage of information protection and access (including the media bill) were also investigated in the study. Preliminary findings suggest that the media coverage on the protection of and access to information during the period under study was very high. The study concludes by arguing that the 2010 Information Protection Bill has received massive coverage due to the fact that it has a negative impact on the work of the journalists and the information society, in general. Conclusions and recommendations for further research are offered.

Key words: Protection of information; access to information; privacy; South Africa; print media; informetrics

MEASURING ACCESS: PROGRESS IN DEVELOPING AN ACCESS INDEX FOR NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF ZIMBABWE

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Abstract

The reason for existence of national archival institutions and indeed archives is to preserve and give access to the national cultural heritage. The level of access to archives may be used as a measure to establish how far the archives have been taken to the people. One of National Archives of Zimbabwe's strategic goals is to increase access from 75% to 100% by 2013. The goal begs several questions including; is access measurable? What exactly is constituted by the current 75% and proposed 100%? A discussion of access invariably leads to other debates that include acquisition policies, archival automation, legislation (closure periods, FOI and copyright), archival processing, access fees, facilities capacity and access times. This paper looks at current efforts to develop an access index for National Archives of Zimbabwe. To achieve 100% access by 2013 requires that an access baseline be established using quantifiable parameters such as accessioning and processing volumes, readers figures, finding aids reach, publications and access carrying capacity. Though this is work in progress the numbers so far seem to show that access can be objectively quantified at the National Archives.

Keywords: Access to archives; National Archives of Zimbabwe; public programming

**“SORRY, THE RECORDS HAVE GOT AN INDEFINITE CLOSURE PERIOD.”
ETHICAL DILEMMAS OF ACCESSING INACCESSIBLE RECORDS AND
ARCHIVES: A CASE OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF ZIMBABWE**

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Abstract

The National Archives of Zimbabwe is a fully fledged archival institution with a wide range of archival records stretching from the pre-colonial, colonial and the independent Zimbabwe. In addressing the topic at hand, the researcher employed an empirical study which, focused on the challenges posed by ethical considerations when access to certain archival records is concerned. What prompted the researcher to explore the subject of ethics vis-a-vis access is what one of the archivist code of ethics states. The code says that archivists should promote access to records, publish guides and finding aids to encourage their use, and be personally available to help researchers, at the same time observing, “any established policies restricting the use of records.” The challenge posed is that of available, but inaccessible records, yet archival principles are soundly based on aspects of acquisition, preservation and provision of access to a country’s documentary heritage. The researcher thus focused on the predicament of a researcher/s who may be interested in conducting research, making reference to records such as adoption cases, hospital records, restricted archives with a longer closure period or even personnel records whose closure period is indefinite. The dilemmas facing archivists was looked at, particularly being employees of an archival institution, themselves having access to the records, but then are required to explain to the researchers that access to the records is restricted due to the consequential effects arising from accessing and using the records. The researcher made use of a questionnaire to gauge the views of both the archivists and researchers on the issue of access restrictions. Interviews were also conducted with the NAZ management and a few selected long term researchers. The findings of the research are that the issue of restricted access to certain records, cuts across the globe, however, the suggestions gained from stakeholders, (archivists, researchers and depositors of records), were quite interesting. Examples of suggestions raised are that, the NAZ should form a committee which deals with complaints against institutions or individuals for unethical conducts. Others suggested the need for a review of the current legislation or the revision of the copyright law restricting access to some records. Others suggested the need to come up with what should be called the archives week, where by visitors come to the archives to learn about a wide range of operational issues, rules and regulation to gaining access to the reading room as well as to the records in the holdings. A list of recommendations has been compiled for a possible adoption by archival institutions.

Keywords: Access to archives; ethical dilemmas; National Archives of Zimbabwe

ARCHIVES NOT IN THE SHOW: THE CASE FOR THE UGANDA NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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Abstract

This article aims at reviewing the services offered by the Uganda National Archives (UNA). Questionnaires were issued to 35 clients to UNA for the period June – December 2010 and 30 were returned duly signed. More information was obtained from a qualitative enquiry consisting of in-depth interviews with both the staff and the clients of UNA. Findings showed that while the UNA has a catalogue in place, access to archival materials is a challenge. Lack of comprehensive finding aids and low public awareness of the services provided are factors hindering UNA services. The existing legislation to support archival services is also not fully implemented. Measures such as updating the catalogue, formulation of access policy, full implementation of the Uganda Records and Archives Act 2001, ICT utilisation, appropriate training of the UNA staff, and raising awareness of the public in general on the importance of archival services require serious consideration to improve the provision of archival services at UNA.

