

ESARBICA JOURNAL

**JOURNAL OF THE EASTERN
AND SOUTHERN AFRICA
REGIONAL BRANCH OF THE
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON
ARCHIVES**

Volume 41

2022

ISSN 2220-6442 (Print), ISSN 2220-6450 (Online)

<https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/esarjo.v41i1.4>

Covid-19, a catalyst or disruptor? comprehending access to records and archives under the new normal

Simbarashe Manyika

National University of Science and Technology
simbarmk@yahoo.com

Peterson Dewah

National University of Science and Technology / University of KwaZulu-Natal
peterson.dewah@nust.ac.zw

Received: 30 April 2021

Revised: 31 March 2022

Accepted: 30 June 2022

Abstract

The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and the resultant intervention measures disrupted and affected the normal operations of business and access to records and archives as information sources. The study sought to explore the impact of Covid-19 on the access to records and archives in the public sector during the pandemic, bearing in mind the disruptive and catalytic effects of the pandemic. Using a qualitative methodology, data were gathered through document studies, and interviews were conducted with records managers from 18 purposively selected organisations. The findings showed that organisations had not moved much towards e-records but depended heavily on paper records. The lockdown period witnessed misdirection and loss of records. Staff taking turns to report for duty also impacted negatively on records. This posed serious threats to proper records and archives management, making room for occurrences such as destruction or alterations by unscrupulous individuals. The study concluded that the pandemic triggered a sense of urgency in the formulation of policies and procedures that promoted remote access. The study recommended that business should always be prepared to deal with disruptive tendencies of pandemics and any other eventuality giving records and archives management great consideration in business continuity plans. Access to records and archives should not be disrupted, as has been the case throughout the pandemic. Organisations should digitise their records and archives to avoid disruptions of service delivery and decision-making during lockdowns.

Key words: access, archives, Covid-19, new normal, records

Introduction and background to the study

Throughout history, many disruptors and catalysts have been recorded in our daily lives. These disruptors and/or catalysts have often redefined how we have lived life as we knew it. Thinking of the Sarajevo assassination as a catalyst for the world war, Uber as a disruptor in the world of taxis and now how Covid-19 has changed our way of life, somehow taking us back to the early 20th century during the days of the Spanish flue. While some are endemic to specific geographical regions, others can spread to become epidemics or pandemics (Delivorias & Scholz, 2020). The way we have known life and conducted business has

changed since the pandemic was first reported in Wuhan district in the Hubei Province of China late in 2019. Recent epidemics recorded were SARS-COV of 2002–2003, avian influenza (H5N1) of 2004–2006 and MERS-COV of 2012 (Ceylan, Ozkan & Mulazimogullari, 2020). It started with localised lockdowns and later spreading to national lockdowns and resulted in significant changes in how people interacted with goods and services, as well as their providers. Records, as the lifeblood of any business providing evidence of transactions, remain critically important not only for the continued existence of the organisation, but also as sources of information. Without reliable and authentic documentary evidence underpinning all essential accountability processes, government, civil society, and the private sector cannot ensure transparency, guarantee accountability or allow for the exercising of good governance (Schenkelaars & Ahmad, 2004).

Continued access to records and archives is important to the well-being of a society. In the case of Zimbabwe, there were reports of some grey areas in terms of records of the pandemic during the early stages, with complains about a lack of access to information, which should not be the case (Chigwada & Maturure, 2022; Ndlebe & Dewah, 2021). Records ought to be accessible as much as possible. If we make a comparison from the Spanish flue of the early 1900s, lessons can be drawn which could compel one to try and seek access to the historical records of the Spanish flue era to find out which measures were put in place in an attempt to contain the pandemic then. If not to draw lessons on how similar conditions had been handled in the past, access to records provides insights to the way forward out of a trying situation like the Covid-19 pandemic. The increase in the number of cases and mutations that characterised the pandemic meant that there was a need for continued access to records. Public access to the records of government is a fundamental right in a democratic society (Millar, 2010). As new information or knowledge is gathered, there is always a need to compare it with what already exists, thus making a strong case for access to records. During the Covid-19 pandemic, underlying conditions were a critical threat to the chances of survival, which resulted in an increased need for access to the medical history of the patients in an attempt to manage their cases better (Murewanhema & Makurumidze, 2020).

