# Extent of the integration of information communication and technology (ICT) systems in the management of records in labour organisations in Botswana

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## Abstract

*This paper presents the extent of the integration of ICT systems in records management in labour organisations in Botswana. The study was largely guided by a survey research strategy. All the 50 registered labour organisations in Botswana were surveyed, 45 of which responded, representing a response rate of 90%.The findings of the study indicated that the depth of electronic records management in terms of existing office systems; e-mail management; integration of records management in ICT systems; integration of ICT systems across computing platforms; and integration of electronic and paper-based record management systems in labour organisation remains low but firmly evolving. It recommends that labour organisations need to re-strategize and put benchmarks in relation to the manner in which they manage electronic records and information.*

**Key words:** Botswana; electronic records management; electronic records; labour organisations; records management; trade unions.

## 1. Introduction

It is now a given that increasingly, organisations all over the world are conducting their business functions using different Information Communication Technology (ICTs) platforms. As a result of this, more and more records are being generated electronically. This entails implementation of effective electronic records management that facilitates the achievement of organisational goals. Literature thus underscores the fact that electronic records management emerged in parallel with the evolution of ICTs. Electronic records management is, therefore, the planning, controlling, directing, organizing, training, promoting, and other managerial activities related to the creation, maintenance and use, and disposition of records using ICTs to achieve adequate and proper documentation of an organisation's policies and transactions and effective and economical management of organisational operations (Dearstyne, 2006, Wamukoya and Mutula, 2005). It is, in short, the application of records management principles in an electronic environment.

By definition, electronic records can be stored, transmitted or processed by a computer or any electronic means. Electronic records must thus have content, context and structure and provide evidence of policies, transactions and activities carried out in electronic environments (Bearman and Trant, 1998, International Records Management Trust, 2004, Wamukoya and Mutula, 2005). Duranti (2001, p. 4) argues there are six distinctive features of the electronic records namely - the medium; the content; physical and intellectual form; function; archival value, legal and administrative conditions of the records.

Today, the utilization of electronic records is increasing swiftly. In an earlier comprehensive study conducted by Archives and Records Managers and Administrators (ARMA) in 2008 more than 90% of the records in organisations were produced in the electronic environment. It is considered that the communication through electronic mail, which started to be used in the 1970s, has contributed to this high rate (Sundberg and Wallin, 2007, p. 31).

Several studies point out that in many organizations in developing countries, there

are various barriers to the integration of ICTs in records management functions (Brown et al., 2009, Goh et al., 2009, International Records Management Trust, 2004, p. 5, Katuu, 2016). These include:

- absence of organisational plans for managing electronic records;
- low awareness of the role of records management in supporting organizational efficiency and accountability;
- lack of stewardship and co-ordination in handling paper-based as well as electronic records;
- absence of legislation, organisational policies and procedures to guide the management of both paper and electronic records;
- absence of core competencies in records and archives management;
- lack of appropriate facilities and environmental conditions for the storage and preservation of paper as well as electronic records;
- absence of dedicated budgets for records management; poor security and confidentiality controls;
- lack of records retention and disposal policies;
- absence of migration strategies for electronic records; and
- absence of vital records and disaster preparedness and recovery plans

Studies in Botswana carried out in the public sector and local government all confirm such findings (Keakopa, 2006, Moloi, 2006, Tshotlo and Mnjama, 2010). For example, Keakopa (2006, p. 135-136) revealed that in Botswana, there were challenges related to management of paper and electronic systems, back-up procedures, long-term preservation of electronic records, issues of access and coping with change from manual to computerised systems. Moloi (2006, p. 105-107) , also cited lack of procedures, lack of policy and legislative framework; lack of skills, among others, as challenges faced in the public sector. Similarly, Tshotlo and Mnjama (2010, p. 30-32) carried a records management audit in a local government at the Gaborone City Council (GCC) and revealed a myriad of challenges such as lack of records management policies to guide the creation, storage, access, retention and disposal of records. The integration of ICTs in records management functions was also found to be very minimal.

In the context of labour organisations, Kalusopa (2011) observes that for labour organisations to participate meaningfully in the national development process there is need for them to develop capacity in records and information management driven by the appreciation and use of ICTs. To this end, since most labour organisations are increasingly operating in e-environments, the need to be electronic records ready in such a networked information society is therefore cardinal (Kalusopa, 2011). This is so because the challenges of conception, initiation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of activities in labour organisations will always require the use of reliable, pertinent and timely records and information in the current e-environment in Botswana (Kalusopa, 2011, Kalusopa and Ngulube, 2012a). Earlier studies carried on the management information and records management in labour organisations in Botswana such as those by Kalusopa (2011) as well as Kalusopa and Ngulube (2012b) do refer to the slow and evolving nature adoption of ICTs and the inadequate records management standards and practices as evidence of low electronic records readiness in labour organisations. However, though alluded to, these studies did not discuss in some detail the issue of the extent of the integration of ICTs in the management of records in these labour organisations. This study therefore attempts to fill in this gap. This paper thus presents the challenges and prospects of the integration of ICTs systems in the management of records in labour organisations in Botswana.