Keywords: Uganda; Uganda National Archives; Archives services

A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD: THE OTHER SIDE OF PUBLIC SECTOR REFORMS ON ARCHIVES AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT; SOME EVIDENCE FROM MALAWI

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Abstract

The World Bank/IMF's Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) and the post-SAPs have resulted in major reforms in the public sector both in Malawi and Africa as a whole. In turn, the public sector reforms have led to the improvements in archives and records management. However, while the public sector reforms are credited for these improvements, implementation of some of the public sector reform measures such as downsizing and freeze in civil service employment, privatisation of public enterprises and commercialisation of the Institute of Public Administration in Malawi, has impacted negatively on archives and records management such that unless a serious review of the policies and measures on the reform strategies is deliberately undertaken to address the situation, archives and records management will be under a threat and access to information will remain a big challenge.

Keywords: Structural adjustment policies; new public management; public sector reform; archives and records management; privatisation; commercialisation; downsizing; rule of law

THE STATE OF E-GOVERNMENT IN SWAZILAND WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES AND DEPARTMENTS

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Abstract

This article discusses the findings of a research conducted in 2008 to assess the state of e-government in Swaziland with special reference to government ministries and departments. The goal was to establish the extent to which the Swaziland Government has responded to the challenges and the progress made regarding the priority initiatives pertaining to e-government in the country as outlined in the work of Oyomno and Ramathape (2004: 45). To provide an accurate picture of e-government in the country was not an easy task due to the absence of empirical studies conducted on e-government in Swaziland. The study used the survey research strategy. The population of the study was the government ministries and departments which made 23 units of analysis. The techniques for data collection were an interview schedule, an administered questionnaire and a website evaluation form. The data was then analyzed using SPSS version 15.0 for Windows for statistical processing. The research established that the country has developed an appropriate ICT policy. This policy promises a favourable climate that would enhance the development and implementation of e-government in Swaziland. The research also disclosed that the country enjoys the requisite political will necessary to see e-government through. The research further revealed that the country has already embarked on a number of e-government initiatives. These initiatives include information services (government organisation and structures, directory information, access to information, and policy documents and reports). Information services are normally the first category of e-government components. The process began with the establishment of a government website to which different categories of government information are posted. The government website is basically static in that content is seldom updated and it is not citizen-centric. Swaziland's e-government index stands at 0.3454, bringing the country to position 125 when rated against countries of the world in terms of e-government development and implementation. This state of affairs means the country's e-government is still at the infancy stage of development in terms of the United Nations and ASPA (2002: 2) model of e-government. Apart from the information services, there are initiatives instituted by the Swaziland Government that include "special initiatives" aimed at closing the digital divide. Lastly, recommendations based on the findings of the study have been made. In conclusion the research noted that e-government in Swaziland has chances of proper development and implementation. This however, will only be possible if the ICT policy and the recommendations based on the findings of the study are put to good use by the relevant stakeholders. The development of an e-government policy, e-government strategy, e-government programme and attending to broadband issues in the country are matters of priority.

Keywords: Digital divide; E-government; E-strategy; E-government programme;
Government of Swaziland

MIGRATED ARCHIVES REVISITED

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Abstract

This article argues that interest in resolving problems associated with migrated archives which had been given priority by many African countries soon after independence appears to have waned over the years such that not much activity is taking place towards the restitution of these archives to their countries of origin.. The article begins by identifying the broad categories that constitute migrated archives and show how the international Community through agencies such as the International Council on Archives, UNESCO and the United Nations has sought solutions to this issue. The paper explores various options for dealing with migrated archives such as digitization, microfilming and bilateral arrangements which may include the adoption of Mutual Cultural Heritage concept in which disputed archival claims are considered to be a shared cultural property belonging to more than one state.

Keywords: Archives; heritage; migrated archives; reformatting

“ELECTRONIC” OR VIRTUAL INFORMATION SERVICE AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO PAPER BASED: IS THIS SCENARIO BOTH FEASIBLE AND DESIRABLE?

