

Journey to EDRMS Solution in Zimbabwe Public Sector

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

E-government initiatives by the government of Zimbabwe and the increased use of computer-based systems by the public sector have seen an increased generation of digital records in the day-to-day conduct of business. The National Archives of Zimbabwe is taking some measures to manage these proliferating digital records in a manner that guarantees their authenticity and continued availability. This chapter explores the journey to digital records management in the Zimbabwe public sector, with specific focus on steps followed to develop the Public Sector Digital Records Management Framework (PSDRMF), Statement of User Requirements (SOURS), and efforts to acquire an EDRMS solution. The chapter provides highlights on some achievements, experiences, and lessons learnt in the process.

THE TRANSITION FROM PAPER TO DIGITAL RECORDS IN ZIMBABWE PUBLIC SECTOR

The Fourth Industrial Revolution currently underway has seen government services being increasingly executed using Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) and Zimbabwe has not been spared. The resultant digital records are becoming the basis for confirming pension and other entitlements; registering birth and deaths;

verifying citizenship and certifying voting rights; enabling the collection of taxes and census enumeration; supporting financial management and enabling audits and evaluation; helping resolving land claims; supporting litigation; documenting inter-governmental agreements; enabling economic planning; describing the government's accomplishments; documenting its transgressions; monitoring the nation's developments and governance; and enabling countless other information intensive activities (IRMT, 2004). As such, there is need to adopt effective means of managing and preserving these records to enhance continued access to them. Embracing Electronic Document and Records Management Systems (EDRMS) is promising to be a step in the right direction to solve the challenges associated with managing and maintaining digital records. As put across by the New Wales State Archives (2019), the benefits of using EDRMS include facilitation of the movement from paper to digital methods of business, protection of documents and records, providing accountability and transparency and enabling compliance. This chapter documents the issues and problems that Zimbabwe is faced with in the management and preservation of digital records and steps the National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ) is taking to come up with a generic EDRMS solution for use in the entire public sector.

BACKGROUND

Formal record-keeping in Zimbabwe can be traced back to the colonial administration which commenced with the granting of the royal charter by the queen of England in 1889 to the British South Africa Company (BSAC) to develop and administer the territory (now Zimbabwe) as a British colony (Matangira, 2016, pp. 23-24). Over the years the National Archives has managed to establish a sound public sector records management system that caters for paper records throughout their life cycle. However, the status quo of records and archives management is gradually changing due to the increased influx of digital records as a result of the adoption and increased use of ICTs within the public sector since the 1990s. Following the explosive growth in internet usage and rapid development of electronic commerce in the private sector since the 1990s, the government was 'forced' to implement ICT based systems in several departments and ministries (Ruhonde, Owei & Maumbe, 2008). The use of the Public Finance Management System (PFMS) to process financial transactions and the Zimbabwe Integrated Performance Management Solution (ZIPMAS) for reporting, evaluating and staff appraisal is clear testimony that digital records are being produced by the government of Zimbabwe (Nkala, Ngulube & Mangena, 2012, pp. 111). The launch of e-government programme by the Government of Zimbabwe in 2011 saw the increased generation of digital records in the public sector, created

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