Access to records and archives as we have known it before the pandemic was punctuated by mainly physical access to the archival institutions and records offices, especially in third-world countries like Zimbabwe where technology was still very slow, although promising (Alyssa, 2020). Regarding access to records, the United Nations (2009) views the digitisation of UN records as one practice that provides better access to, and faster retrieval of, information, and more cost-effective storage of UN records. Covid-19 has been lethal and even worse for those with underlying conditions. A history of such underlying conditions is buried in records centres that are regarded as non-essential services. In Zimbabwe, during the lockdown, apart from health services and allied sectors, many other sectors were classified as essential services and allowed to operate (Ndlebe & Dewah, 2021; Murewanhema & Makurumidze, 2020). However, this was not the case with archival institutions and records management services.

Brief literature review

Records are generated by organisations and individuals as part of business transactions. ISO 15489 (2016:2) considers records as information created, received, and maintained as evidence and as an asset by an organisation or person, in pursuit of legal obligations or in the transaction of business. Such records need to be managed for as long as they are needed, as they assist in decision-making. Abankwah and Hamutumwa (2017:168) are of the view that

efficient and systematic records management is key to effective and efficient organisational administration and resource management. In the same vein, Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005) note that organisations that manage their records reap immediate benefits in terms of being able to utilise all available information resources for competitive advantage. In records management, according to the International Council on Archives (ICA) (2016), the term 'integrity' is often used to describe record qualities as reliable, authentic, and accessible, which means the records are whole and without corruption.

Records management is a field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of, and information about, business activities and transactions in the form of records (ISO 15489, 2016:3). In Ngoepe and Ngulube's (2014) view, sound records management is at the heart of good public management since government services are dependent on access to information. As such, accountability and transparency cannot be achieved in an environment where information is not available (Cox & Wallace, 2002). In the context of judiciary records, Nyamberi (n.d.) states that accessibility and utilisation of court records are a concern since efficiency is maximised while costs are minimised in the administration of justice, if accessibility and utilisation of court records are streamlined. Measures such as access controls and authorised destruction should be implemented to prevent unauthorised access, alteration, concealment, or destruction of records (ISO 15489 2016:3).

Pandemics recorded in human history to date, seem to have had long-term economic, social, and cultural impact with serious consequences in some cases (Aassve, Alfani, Gandol & Moglie, 2021; Shang, Li & Zhang, 2021; Delivorias & Scholz, 2020; Yao, 2020). The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has changed the business landscape with governments forced to make drastic measures to try to contain the pandemic. The resultant measures have been devastating on business operations, with most businesses caught unprepared in terms of operational procedures which required businesses to operate with limited staff or to have their staff work from home (Martzoukou, 2021). Although Covid-19 differed from the 1918 influenza pandemic, the mass deaths of Native Americans and the Plague, these outbreaks indicated how diseases exacerbate inequalities (Yao, 2020). Previous infections such as Black Death, SARS, Influenza H1N1 and Swine Flu had caused similar economic impacts worldwide (Shang et al., 2021). Delivorias and Scholz (2020) note that while a national or regional economy is impacted by an epidemic or pandemic, some sectors are hit harder than others. While the Spanish Flu infected about a third of the world's population and had an estimated 50 to 100 million victims, a growing amount of literature seems to suggest that the second worst pandemic in human history, the Black Death, had long-term economic, social and cultural consequences, shaping behaviour well into the 20th century (Aassve et al., 2021).

To minimise interaction and maintain social distancing during endemics and pandemics, the use of electronic records can become handy as action officers and executives can access records from remote places. Digital records, including archives, do enable remote access (Conway, 2010). Besides minimising human errors and ensuring data security, an electronic records management system does facilitate access to information (Chisita, Enakrine & Durodolu, 2021). In order to underscore the importance of electronic records, Marutha and Ngulube (2012) conducted a study to establish how electronic records were managed in the current medical recordkeeping practice. The study recommended the introduction of an electronic records management system that is capable of capturing and providing access to a

full patient record and tracking paper record movement, such as Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) (Marutha & Ngulube, 2012). The use ICT to transform the structures, operations and, most importantly, the culture of government is regarded as e-government, and it results in improved service delivery and efficient governance. Bridges (2005) defines e-readiness as a society that has the necessary physical infrastructure (high bandwidth, reliability and affordable prices); integrated current ICTs through business (e-Commerce, local ICT sector), communities (local content, many online organisations, ICTs used in everyday life, ICTs taught in school) and the Government (e-Government); strong telecommunications competition; independent regulation with a commitment to universal access; and no limits on trade or foreign investment. It is assumed that e-readiness is a precursor to e-records readiness which can be defined as the depth and breadth or the capacity of organisations to have the required institutional, legal framework, and ICT infrastructure anchored on a systematic records and information management (Kalusopa, 2011:7).

