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AN ASSESSMENT OF THE E-READINESS FOR E-GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTATION IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES: A CASE OF PLUMTREE TOWN COUNCIL, ZIMBABWE.

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ABSTRACT

The benefits derived from the use of e-government include speedy access and information provision to citizens and businesses. It enhances interactions with business and industry and also enables citizen empowerment through access to information. The implementation of e-government in developing countries is not an easy task particularly in a local government context. From the information that was gathered from the interviews and questionnaires the council has made progress in installing internet and making it available to all employees. Qualitative data was collected using structured questionnaires and interviews. Based on the findings, it was concluded that the state of Information and Communication Technology services and infrastructure at the local authority are still in infancy. Although the council is ready for e-government implementation and currently making progress, there is need to keep pace with the global and national Information and Communication Technology policies. The purpose of this study was to determine the e-readiness for e-government implementation in the Plumtree Town Council and the willingness of its customers to make use of e-government services based on an e-readiness framework. Local government face challenges in the following areas; availability of an e-government vision, Information and Communication Technology infrastructure, financial commitment, support and commitment from the leadership, Plumtree Town Council is not an exception. The study draw attention to the different measuring concepts that have the highest weights in the importance of e-government implementation. This is shown by the illustration of the e-readiness model developed by Economist Intelligent Unit which ranks and assigns weights to the various categories that are important in e-government implementation. The study provides an insight in assessing the e-readiness for e-government implementation in local authorities and points out the factors that should be considered such as availability of funds, sound infrastructure, skilled human resources, a policy and proper awareness of the e-government initiatives. Hence, the study adds to the body of knowledge in research areas like e-readiness, e-government and e-government implementation.