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Abstract

Paper based information has been a key format in serving bussiness transactions for centuries now. Every organisation in the world has been creating, receiving and using paper based, but due to the increasingly number of volumes of paper based, organisations are experiencing difficulties in managing them. The difficulties being experienced by many organisations include the problem of office space, storage facilities, dificulties in retreaval and access, misfilling and the like. These problems has forced organisations to introduce alternative formats that can capture and store their information on a virtual or electronic media. Due to change in technology and the way organisations are making business to achives to achieve their organisational objectives, electronic information is technologically, economically and operational becoming feasible. However, electronic or virtual information are not completely desirable since there are many issues that has not been addressed to make them desirable to replace paper based information. The issues of evidence to accomplish legal obligations and good governance, security, technological changes, skilled personnel still hamper full adoption of virtual or electronic information. Organisations therefore, are still running both systems to ensure their sustainability and continuity. Failure to access information by management, stakeholder or the public in general is a fatal disaster to any organisation.

Keywords: Electronic information; virtual information; paper based information

E-RECORDS READINESS – BUILDING A CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR LABOUR ORGANISATIONS IN BOTSWANA

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Abstract

Literature review and empirical evidence shows that by and large, most labour organisations' activities are largely knowledge-based as well as information intensive; and that, advances in Information Communication Technology (ICTs) have brought about the proliferation of e-records with numerous associated challenges pertaining to the creation, storage, retrieval and dissemination of records and information. This has necessitated the need to understand the application of ICTs in records management, thus underscoring the concept of e-records readiness. Currently, there are various assessment tools that that been put in place to assess the depth of e-readiness and e-records readiness world over. However, in Botswana, as elsewhere, evidence points to the fact that the concept is still evolving and there are few studies that have been devoted to assessing e-records readiness; with most empirical ones being limited to either e-readiness in general or having a focus on e-records management in the public sector. There also appears to be an evolving analytical framework to explain and support the assessment of e-records largely limited to the public sector with little reference to labour organisations. The question, therefore, that needs to be addressed is whether the existing e-records readiness framework is appropriate for assessing e-records readiness in labour organisations and to what extent such a framework can be used as basis for understanding the management of e-records in labour organisations in Botswana. This paper, therefore, documents empirical information on the assessment of e-records readiness in labour organizations in Botswana. Based on literature review and empirical survey information, the paper seeks to establish the relevance of the e-readiness and e-records readiness' contextual and conceptual framework with a view to guiding the methodology and practice in the assessment and management of e-records in labour organisations in Botswana. The paper concludes by calling for the development of a framework that "institutionalises knowledge about the e-records readiness processes" in labour organizations for them to integrate fully in the envisaged e-environment in Botswana.

Keywords: E-records; E-readiness; E-record readiness; E-records management; Botswana

MANAGEMENT OF E-RECORDS AT MOI UNIVERSITY ELDORET, KENYA

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Abstract

The paper discusses the findings of a study that was carried out to investigate the management of electronic records (e-records) at Moi University. The aim of the study was to investigate the management of e-records within the context of the continuum principle with a view to recommending a framework that can be used to manage e-records. The study population consisted of 60 respondents drawn from Moi University main campus, Chepkoilel Campus and Town campuses. Purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents from Moi University management, ICT, general administration, records/accounts and secretarial staff. Data was collected using semi-structured interview schedules supplemented by observation. The study results revealed that despite Moi University embracing the use of computers as a critical tool for information management and communication in support of its business transactions, the management of e-records remained a neglected area of the university record keeping system. Factors contributing to this were found to include lack of policies and procedures to guide the management of e-records and lack of knowledge and skills in records management and in particular e-records management. The authors' recommendations include equipping staff and especially those responsible for managing e-records with knowledge and skills in records management and in particular e-records management, staff and users be equipped with ICT skills to enable them work in an electronic environment and the university should raise awareness amongst staff on the importance of managing e-records.

Key words: E-records; e-records management; Moi University; records management

COOPERATION AND SHARED SOLUTIONS IN THE PACIFIC: THE PARBICA RECORDKEEPING FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE TOOLKIT

