

Impact of ICTs in the Practice of Records Management in Ministry of Health, Nigeria

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the impact of information and communication technologies in the practice of records management in Ministry of Health, Nigeria. A diverse set of ICT tools of computer, CD-ROM, multi-media, scanner, internet, software applications (CDS/ISIS), among others are currently used in the practices of records management. The rationale that spurs the use of ICTs for record management is due to the ever-changing nature of operations that required capturing, processing, storing, and dissemination of records and other evolving phenomenon from traditional to virtual/technological platform. The qualitative research approach grounded on documents/textual content analysis of literature was employed in this study. Findings revealed that ICTs are used for different purposes in records management operations in the Ministry of Health in Nigeria. The evolving nature of transformation is that organisations no longer use old technologies of microfilm/fiches, floppy disc, papyrus, tape recorders, and typewriters. Strategies of security, different devices, and policy are significant.

INTRODUCTION AND CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

Generally, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have become a critical success factor needed for accomplishment of set goals and tasks in every organisation and human endeavours. Different scholars such as Blurton (1999:46); UNESCO (2002); Anunobi, Anyanwu, Oga & Benard (2011); Ofori-Dwumfuo & Kommey (2013); Enakrire (2016) & Enakrire & Ocholla (2017), have over flogged the understanding of ICTs, to mean a multifarious technological tools and resources, used for varied operations in organisations. The multifarious technological tools and resources are both old and new tools used to acquire, process, store, edit, retrieve, transfer and disseminate information and knowledge of various formats. The said technological tools and resources consists of telephony, cable, satellite, television, radio, computer-mediated conferencing, video conferencing; digital technologies, information networks, Internet, World Wide Web, intranets and extranets and software applications, among many others (Enakrire & Ocholla, 2017). These diverse ICT tools mentioned have had much impact on work performance of individuals in organisational growth. Therefore, the importance of ICTs globally cannot be overemphasised, as it has become so common in every human sphere. The reason behind this was based on its continuous use in activities/operations carried out within and outside organisations, in attainment of set goals. The purpose behind this assertion was due to improved efficiency and effectiveness in organisational performance of staff. The viability in terms of competitiveness is another key point to consider.

Studies by Enwere (1992); Baje (1998); Shepherd & Yeo (2003:4); Erima & Wamukoya (2012); Hulme (2012) and Toyo (2017) argue that, records, which take different forms of transaction: working papers, drafts, files, electronic messages, information, data, text messages, documentaries, photographs, databases, and audio visual, among others, become useful for different purposes. Shepherd & Yeo (2003:4) assert that, records do not have a definite physical shape, age or existence, rather what is important is that, it contains information. The records consists of both those in paper/print and electronic format (Erima & Wamukoya (2012). The paper/print records, are those found in papers, that takes the form of general correspondence of letters, transactional records, receipts of items bought, photocopied papers, drafts, staff and students records in files, finance records, legal hold records, landed property documents, among many others (Toyo, 2017). Another point of emphasis by Chifwepa (2013) notes that, records are documented transaction, which contains information, stored for transaction purposes. The records, which are created electronically, consist of electronic messages, metadata records, audio and video files, messages on mobile and memory cards, records on external hard disk drives (Ambira, 2016).

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