Statement of the problem

Covid-19 brought so many challenges in the management of records and the provision of access to records and archives users and decision makers. Activities in organisations were disrupted and some institutions closed down because of the pandemic. However, the restrictions allowed a few employees to be at work who needed records to make decisions in order to provide essential services. Records and archives management, who was not afforded the essential service classification, had to close or operate from home. According to Mnjama (2022), a key organisational aspect that has been impacted by Covid-19 relates to access to organisational records and archives in such a way that organisations, both public and private, were compelled to suspend their records and archives management activities. According to Ocholla (2021), Covid-19 disruptions and uncertainty would remain for quite some time (3 to 5 years), even in countries that had already registered profound success in its containment; therefore, this research sought to explore the effects of the pandemic on records and archives access and how records management can still go forward under the new normal.

Research objectives

To understand the disruptive and catalytic effects of the pandemic on records and archives access, the study was guided by the following objectives:

- 1) To determine if Covid-19 has been a disruptor to records and archives access
- 2) To investigate how Covid-19 has been a catalyst to changes in records and archives access during the new normal
- 3) To establish the reaction of records and archives professionals in response to the pandemic
- 4) To find out how structured and unstructured interventionist approaches have been applied to ensure support to business continuity
- 5) To proffer recommendations for continued access under the new normal

Research methodology

Using an interpretivist qualitative methodology, data were gathered by administering an open-ended questionnaire that was emailed to 18 purposively selected public sector organisations. Most of the records managers/archivists (12) returned a completed copy to give a response rate of 66.67%. As part of the ethics, participants (organisations) were anonymised

and coded to participant (organisation) 1-12. The tool was pretested with two public organisations and the results provided the researchers with insights into the disruptions that occurred in private and public organisations regarding records management as a result of the Covid-19 lockdown. The authors used personal experiences and observation to supplement the data and the interpretation. The study involved the content analysis of existing literature that focused on Covid-19 and data were analysed and presented in themes. The study's focus was on 18 organisations, which, on its own, constituted a limitation considering the sample size, and the implications were that the results could not be generalised to the rest of organisations. Nevertheless, the results provided a picture of the situation on the ground regarding the impact of Covid-19 on records management in public institutions. An open-ended questionnaire that focused on four themes (Covid-19 disruptions on the operations of organisations; Covid-19 as a disruptor or a catalyst to records/archives operations; effects of Covid 19 pandemic on records/archives management; recommendations to organisations in terms of records management in view of the Covid-19 pandemic) was emailed to 18 organisations whose consent to participate in the study was obtained before participation. The results are presented in the following section. The responses have been reported verbatim and broadly analysed thematically.

Presentation and discussion of findings

This section presents and discusses the findings.

Demographic profile of the respondents

Respondents were asked to provide some personal information such as age, gender, highest level of education, job experience as well as a brief description of their job in the organisation within which the respondent was working. Data obtained from the questionnaires revealed that the ages of respondents ranged from 25 to 53 years. In terms of gender, there were more female (8: 66.7%) than male (4: 33.3%) respondents in the sample studied. The level of education and work experience of each respondent in each organisation were also investigated. The results indicated that all the respondents held a bachelor's degree and were employed in records sections, with records management experience ranging from 2 to 31 years. Their jobs included "managing student records; managing the authority's records; stores clerk responsible for stores inventory capturing; supervising the accessioning and processing of records and archives in all government institutions in the province; teaching information management; being a registry clerk; being a records officer/archivist; heading the Records and Information Department responsible for managing all the hospital's incoming mail, filing documents in personal files and supervising the students on attachments." The level of education, coupled with the experience attained and age of individuals, made the respondents assume the role of key informants providing aggregate information on organisational properties rather than personal attitudes and behaviour (De Giovanni, 2009:4) on how Covid-19 was a catalyst or disruptor to records and archives management in their respective organisations. The findings of the study are presented according to the objectives. For ethical reasons, the identity of the organisations that participated was not revealed as assurance was given prior to the research that responses would be kept confidential.

