

# Chapter 18

## Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) Implementation in a Developing World Context: Case of Botswana

**Mosweu Olefhele**

*Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Botswana*

**Mutshewa Athulang**

*University of Botswana, Botswana*

**Kelvin Joseph Bwalya**

*University of Botswana, Botswana & University of Johannesburg, South Africa*

### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter presents a case study of back-end information system implementation geared towards encouraging e-Government development in Botswana. The case is an in depth analysis of the implementation of the Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) at the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI). The focus of this chapter is two-fold: 1) it highlights the factors that influence the adoption and usage of EDRMS by Action Officers and Records Officers at MTI and correspondingly outline EDRMS' facilitation of information access in the realm of e-Government; and 2) aims to understand the initiatives that have been implemented to facilitate robust e-Government development in the public sector of Botswana. This chapter culminates from a pilot that was done prior to an on-going study hinged on unison objectives. The indicative list of factors explaining the adoption of EDRMS might explain the global perception of ICTs in the public sector in Botswana. The limitation of the study is that its sample space may not be representative of the actual situation in Botswana's public sector given the heterogeneity in different line ministries and departments. Therefore, the results from this study might not guarantee statistical generalizations. The chapter is hinged on extensive literature reviews compounded by anecdotal evidence. This focus is novel because it aims to understand adoption and usage of ICT platforms by employees. Other research endeavours have probed citizens' and businesses' adoption of ICTs before considering institutional and employees' readiness hence investigating macro factors influencing technology adoption.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Governments in both developing and the developed world have embraced the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to deliver public services due to the capacity of ICTs to deliver improved public services (Mnjama & Wamukoya 2007, Bwalya, 2011). The New Public Management (NPM) school of thought has shaped the realization of governments the world over to come up with strategic initiatives (such as e-Government (use of ICTs in public service delivery frameworks) and Knowledge Management) to encourage efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery frameworks (Bonina & Cordella, 2008). In addition, citizen expectation for, and demand of delivery of quality public administration services has led to governments employing methods, practices and techniques previously synonymous with the private sector such as customer relation management, including the use of ICTs (Raymond et al. 2005).

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) region has in recent times experienced a surge in e-Government initiatives with Botswana, South Africa, Mauritius and Seychelles at the forefront (Bwalya, 2010). This paradigm shift from entirely manual systems to ICT based business processes has resulted in changes in the way information is collected, processed, stored and disseminated (Mnjama & Wamukoya, 2007). ICT assisted delivery of public services results in the creation and management of electronic records (e-Records) produced by deployed Electronic Document and Management Systems (EDRMS). From way back as far as 2007, the Botswana government has been implementing ICTs in its public delivery frameworks as part of the wider e Government reforms (Mnjama & Wamukoya, 2007). The whole idea is to derive potential benefits that technology can offer in the delivery of public services, as espoused in Maitlamo National ICT Policy (Government of Botswana, 1997, 2007). Bwalya (2011) observes that Botswana has positioned itself well to accrue benefits provided by ICTs through a well laid down institutional, legal and policy framework to support its implementation.

Despite the huge benefits promised by the utilization of ICTs in general and information systems in particular, their benefits are yet to be fully realized (Mutula & Jain, 2001; Totolo, 2007; Iyanda & Ojo 2008). In Botswana, the adoption and usage of deployed information systems is low. For example, the Student Loan Management System (SLMS) at the Department of Tertiary Education and Financing, the Tribal Land Information Management System (TLIMS) at Tlokweng and Ngwato Land boards and the Land Inventory for Tribal Land Boards of Botswana (LYNSIS) suffers from low utilization (IRMT, 2008a; Office of Auditor General, 2010; Government of Botswana, 2011). The low adoption of information systems is a global trend (Davis, 1993; Kim & Kankanhalli, 2009). Effective implementation of information systems in the public sector delivery value chains largely depends on technology adoption at both institutional, employee and individual levels (Davis et al., 1989; Seymour, 2007; Goldfinch, 2007; Ojo & Grand, 2011).

This chapter intends to understand the factors that influence employees' utilization of EDRMS towards global utilization of information systems in governance delivery value chains. The study presented in this chapter intends to depart from major research endeavours which have concentrated on understanding the factors influencing e-Government at individual levels with assumptions that all (or most) of the desired e-Government applications are readily available for individuals to choose from. The investigation of institutional and employees' readiness to utilize ICTs in their day-to-day business processes is the starting point for measuring e-Government penetration and adoption. This chapter focuses on the implementation on EDRMS at the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI), one of the line Ministries in Botswana. Established in 2002, the MTI was mandated to attract investment and diversify the economy

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