

Chapter 18

Zimbabwe's E-Government Readiness and Adoption of Cloud-Based Records Management in the Fourth Industrial Revolution

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ABSTRACT

Zimbabwe is one of the developing countries striving to reach a middle economy status by year 2030. In its bid to achieve this vision, it has adopted an electronic government strategy (e-government strategy) where government business is done electronically. An e-government strategy is a plan for e-government systems and their supporting infrastructure, which maximises the ability of government to achieve its objective of Vision 2030. An e-government strategy must give direction where the government is going, its goals, vision, mission, and some implementation guidelines. In order to reach this objective, the government has to become more accountable and transparent on its journey to Vision 2030, and one of its key drivers is proper records and archives management. Properly managed electronic government records bring about accountability, transparency, and good governance.

INTRODUCTION

Zimbabwe is one of the developing country thriving to reach a middle economy status by year 2030. In its bid to achieve this vision, it has adopted an electronic government strategy (e-government strategy) and established a National Data Centre to facilitate the e-Government processes through providing centralised virtual servers for data processing and storage accessible to all ministries and agencies across all government departments. An e-government strategy is a plan for e-government systems and their supporting infrastructure which maximises the ability of government to achieve its objectives (Heeks, 2006). An e-government strategy must give direction where the government is going, its goals, vision, mission and some implementation guidelines. In order to reach this objective, the government has to become more accountable and transparency on its journey to vision 2030 and one of its key drivers is proper records and archives management. Properly managed electronic government records bring about accountability, transparency and good governance. Records, despite their media are the snapshot of any business transaction and help the government to account for its actions to citizens. In an e-government strategy, government business is conducted online using ICT infrastructure, the evidence (records) of such businesses are also created electronically. As the government adopts e-government strategy, it has to adopt an e-records management to cater for records created in electronic formats. These e-records will be sprout in every government computer, and it is important to adopt cloud-based records management for more secure since they will be in virtual platforms. Cloud based records management is one of the key innovations of the fourth industrial revolution. The fourth industrial revolution is being driven by technology which is aiding in every sphere of life. This chapter assesses Zimbabwe's e-government readiness and adoption of cloud-based records management in the fourth industrial revolution.

E-GOVERNMENT OVERVIEW

Technology became an enabling factor starting in the 20th century and today, in this 21st century, Sodhi (2016:91) laments that “the development of application and utilization of information technology is taking place at a rapid pace throughout the world”. E-government is a concept emerging from the use of ICTs in all the sectors of economy. This involve the government, citizens and other civil society organisations. The advancement in ICTs has further accelerated the interaction between the government and its citizens. This gives birth to e-government which is all concerned with the application and utilisation of technologies such as the internet, to improve “the processes of governance, functions and the basic public services” (Sodhi, 2016:93). Accordingly, Navarra and Cornford (2003) refer e-government to a strategic and systematic use of ICTs to promote efficient and effective government while Sodhi (2016:93) considers e-government as an internet-based government or online government which uses information and communication technologies such as internet, world wide web (WWW) and mobile computing to reach out to citizens and to facilitate the delivery of public service. Sodhi (2016:93) defines e-government as a “means of enhancing the capacity of the public sector, together with citizens, to address particular development issues”. For an e-government strategy to work, there is need for the government to set objectives that need to be achieved and support them with adequate policies and legislation. An e-government strategy enables the government to link all its departments under one umbrella and removes the need for each department to have its own servers. It enables them to share ICT resources and enables citizens to access, interact and receive services from the government at any time. The use of ICTs allow services

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