How the lockdown disrupted operations and service delivery

In trying to address the first objective of the study, the respondents were asked how the pandemic-induced lockdown disrupted operations and service delivery in their respective organisations. Participants reported as follows:

Participant 1: *Since lockdown was introduced end of March 2019, businesses closed down, movements were restricted, and this had a hard impact on the city council's revenue collection. Although there is online biller-coding systems, citizens had no money since their businesses which are the major sources of income were closed. Those businesses who rent council properties could not afford to pay their rentals on time. Little or no revenue collection led to a standstill in service delivery and, until now, council is still struggling even to pay its workers' salaries. Council is operating with skeletal staff since they do not afford to provide the Covid-19 recommended protective clothing to all the employees. In most departments, employees are still taking turns to report for duty. All this impacted negatively on service delivery.*

Participant 6: *We were not able to continue working due to centralisation of resources, servers and operations. There was a backlog of work, disruptions in business continuity and clients were disgruntled.*

Participant 7: *Covid-19 led to reduced personnel at my workplace; banning of tourists who wanted to visit Zimbabwe. We were compelled to communicate electronically, though it was a challenge at times since we would want to continuously refer to personnel files which are paper based. Some of the documents that would be required for reference and use were not yet digitized.*

Participant 9: *The lockdown negatively affected us much, we had a lot of staff members who were infected, and the organisation had resorted to shift work, there was not enough manpower in the records section considering documents that would be coming from our district offices.*

Participant 10: *Most of our pensioners are now settled in rural areas where network is a challenge and communicating with them during the lockdown period has been a serious setback.*

The results showed that private and public organisations adopted a work-from-home approach that they had not prepared or planned for. The general outcome confirms the statement of Ocholla (2021) that the Covid-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented disruption to lives and livelihoods globally. The findings also revealed that tourists were banned, and this was confirmed by Delivorias and Scholz (2020) who state that another economic implication of an epidemic is that travel and tourism to regions affected by outbreaks are also likely to decline. In a study of a similar nature Panganayi (2020) it was found that the digital divide, among other things, was a serious challenge brought about by Covid-19 pandemic.

Covid-19 as a disruptor or catalyst

Respondents were asked to share their perceptions regarding whether they viewed Covid-19 as a disruptor or catalyst. Comments on the open-ended spaces from some interviewees showed that Covid-19 effects were of a varied nature if not both in the majority of organisations:

Participant 2: *Covid-19 is a disruptor to the records centre. The centre was on a total shutdown during the first three months of the lockdown, so could not provide normal services during the lockdown period.*

Participant 12: *Covid-19 is a disruptor to records management in my organisation because users and action officers were limited in their access to records and archival material in our custody. Consequently, decisions to some important issues could not be made.*

Participant 11: *It becomes a catalyst to records management since the organisation is now trying to employ an effective electronic records management system.*

Participant 9: *Covid-19 is a catalyst to records management, as the organisation had to adjust to meet the demands of the day, like working from home concept.*

The findings revealed that participants viewed the Covid-19 pandemic as both a disruptor to normal business continuity and a catalyst to records and archives management operations. The labour disruptions noted from the current study's findings confirmed the observations of Ceylan et al. (2020) that the Black Death pandemic changed and destructed labour, labour endowments and brought about declining labour supplies. Covid-19 has effectively disrupted how organisations conducted business. Some were caught flat footed with no plan for how to respond. Business saw revenue drop drastically due to the imposed lockdowns and this also adversely affected their strategies to effectively respond to the new work-from-home arrangements. Ocholla (2021) rightly concludes that Covid-19 has escalated the implementation of 4IR projections for stakeholders requiring minimal persuasion to support change, and for jobs being performed at anytime, anywhere, everywhere, thus working from home.

Data gathered revealed that while all respondents used both physical and e-records, the majority predominantly relied on paper-based records in their organisations. No organisation uses electronic records only in its business operations; yet, as Saman and Haider (2012) state, electronic records management programmes have taken place as a way to improve records management for enhanced service delivery. Electronic records are information or data files that are generated electronically and stored using computer applications technology (Ambira, 2016) and, unlike paper records, electronic records may be stored in various formats and on various media such as a Word document and a portable document format (PDF), a format that allows documents to be saved and exchanged over the internet without alteration (IRMT, 2009:1)

Effects of the lockdown on records and archives management

The study found that the effects of the lockdown were far reaching not only affecting access to records, but also the whole chain from creation of records to archiving of the selected category. Normal business operations having been disrupted saw some organisations cutting corners in the way things were done. With regard to the effects of the lockdown on records and archives management in their organisations, some participants noted the following:

Participant 1: *Dealing with issues left some weeks or a month ago can pose serious threats to proper records and archives management as well and can be difficult to account for. This can also give room for mishaps such as editing of records, destruction or alterations by individuals.*

Participant 3: *I am in the Ministry of Health and Child Care (MOHCC); an essential service. Although we were supposed to be on duty as usual, most of us were infected and affected by the virus. So we were never 100% on duty. This made records to pile*

up and the backlog has been too much. Worse still, we were and are still afraid to work freely with records that are created in the wards.

