The impact of ict on records management

THE IMPACT OF ICT ON RECORDS MANAGEMENT IN AN ORGANISATION

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Over a quarter of a century ago, Ben Russak (1975) noted that traditional models of scholarly communication would be undermined by the photocopy machine and the computer. His prediction has held: the advent of new information technologies that have completely and irrevocably transformed the ways in which materials are created, structured, stored, transmitted, distributed, communicated, and accessed, have similarly transformed the means and modes of scientific communication .

During the past decade, global communications have changed dramatically, as a result of the increased use of information and communication technologies (ICTs). ICTs are becoming necessary if countries are to compete on a global scale.

Oliver (1999) sees ICT as the science that investigates the properties and behaviour of information, the force governing the flow of information and the means of processing information for optimum accessibility and usability. In the past few years Information Communication Technology (ICT) has spread through the whole world in a big way. Computers are finding their way into schools and higher learning institutions, government and the private sector, and other organisations. In many cases, ICT has penetrated work and learning environments unplanned. Many governments and users recognize

the potential of ICT and the opportunities it provides, particularly for economic and social development where distances and traditional systems have tended to hamper progress. ICT also presents opportunities for recordkeeping in developing countries. Bamiro and Liverpool (2002 in Akwegwu et al 2011) observe that the computer (ICT) has already invaded and dominated universities in the developed world. It has also been widely acknowledged that ICTs have the potential to play an immediate role in the quest for sustainable and equitable development in Third World countries.

In Ghana, over the past few years there have been attempts by governments past and present to improve Ghana's information highways because of the realization of the use of ICT as a tool for sustainable development, which is indeed significant. This has led to some improvements in ICT infrastructure though there is still room for further improvement. The private sector has also been very instrumental in developments in this sector, building some form of infrastructure on their own with great success.

Records management as a field of work and as a means of ensuring productivity has not been given the necessary attention that it deserves in Ghana until recently when both public and private institutions have started to pay attention to good records management systems and practices. Although International Standard for the management of business records (ISO 15489) emphasizes the need for good records management as an effective way for countries and organizations to fulfil their obligations and meet expectations of their stakeholders, this requirement has suffered a major backlash in Ghana.

Records and record keeping constitute the life wire of organizations (Egwunyenga, 2006). It would be very difficult to plan and administer any organization such as the school effectively if records are not kept and managed properly. School records are documents, books, diskettes and files which contain information on what goes on in the school (academic and non-academic activities), school personnel, students as well as other school resources such as instructional materials (Olagboye, 2004).

Record keeping and management ought to be taken as a vital responsibility by school authorities because of the indispensable role records play in the effective day-to-day running of the school. However, most school authorities do not have a good culture of record keeping. The few records that are kept are usually not properly stored, thus creating the problem of retrieval to users when needed.

The few school authorities that have adopted the electronic record-keeping practice in the record management system of their institutions have risen above such problems of storage and retrieval, as ICT affords the opportunity to have a quick and easy view of all the records on school activities. Technological advancement had contributed to the effective storage and management of school records.

ICT and record management have a strong degree of commonality and many complementary skills. ICT and record management are both concerned with the creation, storage, accessibility and security of digital information. The ultimate aim of both record management and ICT is to support, protect and enable the business of the organisation in a cost-effective manner now and

in the future. Information and Communication Technology is the major change perceived in the world of record management.

However, where ICT engineers and maintains systems to manage an organisation's information assets, the focus of record management is on protecting, classifying and maintaining the authenticity of records, so they remain accessible and function as evidence of the business conducted for as long as they are required to be kept.

With Information and Communication Technology, Record Management should be simple as compared with the complexity of traditional record keeping. The use of ICT for school record keeping and management gives an overview of the number of students that registered, accurate information on students' fees payment status, and a comprehensive database of staff, students and instructors with just a click. However in most of the tertiary institutions in Ghana the case is different where almost all their records and record management are done manually and Ho Polytechnic is not an exception.

1. 2Problem StatementProblem Statement

In the past few years Information Communication Technology (ICT) has spread through the Pacific region in a big way. Computers are finding their way into schools and higher learning institutions, government the private sector, and other organisations. In many cases, ICT' has penetrated work and learning environments unplanned (Setareki Tale and Opeta Alefaio, National Archives of Fiji 2005). Example, in the past years, typing was done with typewriters, then there was a transformation to the use of computers, now,

not only are computers used to type, but one can programme it to take dictations of notes and type them. However, Ho Polytechnic since its inception is now seeing some level of ICT innovations where a program called topas was introduced to generate students' record. This was causing problem of updating students' records by itself and key in data could not be changed. Lecturers and students are not comfortable with this program, so new programs are being introduced but there are still lapses in the record keeping and management systems which need to be addressed.

Retrieving or getting information or records on students, staff and people in polytechnic community is difficult. In the General Office, there are still bulky files which are presumed to be records of the polytechnic and the use of computers; does it mean that filing is done both manually and with computers? Also students Transcripts, attestation and results takes a long time before they get them. Why does it take so long a time? Looking at the population of about a thousand and above, students still queue for several number of days to have their registration done per head on paper.

