

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR: DELIGHT T. SIGAUKE

TITLE OF PROJECT: MANAGEMENT OF ELECTRONIC MAIL AS
ELECTRONIC RECORDS IN STATE UNIVERSITIES IN
ZIMBABWE.

DEGREE FOR WHICH PROJECT WAS PRESENTED:
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN RECORDS AND
ARCHIVES MANAGEMENT.

YEAR THIS DEGREE WAS GRANTED: 2015

Permission is hereby granted to the National University of Science and Technology Library to reproduce copies of this project and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves other publication rights and neither the project nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

SIGNED: *Delight T. Sigauke*

PERMANENT ADDRESS: 6 MORTON ROAD
SUNNYSIDE
BULAWAYO
ZIMBABWE

DATE: *23 OCTOBER 2015*

LIBRARY NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY P.O. BOX 346, BULAWAYO ZIMBABWE		
DATE	ACCESSION	CLASS No
<i>26/10/15</i>	<i>SC 15/791</i>	



NUST Library

Abstract

The prevalent use of email in state universities points towards the need to capture and manage the official business communications in emails as electronic records. The task of managing emails as electronic records in state universities was assumed to be at risk given the inherent technological challenges, inadequate skills in the public sector, inconsistent practices and lack of policy that are associated with managing electronic records. Although the challenges impacting the management of electronic records have been well documented, little is known as to the extent to which these challenges have impacted the management of emails in state universities in Zimbabwe. In a bid to investigate this gap, this study sought to investigate the management of emails as electronic records in state universities with a view to improve the recordkeeping practices for email records within the respective institutions.

A cross-sectional survey of six state universities in Zimbabwe was conducted using a mixed method research design. A combination of face-to-face interviews were conducted and a questionnaire distributed to collect data from purposefully sampled officials in state universities. The major finding from this study showed that officials in state universities recognise and designate emails as records however, the recordkeeping efforts and practices to manage emails as electronic records was concluded to be inadequate. Officials practice self-discretionary responsibility for emails which permits them to retain and dispose of emails with limited or non-existent email policy instruction or legislation. In addition, recordkeeping professionals in state universities were noted to have a relegated responsibility as compared to the ICT department for managing emails as electronic records. Further findings revealed that the role and responsibility of the National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ) to assist state universities in managing emails was limited and passive given the lack of requisite technological infrastructure and personnel challenges.

The study also concluded that a lack of recordkeeping professionals in state universities and the passive involvement of the NAZ whose incapacities at the legislative, infrastructural and human resources levels will perpetuate the state of depreciated recordkeeping and practices in the management of emails as electronic records in state universities in Zimbabwe. These findings had put to risk the capture, access and retention of emails as electronic records. This confirmed the original supposition of the study regarding the extent of the challenges affecting electronic records to be also experienced for emails.

In light of the findings, this study precisely recommends for the integrated involvement of recordkeeping professionals with the ICT departments and the training of officials in state universities in order for them to appreciate recordkeeping concerns and improve their recordkeeping practices for managing email records. Finally, the study proposes for state universities and the NAZ to engage in an interactive partnership in the management of electronic records through a continuum of responsibility. Such a partnership is vital for the establishment of a policy and the development and successful implementation of a procedure manual for state universities and the public sector for the management of emails as electronic records.