Participant 4: *There has been a serious impact on records during this pandemic. At our organisation, despite the advent of technology in some sections of the authority, most of our records are still paper based. The lockdown period has seen a number of records misdirected, lost. Staff members were seized with the fear of handling the paper-based records for fear of contracting the disease. Those who passed on during the period needed funeral assistance from the authority, and handling their records has been a serious threat to us the records staff. Imagine handling a record inscribed 'covid' as cause of death. True our records have been impacted by the pandemic.*

Participant 5: *Conveniently enough, some of us were called back to office to clear the backlog and establish intellectual control just before audits of paper records began. Even though some departments had gone all digital, some still insist on use of paper records.*

Participant 7: *Decision-making processes were delayed in all government departments in the Midlands Province due to failure to get records from the records centre. During the early period of Covid-19, paper was said to transmit coronavirus; therefore, staff had phobia of catching the deadly pandemic through attending to request leading to unavailability of requested files.*

Participant 10: *Taking turns to report for duty had a negative impact on records compilation and maybe reconciliation since they would have been created by different individuals at different times.*

A majority of the respondents reported some form of staff rationalisation with at least one records professional attending to records and archives needs as and when the national regulations allowed movement. These findings corroborate the findings of Delivorias and Scholz (2020) who point out that the evidence reported in various studies indicated that the epidemic disease impacted on a country's economy through several channels, including the health, transportation, agricultural and tourism sectors. Delays in communications and accumulation of backlogs characterised the lockdown period in Zimbabwe as post and telecommunications were categorised as essential services, but yet, the archival services and most business were not. As such, many times, backlogs accumulated of requests sent via courier and/or even emails with nobody to attend to as offices were closed and/or operating with skeletal staff. The result is contrary to Matlala and Maphoto's (2020) observation that the effective management of records is fundamental to good governance, effective and efficient administration, as well as forming the basis for formulating policies, managing resources, and ensuring service delivery.

At some point in some organisations, non-records professionals were being tasked with performing records and archives management duties, bypassing proper protocols and procedures in the process. This presented an opportunity for underhand dealings with a potential for deliberate damage to records as the records became exposed. The pandemic did not spare records professionals, especially for those employed in the health sector, as they were exposed to the virus while handling records from patients and/or colleagues who tested positive. Backlogs were reported by all respondents as the organisations operated with limited staff, thus hindering proper access. Even long after the lockdown measures were

relaxed, organisations were preoccupied with trying to clear the backlog while, at the same time, balancing new access requests.

Response of records and archives professionals to the pandemic

The participants were asked about their response to the pandemic in their capacity as records and archives professionals and they reported as follows:

Participant 9: *We are digitising records, and some departments had all gone digital though there are some sections in the organisation who are still insisting on the use of paper records.*

Participant 5: *The whole organisation had resorted to shift work and records supervisors encouraged shift work because there was not enough manpower in the records section considering documents that would be coming from our district offices. The organisation is slowly moving to e-records. The organisation dwells much on paper records, so filing of records has not been done to the full due to shortage of staff in the section. Records staff fear touching papers that would have come from those that were not tested and those that would have tested positive.*

Participant 8: *We were compelled to communicate electronically though it was a challenge at times, since we would want to continuously refer to personnel files which are paper based, some of the documents that would be required for reference and use would have not been digitised.*

The results showed that the spread of the virus caught almost everyone on the back foot, from medical practitioners to politicians with most of the responses being knee-jerking, inspired not by scientific theory or principles but often by panic and fear. The response of records and archives professionals to the pandemic highlights the importance of e-readiness, e-government, use of e-records and digitisation. Millar (2010) views digitisation as the process of transforming analogue archival material, such as paper-based textual records, photographs, cassette or reel-to-reel sound or video recordings, into binary electronic (digital) form to support preservation, storage, and access.