Results of students need to be processed as fast as possible that is why there is the need for the use of ICT to speed up the process of retrieving files when needed. This problem needs to be checked before the institution lose its customers (students) because there are other institutions out there which have a well-planned record management systems and students records are retrieved on time. It looks disturbing that a big organization like the Ho Polytechnic appears to have problems with record management in this era of ICT. This research seeks to outline the necessity of the authorities of the institution to migrate at all cost to the use of the ICT and the various benefits

which comes along with it, which will go a long way to ease the work of the administration and the student body as a whole. Thereby answering the question when will we ever stop spending days in a queue to register at the beginning of every semester.

1. 3 Justification

Since the penetration of ICT into the third world countries, there have been several studies on the impact of ICT on record management, education systems and the development of Ghana as a whole. (Adebi, Teye Emmanual, 2012; George Amanortsu et al, 2013; Albert Kwansah et al, 2012). Adebi, 2012, in his study on the assessment of ICT in senior high schools, found out that lack of training, knowledge about computers and experience in the use of computers are the factors affecting the use of ICT in classrooms. George et al 2013, conducted a study on the access and usage of ICT in the Polytechnics, reveal that experience of introducing more and different ICTs in classrooms and other educational settings suggest the full realization of the potential educational benefits of ICT. Albert et al, 2012 researched into the use of ICT in front office operation of chain hotels in Ghana. It was found that ICT has positive impact on the front office of chain hotels by reducing queues to the barely negligible. However there has been no extensive study on the impact of ICT on record management in institutions in Ghana. Ghana's population is increasing and for that matter the increase in student population in tertiary institutions which means more administrative activities making retrieving or getting information or records on students, staff and people in polytechnic community difficult and so the need for better and more stringent way of record keeping and management.

1. 4 Research Questions

In view of the objectives set for the study, the study is guided by the following questions:-

1. What is the importance of records management in Ho Polytechnic?
2. How and what method will be adopted for ICT to have a positive effect on Record Management?
3. What form of data base management system does Ho Polytechnic utilise?
4. Is Ho Polytechnic system of record keeping automated or manual?
5. What ways would ICT be used to improve records management system.

1. 5Objectives of Study

The main objective of the study is to investigate how ICT has contributed to the enhancement of records management in Ho Polytechnic.

1. To determine the importance of Records Management in Ho Polytechnic.
2. To determine the effect of ICT on record Management
3. To find out if Ho Polytechnic has a data base management system.
4. To find out if record system is automated or manual.
5. To determine ways to improve record management systems using ICT

1. 6. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to provide a basis for comprehensive information on information and communication technology and its impact on record management in institutions in Ghana. The study will established the existing

gaps in the adoption of information and communication technology in the record management of Ho polytechnic in the Volta region of Ghana.

The result of the study has the potential to contribute immensely to the strategic decision making of the top management of Ho Polytechnic. This will enable them to give much attention to records management using ICT and automate most of their process such as student registrations, fee pay and result among others for effective and efficient management of the institution. The study would also be beneficial to policy decision makers to take concrete decision on how the tertiary system in Ghana should be ran and how to keep records for quick and timely decision making through the use of ICT.

Also the result of the study would help individuals especially entrepreneurs, managers, business organizations who are yet to enter into business to consider all the relevance of ICT in records management of an organisation. The study would also serve as a reference material for further investigation by interested researchers who might want to know more about the impact of Information and Communication Technology on records management

1. 7Scope of the Study

This study will concentrate on issues bordering on access to and use of ICT in institutions record management. The focus of this study will be on the extent to which access to and use of ICT by management, staffs and department as whole in an institution's record management and the impact it has made on the record management. The scope of the study is limited to Ho Polytechnic, as it will be easier for the researchers to reach their subjects.

Ideally, it would have been appropriate to include other tertiary institutions in the study in order to be able to compare access and use of ICT in various institutions record management since this is an issue in most tertiary institutions in Ghana. However, the cost involved in such endeavor and the time available for the research has not made this feasible.

1. 8Limitation of the Study

As it is with any research that will need findings, the research will be limited by variety of factors which include: time, finances and access to information on the topic. Time will be a constraint due to the fact that the period allocated for the research is short to allow adequate collection of information on the study. Finances pay a major role in researches of this kind. This is so because the researches need to buy materials, print documents and travel to the place of data collection. Without finance the study will not portray the true picture it supposes to produce.

The initial unwillingness of the school administrators in allowing the researchers to use their institution for the research study and the provision of requested information. The unwillingness of some of the respondents to return the questionnaires is another constraint to this study. It is anticipated that some respondent will not cooperate during research data collection. Others will only tick the responses without thorough reading and understanding of the questions well.

Organization of Study

The study has been divided into five chapters.

Chapter one (1) outlines the introduction of the study, the problem statement, justification objectives, research questions, significance of the study, scope, limitation and organization of the study. Chapter two (2) entails the literature review of the study, sets the theoretical base of the research and to set the current research perspective to show the state of the art and it is the reviewing of secondary data. Chapter three (3) covers the methods of data or information gathering. It includes the definition of the study area, , its population, research design, sample size, the sampling techniques, the mode of data collection and analysis. Chapter four(4) deals with data presentation and analysis. Chapter five (5) addresses summary of the major findings that is the conclusion and recommendation.

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