

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ELECTRONIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (ERMS) IN PUBLIC SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

Challenges in the management of electronic records (e-records) have led to the adoption of Electronic Records Management System (ERMS) to enhance their management. The spread of technology use has led to the creation of different types of records and ERMS can provide an integrated way to manage these different types of records effectively. Most government agencies around the world have adopted the use of ERMS to improve the management of e-records. However, many initiatives to implement ERMS especially in developing countries have failed. Therefore, this study was conducted to identify the hindrance factors for the implementation of ERMS particularly in government sectors. This review paper gathered the data from the previous literatures which discussed on the issues and challenges in the ERMS implementation and other related topics. Based on the reviews, the factors that have been cited as major hindrances include lack of top management support and resistance to change by users of the system. This study will benefit to the records manager and organization as the recommendations and a best-practice for managing electronic records in support of ERMS in government sector have been provided.

Keywords: Electronic Records Management System, E-Records, Digital Records, Public Sector, E-Government

INTRODUCTION

The advancements in information and communication technologies (ICTs) have made it convenient for the government and organizations across the globe to generate digital records (Ngulube, 2007). This means that records can be recorded and preserved at their creation phase. Reports from other parts of the world, such as the USA confirm this rise in e-records creation. Organizations rely extensively on information and communications technology (ICT) to do business, which results in massive amounts of e-records being generated. These records are essential to attaining organisational goals and obtaining knowledge for decision-making and problem-solving (Katu, 2012). They all, however, lament challenges in the management of these e-records with recommendations to adopt e-records management systems (ERMS) to enhance their management. In addition, electronic records should be captured and recorded in ways that make them easily accessible during their entire lifecycle (Asproth, 2005). The rise in the creation of electronic records (e-records) by governments' administrations around the world is undeniable. Governments now deliver mission-critical information which previously generated in a paper-based environment in electronic format to make easily accessible (Adila and Habee, 2018; Ngulube, 2007).

Due to this technological advancement and the rapid move from physical to virtual businesses, electronic records are being generated at a rapid pace across all government entities. However, there is a lack of both a collective principle and the accountability for government ministries to collaborate with one another in the interest of providing high-quality services to the public (Ambira et al., 2019). Thus, a single standardised system for management of records across the public service is deemed vital. However, before focusing on the implementation of the integrated system, initiatives should be invested in the strategic planning of implementing the system with the hindrance factor first identified in order to prevent rejection or failure. Therefore, this study was conducted to identify the hindrance factors for the implementation of ERMS particularly in government sectors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

ICTs are mostly utilised to conduct business and communicate information, leading to the requirement to manage and preserve the generated records (Luyombya, 2010). In most cases, while great effort is being put into embracing the adoption and implementation of ICT tools through e-government, the same cannot be said with regard to creating a favourable environment for the management and preservation of e-records. Increased use of digital records has therefore presented additional and new challenges in these areas (Lemieux, 2016).

Policies pertaining to digital transition have been released by the respective governments in many developed countries (An, 2009; Fletcher, 2002;

Özdemir, 2019; Reed, 2015). These policies represent a part of the holistic construction of the e-government, leading to a higher level of transparency, accountability, and public participation (Casadesús de Mingo and Cerrillo-i-Martínez, 2018). A few of these transition strategies were based on the implementation of the electronic documents and records management system (EDRMS) to maintain digital continuity, that is, to ensure the availability of digital information despite any changes occurring either in the time span of technology development or in the space span of system connection or migration.

i. Major Hindrances of the ERMS's Implementation

Challenges in the management of e-records have led to the adoption of ERMS. Most government agencies around the world have adopted the use of ERMS in a bid to improve the management of e-records. Porter-Roth explains that the spread of technology use has led to the creation of different types of records such as word processing documents, emails, faxes, instant messaging, text messaging, digital images - scanned paper documents, and new media type such as blogs and wikis in a variety of data formats. An ERMS can provide an integrated way to manage these different types of records effectively (Manikas, 2015). However, McDonald (2015) reports that the preservation of digital records for continuous access remains a major concern of archival institutions across the globe. Rapid development of relevant technology means that software and hardware systems have to be constantly upgraded to ensure the continued usefulness of fragile digital records (ISO 15489).

Other than that, the main factors that are also been cited as major hindrances include lack of top management support and resistance to change by users of the system (Kwatsha, 2010; Yin, 2014) which led to many initiatives to implement electronic documents and records management system (EDRMS) especially in developing countries have failed (Abdulkadhim et al., 2015). This was further supported by recent study who claimed that the general status of management of e-records in government ministries is inadequately positioned to support e-government (Ambira et al., 2019). Because of their reliance on technology for both generation and storage, electronic records provide an exceptional set of challenges that need long-term computerised management (Kimberly et al., 2001).

Moreover, electronic records have a number of drawbacks, including the fact that it can be easily duplicate, that they are dependent on computer hardware and software, and that the hardware technology on which they are reliant may eventually become obsolete in a short period of time (Tafor, 2003). The following figure summarises the primary impediments that have influenced ERMS implementation.

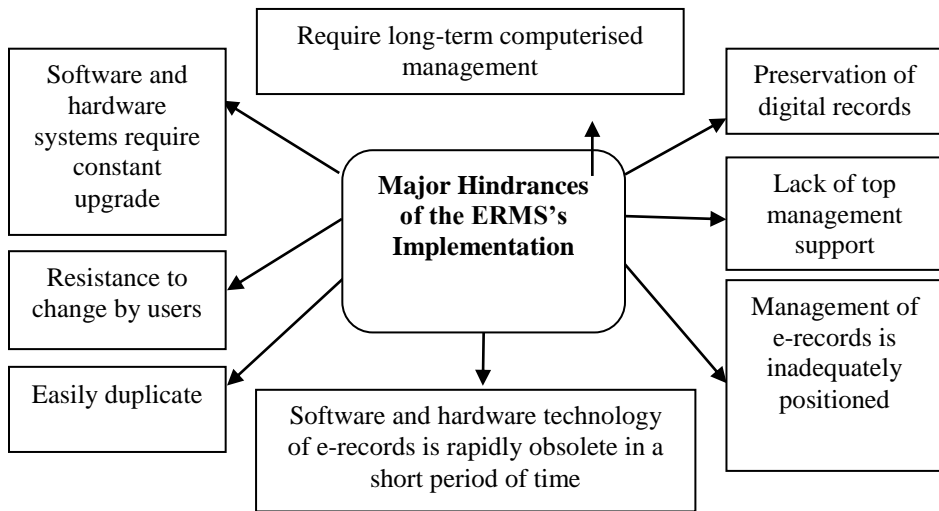


Figure 1: Major Hindrances of the ERMS's Implementation

CONCLUSION AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATION

In summary, there are various hindrances factors which will slow down the implantation of ERMS in government sector with the major factors includes poor management support, resistance to change by users and few technological issues such as hardware and software used is rapidly obsolete in a short period of time and require long-term computerised management in ensuring the continuous access of the e-records. This study will benefit to the records manager and organization as the recommendations and a best-practice for managing electronic records in support of e-government have been provided. This will provide a clear guideline on the implementation of ERMS which can be practically adopted by the organization.

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