The responses were “empty” at most, without guiding principles ever changing in reaction to directives given by the central government and health authorities, which had not given guidelines or mentioned records and archives access, except for journalists. In the heat of the moment, organisations have made hurried decisions without due care to issues regarding records access and security sharing frameworks to ensure that principles for access use and storage remained intact. Covid-19 has proven to be a disruptor and a catalyst at the same time; it can no longer be business as usual with regard to records and archives access. The archivists’ and records managers’/officers’ job has been classified as a non-essential during the pandemic, the result of which was hindered access to the workplace, thus blocking access to records. Overall, the response of the records and archives professionals confirmed Ocholla’s (2021) findings that, fundamentally, access and use of ICT, innovation, transformation, self-learning, blended learning, and flexibility emerged strongly among the experiences.

Structured and unstructured interventionist approaches to support business continuity

The fourth objective sought to explore the interventionist approaches that were adopted to support business continuity. The study showed that different approaches were taken by the different participants as reported below:

Participant 3: *In order to support business continuity, some of us were called back to work.*

Participant 4: *Some departments had gone digital to continue with business.*

Participant 5: *Since we had experienced deaths in the organisation, the management had to fumigate all offices, including the records room where we file our paper records. Unfortunately, fumigation destroyed some of our documents that were not protected.*

Participant 8: *We digitized some of the documents that would be required for reference and use. We were compelled to communicate electronically though it was a challenge at times since we would want to continuously refer to the paper-based personnel files.*

The results showed that the pandemic provided for a ‘forced chance’ for some organisations to test and experiment with new technologies at a small scale in a live environment without the fear of being overwhelmed by workloads on the new systems. In this way, the pandemic proved to be a super catalyst for those organisations that have been reluctant to adopt new technologies. This also goes further to the extent of disaster preparedness and recovery. It proved the inadequacy of most disaster recovery and preparedness plans that were in place, thus prompting a review and incorporating pandemics in future plans.

Conclusions and recommendations

The article is based on the study that aimed to investigate whether Covid-19 was a disruptor or a catalyst with regard to records and archives access in Zimbabwe. It sought to address the following research objectives: to determine if Covid-19 was a disruptor to records and archives access; to investigate how Covid-19 has been a catalyst to changes in records and archives access during the new normal; to establish the reaction of records and archives professionals in response to the pandemic; to find out how structured and unstructured interventionist approaches have been applied to ensure support to business continuity and to proffer recommendations for continued access under the new normal.

The study results revealed that Covid-19 was both a catalyst and a disruptor. The strength of the two being felt most for a catalyst in those organisations that already had a digital drive, while for those more paper inclined, it was felt more as a disruptor. Critical to the new normal was organisational responsiveness; how responsive was the organisation to the operational conditions presented by the new normal. Either way, businesses should always be prepared to deal with disruptive tendencies of pandemics and any other eventuality and should give records and archives management great consideration in business continuity plans. Access to records and archives should be minimally disrupted, as long as there is a possibility of business operations as has been the case throughout the pandemic. The triggered a sense of urgency for policies and procedures upon which promote remote access that was witnessed as organisations sought to embrace remote access technology should be

built. The pandemic provided a perfect opportunity for piloting with new technologies in a live environment with limited users, thus less pressure in a “near natural” testing environment and providing potential for credible test results. In the same spirit, the Covid-19 pandemic has taught us a lesson as records and archives professionals to always be prepared for the worse. First and third-world countries were hit the same as long as they had no technological solutions that allowed for remote access. The study recommends that:

- 1) organisations, records and archives professionals should leverage on the potential or momentum gained during the Covid-19 pandemic to further run with the digital drive. Digitisation of electronic records that can be virtually stored, preserved and accessed via cloud services should be adopted by all. Digitisation facilitates accessibility, improved communication and information exchange between staff and records users in the organisation
- 2) organisations should embrace more records management technology and be prepared for bad times
- 3) organisations should rethink their service model from a custody-driven access model whereby users have to physically visit the custodian of such records or archives to a shared-access model. This further buttresses the case for the adoption of cloud technologies, as organisations that had embraced cloud technologies have partially or fully enjoyed some form of stability as they continued to provide services remotely with employees working from home
- 4) organisations should run parallel information management systems (digital and manual systems) for them to have both electronic and physical management of records. The digital system allows remote working in an e-readiness environment
- 5) organisations should decentralise their operations. Decentralisation will ensure that one does not necessarily need to be at the organisation’s premises, like university campus where the servers are centrally located, to do the job such as capturing application forms.

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