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Abstract

Good governance requires good records management, so that public officials can account for their decisions and activities with reference to accurate, reliable and accessible information. Good governance is also one of the key priorities for Pacific Island governments. However in most Pacific countries, the legacy of no tools, guidance, or training on recordkeeping and information management in the post colonial era has resulted in an underlying problem of weak or nonexistent frameworks that do not support the needs of governments or communities. Nevertheless, recordkeeping is beginning to improve across the Pacific. In 2005, 13 countries of the Pacific Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (PARBICA) adopted a declaration on recordkeeping for good governance. One result of this declaration is that representatives from many Pacific countries worked together to develop a suite of web-based and printed tools which form the Recordkeeping for Good Governance Toolkit. The toolkit provides practical advice on getting leaders to listen, as well as guidance and practical tools on creating, maintaining, and disposing of government information. It was developed by Pacific representatives in a way that can be easily adapted to meet specific jurisdictional requirements. This paper will introduce the Recordkeeping for Good Governance Toolkit to ESARBICA and use it as a case study to address the issues of developing and implementing practical information management solutions across institutional, national, linguistic, and geographic borders, and the leading role that archives play in the democratic process through supporting good governance. The paper will also examine the lessons learned from utilising PARBICA's networks to influence leaders, develop strategic allies, co-ordinate regional initiatives, and leverage the experience of a few to provide professional development opportunities to many.

Keywords: Accountability; good governance; recordkeeping; public sector efficiency; toolkit

THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGS) IN ZAMBIA: THE ROLE OF RECORDS AND ARCHIVES IN THEIR ATTAINMENT

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Abstract

The role of records and archives in development cannot be over-emphasised. It is difficult to attain development without records and archives. It is only by looking at our past that we can understand our present and be able to plan for our future development as a country. Records and archives support government's efficiency, transparency, accountability and good governance. Essential government decisions and activities including fundamental rights and obligations are documented in records and archives. However, the critical role of records and archives in national development is often overshadowed by many competing priorities in national development. Consequently, records and archives are often missing links in most developmental work especially in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In most cases, short term and inefficient solutions are implemented which results in loss of evidence, threatens rights, make audit difficult and allows corruption to occur. This article examines the role played by records and archives in the attainment of each of the eight (8) MDGs in Zambia. A number of studies have examined the role of records and archives in development. However, few studies have investigated the link between the MDGs and Records and archives. This paper provides a critical review of studies on the role of records and archives in the attainment of the MDGs. The paper begins by highlighting the eight (8) MDGs. In addition, the paper discusses records and archival information. The paper further discusses the contribution of records and archival information in the attainment of the MDGs. Finally, it discusses why records and archives are under- utilised in many regions and the way forward.

Keywords: Millennium development goals; archives, records; information management; sustainable development; Zambia

RECORDS AND INFORMATION DISASTER PREPAREDNESS IN SELECTED ORGANISATIONS IN UGANDA

Paper presented at the XXI Bi-Annual East and Southern Africa Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (ESARBICA) General Conference on Access to Information: Archives and Records in Support of Public Sector Reform in Context, Maputo, Mozambique, 6-10 June 2011

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Abstract

Access to Information, Archives and Records in Support of Public Sector Reform in our view should not be looked at in isolation of records disaster preparedness of organizations. It is on this basis that this study looked at the availability of rules and regulations governing access to and use of records; threats to records management; disaster response plan; extent to which organizations are committed in four major stages of disaster management in organizations in Uganda. In gathering the data, structured questionnaire was administered to 32 records and information professionals from both government and private sector who participated in performance improvement training in Electronic Records Management at Makerere University in August 2010. The findings show among others the areas of interest for short training for records managers; availability of rules and regulations governing access to records; percentage of the organizations' budget spent on disaster preparedness; threats to both paper-based and e-records; availability of policy on records disaster management; availability of migration plans from paper based to electronic records; rate at which records are lost through disasters. The study showed the level of records disaster planning preparedness of the organizations in Uganda and extent of commitment towards disaster management. It gives a picture of records managers' perception on aspects of records disaster management considered crucial for effective records management in organizations. The study concludes a worrying situation that requires immediate interventions that include among others: the need for organizations to design records disaster management policy; the inclusion of disaster planning and management as a core training course for Information Science professionals; sensitization of organizations' policy makers on disaster planning and management; developing techniques for training, knowledge transfer and assessments for records disasters

Keywords: Disaster management; records disaster plan; records management; records-threats; Uganda; records disaster management

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC RECORDS IN SOUTH AFRICA: GUARDING AGAINST COLLECTIVE CULTURAL AMNESIA

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Abstract

Archives collect and manage traces of the memory of nations. All their efforts will come to naught if all those memories are lost due to disasters. As other archivists in the world, South African archivists and records managers as temporary guardians of the national heritage owe it to the future generations that the heritage is preserved. Disaster management should be part and parcel of the strategy to preserve archives for the present and future generations because emergency preparedness has the possibility of reducing the effects of disaster and ensuring business continuity. This article presents the findings of an assessment of disaster management activities in public archives of South Africa. A quantitative approach with a triangulation of data collection methods was used for the study. The findings revealed that disaster management did not feature prominently on their agenda as evidenced by a lack of written disaster management plans and strategies. It was concluded that without disaster plans public archival institutions are unable to preserve the South African heritage and guard against collective cultural amnesia. Among the recommendations is that South African archivists should ensure that the national documentary heritage is preserved through initiating disaster management activities nationwide.

