

Managing Change in Electronic Document and Records Management System Implementation at the Ministry of Investment, Trade, and Industry in Botswana

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Electronic document and records management systems (EDRMS) have been implemented in organisations in order to, among others, improve delivery of services. Implementation alters work processes, and if the change is not properly managed, intended deployment benefits are not realised. The Ministry of Investment, Trade, and Industry (MITI) implemented the Document Workflow Management System (DWMS), an EDRMS, to improve service delivery through a technology-enhanced records management system. Implementation faced user resistance. Using documentary reviews and interviews to collect data, this chapter describes the change management activities instituted to promote adoption and use of DWMS. Data collected from purposively selected action officers and records officers was analysed thematically. The study found that the poor management of change brought by DWMS led to resistance to adopt and use the system.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Developing countries have joined their developed counterparts in the deployment of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to support decision-making processes in the both the public and private sectors. Such ICT applications have included deploying EDRMS in public service delivery value chains for purposes of improving productivity, compliance to regulatory requirements, e-government development, the need to manage records and information as strategic assets, and the quest to improve recordkeeping culture in countries such as Botswana, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand (Maquire, 2005; Wilkins, Holt, Swatman & Chan, 2007; Mosweu, Mutshewa & Bwalya, 2014; Yin, 2014; Mosweu, Bwalya & Mutshewa, 2017). According to the National Archives of Australia (2011, p. 3), “an EDRMS is a software application that manages digital information such as email, word-processed documents, spreadsheets, images and scanned documents. Johnston and Bowen (2005, p. 133) defines it as “an automated system which supports the creation, use and maintenance of paper or electronic documents and records for the purpose of an organisation’s workflow and processes. It has recordkeeping functionalities. An EDRMS can also control paper records and physical objects.” An EDRMS can be implemented as a standalone system, or as part of an Enterprise Content Management (ECM) system suite which goes beyond just managing digital records but integrates and connects web content management, workflow solutions, internet and extranet, and other information presented via web technologies (Anderson, 2008).

Notably, although the implementation of ICTs has proven benefits, expected users more often than not resist them. According to Peterson (1998) and, Berman and Tettey (2001), this has resulted in the low rate in the adoption and use of information systems, resulting in system underutilization. Low usage of information systems around the globe is largely a consequence of poor adoption by users (Kim & Kankanhalli, 2009; Alshehri, Drew, Alhussain & Alghamdi, 2012). Totolo (2007) avers that resistance stems from wrong assumptions that people will automatically use computer technologies once software is installed. In a study that investigated digital government in the public sector in Africa, Evans (2018) observed that African countries are lagging behind in digital government adoption compared with developed countries. However, one of the ways in which organisations deploying ICTs have addressed the issue of their resistance has been the implementation of change management programme as part of the overall system implementation. This chapter describes change management in the implementation of DWMS at the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry in Botswana,

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