Keywords: Archives; continuity plans; disaster management; emergency preparedness

THE MANAGEMENT OF AUDIO VISUAL MATERIALS AT THE SWAZILAND TELEVISION AUTHORITY (STVA)

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Abstract

This study investigated the management of audiovisual records (AV) at Swaziland Television Authority (STVA). The study employed interviews, observation, and a review of documentary sources. The observations and interviews were carried out from a sample drawn from the STVA and Swaziland National Archives (SNA). The study established that STVA does not comply with the provisions of the legal deposit system. The study uncovered that STVA library facilities are purpose-built, lack basic storage equipment, and has inadequate shelving units. The storage facilities lack fire warning and control equipment as well as temperature and humidity control equipment. The videotapes are improperly stored on the floor, along the walls, inside cardboard boxes and consequently, the effects of hydrolysis, oxide shedding and de-lamination have begun to take their toll on the collection. The videotape collection is not properly arranged and described and lacks retrieval tools. The study further, established that the STVA staff responsible for the custody of the collection lack relevant training in Audio-visual Records and Archives Management, Library and Information Science. Moreover, the study shows that despite its vested mandate in setting and enforcing standards for Records and Archives Management, SNA has literally failed to conduct records surveys, and fulfil its preservation, records and archives management responsibilities at STVA. As a result, policies on appraisal, acquisition, access, preservation, retention, digitisation and disposal of AV records are lacking at STVA. This study recommends the construction of an appropriate archival building, acquisition of appropriate equipment and professional training for its staff. Closer collaboration and partnership between the STVA, SNA, and international organisations like IAA, FIAT, FIAF, ICA and ESARBICA is recommended to help impart skills and knowledge through scholarship grants, workshops and conferences for AV practitioners locally, regionally and globally.

Keywords: Archives; audiovisual records; Swaziland Television Authority; Swaziland National Archives

SOCIAL NETWORKING, CLOUD COMPUTING, VIRTUAL ARCHIVES, BEST PRACTICE, ORAL HISTORY: HOW UNMIS IS ADAPTING 'SQUARE' TECHNOLOGY TO FIT 'ROUND' REQUIREMENTS

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Abstract

UNMIS operates in a remote and difficult environment in Sudan. The mandate of the mission is to ensure the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed in 2005 is adhered to and the best outcomes are achieved by both sides to the Sudan conflict. The issues affecting the western Darfur region are a separate matter and they are dealt with by the UNAMID mission. The national elections conducted in Sudan in mid-2010 were an example of how UNMIS can be of assistance when it comes to implementing the CPA. The next phase of the CPA requires that both parties to the agreement, the Government of South Sudan (GOSS) based in Juba and the Government of Sudan (GoS) based in Khartoum, hold referenda to determine whether the south secedes to become independent and to determine the fate of the Abyei region which straddles the 1956 colonial border between the north and south. Depending on the outcomes of the referenda, it is anticipated that certain changes will need to be made to the structure and mandate of any UN DPKO entity that remains in Sudan post January 2011. As far as information management goes there are many initiatives underway to ensure that we can address the potential risks that may be presented should the need arise. DPKO and the UN in general have embraced the concepts of Web 2.0 technology. Social networking and file sharing sites have become de facto systems for many UN bodies. The Public Information Office of UNMIS routinely uses Youtube and Facebook to spread its information to the wider world. DPKO has in development a shared system suite of applications to make communicating more effective within the DPKO community. They have adopted a Facebook style of user interface with many modules and add-ons for on-line travel booking, accommodation requests in the field, phone directories, and training requests. The recordkeeping system at UNMIS is a version of what people generally call cloud computing with virtual servers and on-line backups in off shore locations. The RMA Unit uses blogs and Twitter to disseminate information within the unit but plan to expand its use. Field staff communicates with HQ staff in New York via on-line communities of practice. A recently started oral history project of departing staff has provided a wide range of best practice and lesson learnt material that will add value to the ongoing operations of the mission in Sudan. It is envisaged that this paper will present an overview of how the information management staff at UNMIS are deploying and adapting Web 2.0 developments in a difficult and

challenging environment by giving practical examples of our work as a way to build on largely freely available technology.

Keywords: Archives; oral history; social media; social networking; Sudan; Web 2.0 technologies

STUDENT ASSESSMENT OF THE MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN INFORMATION SCIENCES (RECORDS AND ARCHIVES MANAGEMENT) DEGREE PROGRAMME AT MOI UNIVERSITY, KENYA

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to determine student assessment of the Master of Philosophy [Mphil] and and Master of Science [MSc] in Information Sciences [RAM] programmes and propose recommendations to enhance the course content and structure to meet the education and market needs of Kenya. The specific objectives of the study were to: find out the status and characteristics of the students, establish student's perceptions regarding adequacy of curriculum in relation to market needs, establish the adequacy of resources availed to students, find out the students research thesis themes and titles, determine the challenges faced by students while undertaking the programme and provide recommendations to improve curriculum content and delivery and meet market needs. The study population comprised of 21 students admitted into the MPhil and MSc RAM programme from the academic year 2007/2008 to 2009/2010. Purposive sampling was used to select all the cases for study. Data was collected through the use of open-ended interview schedules completed by content analysis. Data collected was subjected to qualitative data analysis techniques. The study findings revealed that the programme has strengths and weaknesses, some courses needed revision to meet market demands, the resources offered to students were inadequate, some lecturers took longer periods of time to read and return students work and do not offer the much needed supervisory support and lecturers were overworked and at times missed classes since they had many students to supervise in addition to other responsibilities. The study recommended need to revise the courses and particularly those that require a practical orientation and introduction of new courses, department acquire more information materials including books, journals, and computers and improve on Internet connectivity and University policy on postgraduate thesis supervision that stipulates a maximum of six to seven candidates per supervisor within one academic year be strictly adhered to.

Keywords: Assessment; LIS curriculum; Moi University; records and archives programme

HOW DOES LIS PERCEIVE RECORDS MANAGEMENT? A TREND AND CORE/PERIPHERY MODEL ANALYSES

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Abstract

It has been observed that the scope of 'records management' (RM) as well as the concept's definition is still not clear. The problem has been compounded by the emergence of new formats of 'records', a situation that calls for a re-examination of the definition of RM. This paper offers an informetric perspective of understanding the concept through an analysis of the subject headings used to describe RM in the published literature that represent RM research. Using various analytical technologies to analyse the data extracted from the Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts (LISTA) database, the study found that RM is increasingly becoming synonymous with Information Resources Management (IRM) which featured prominently in the RM literature as a subject heading. The core single subject terms that are commonly used to describe RM include management, records, information, resources, electronic, systems, archives, documents, services and computer. Based on the findings of this study, we conclude that RM is related to IRM and is practiced in such places as archives, libraries and business enterprises by librarians, archivists, information professionals and records managers who use different enablers such as computer softwares and systems to manage (e.g. process, plan, control and or coordinate) various types of information resources (e.g. electronic documents, records, manuscripts, etc). Further areas of research are recommended.

Keywords: Records management; informetrics; content analysis; information resources management

AN INFORMETRIC ANALYSIS OF THE GENERAL REPORTS OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL OF SOUTH AFRICA (2005-2010): FOSTERING ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR?

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Abstract

After every audit cycle, the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) issues consolidated General Reports on Audit Outcomes (GRAO) for all municipalities, government departments and public entities. The GRAO of the AGSA identify certain broad themes (e.g. document management, asset management, risk management, etc.) and highlight specific trends that were detected during an audit cycle. These reports are used to stimulate dialogue on the audit findings, ideally to a point where both the senior management and political heads of governmental bodies are able to commit to specific actions and interventions to address the findings. In this study, a total of ten Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) and Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA), GRAOs for the period from 2005/06 to 2009/10 financial years were reviewed utilizing an informetric content analysis to identify the types of audit opinion issued that relates to records management and whether those issues lead to qualified or unqualified report. The study found that the root cause of qualified audit opinions in most cases resulted from lack of a clear trail of supporting documentation. In addition, in most instances difficulties were experienced by auditors due to delay or unavailability of records from governmental bodies which lead to disclaimer opinions. The study recommends that records management should be embedded in the auditing process of governmental bodies. It is concluded that failure to transform this pattern will lead to governmental bodies continuing to obtain a disclaimer opinion.

Key words: Auditing; audit reports; general reports; document management; internal controls; records management; Auditor-General South Africa