## 2. Methodology

The study used a survey research strategy. This was, however, complemented by methodological triangulation of both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The survey collected data through a questionnaire supplemented by follow-up interviews with personnel designated to ICT/information management in labour organisations. These were either on-site, where labour organisations had employed such staff or off-site technical ICT support, where labour organisations have outsourced IT systems support. Since labour organisations are membership-based and managed usually through the Secretary Generals' Office (who is the Chief Administrator) – this office or its designated officials were also interviewed. The study was also complemented by on-site observations. All the 50 registered labour organisations in Botswana were surveyed, 45 of which responded, representing a response rate of 90%.

## 3. Findings and discussions

This survey relied on several current 'best practice' standards and guides in the assessment of the extent of ICT integration in records management in labour organisations. There are many such standards developed and used globally (Franks, 2015, Hoffman, 2015, Katuu, 2016). The study survey thus consulted the best practice ISO standard ISO 15489-1:2001 - Information and documentation -- Records management -- Part 1: concepts and principles (International Standards Organization, 2001). The standard applies to the creation, capture and management of records regardless of structure or form, in all types of business and technological environments, over time. In addition, the study used ISO 23081-3:2011 Managing metadata for records - Part 3 that is built on Part 1 of the standard (International Standards Organization, 2006, International Standards Organization, 2011b). Metadata is defined as data describing the context, content and structure of records and their management through time. The preservation of the record with its associated metadata is necessary to maintain the integrity of the record. Types of metadata include technical / structural, administrative, descriptive, preservation and use (International Standards Organization, 2001, Sec 3:12). The ISO 23081 standard provides useful guidelines to the understanding, implementing and using the metadata needed to manage records within the framework of ISO 15489. It focuses on the relevance of records management metadata to business processes. The standard establishes a framework for defining metadata elements and provides guidance on conducting a self-assessment on records metadata in relation to the creation, capture and control of records. It does not define a mandatory set of records management metadata, but instead assesses the main existing metadata sets (including Dublin Core, ISAD (G) EAD, ISAAR) against the requirements of ISO 15489 and considers their ability to support business and records management processes. Further, the study also consulted the - ISO 16175 series of standards that address functional requirements for records in electronic office environments(International Standards Organization, 2010a, International Standards Organization, 2010b, International Standards Organization, 2011a). The ISO16175 series are international standards that address the principles and functional requirements for software used to create and manage electronic records in office environments. They were published in three parts between 2010 and 2011 and derives from the International Council on Archives (ICA) 'Principles and functional requirements for records in electronic office environments' (International Council on Archives, 2008a, International Council on Archives, 2008b, International Council on Archives, 2008c). They are based on the records functionality outlined in ISO 15489 and can be used to identify and evaluate records management

functionality in systems. The International Records Management Trust (IRMT) good practice indicators in integrating records management in ICT systems published in 2008 also provided useful standards of practice for this assessment.

The findings and discussions on understanding the depth of the integration of ICTs in records management functions in labour organisations in Botswana thus focused the following key thematic issues namely:

(a) Existing office systems;
(b) Integration of records management in ICT systems;
(c) Integration of ICT systems across computing platforms;
(d) Integration of electronic and paper-based record management systems; and
(e) Integration of e-mail management in overall records management strategy.

### 3.1 Existing Office Systems

The International Records Management Trust (2009) argues that when discussing electronic records management, it is usually prudent to make a distinction between 'application' or 'business' systems (such as human resource and financial management systems) that have a well-defined structure and data management procedures, and 'office systems' that are used to generate and hold unstructured single digital objects, including e-mails and attachments, word processed documents, spreadsheets, scanned images of hardcopy records (International Records Management Trust, 2009, p. 1) They posit that there are two types of ICT systems – application and office systems need to be integrated. For example, technically, human resource systems could be interfaced with electronic documents (such as correspondences such as appointment letters) being created during human resource management processes (International Records Management Trust, 2009, p. 1).

With regard to the existing office systems, the survey confirmed that all the 45 labour organisations had access to some form of computer technology with the most of them using basic word processing applications for managing trade union application forms. However, despite this use of office systems, there were currently no institutional procedures that guide the filing, arrangement and disposition of electronically created documents by staff using desktop computers or appropriate records management software. This implies labour organisations are no different from many other organisations around the African continent that are making the transition to the electronic environment and have yet to establish standards and guidelines for the management of 'office system' records.

### 3.2 Integration of records management functionalities in ICT systems

Usually, when properly implemented, an ICT system that has integrated records management functionalities would permit the capture, organisation, use, retention, and disposition of records (International Records Management Trust, 2009) . The current survey focused on the integration of records management in ICT systems in the labour organisations. The following research questions guided the understanding of this integration ICT systems and records management:

- Were there any standards and procedures for integrating records management in ICT systems in the labour organisation and, if not why?
- Were there any organisation-wide records/information management strategy that includes a specific objective to integrate records management in ICT systems and, if not why not?
- Did the labour organisations have specific tools for auditing and evaluating records management integration in ICT systems and, if not why not?
- Were there any unique identifiers assigned to the records that would remain unchanged as long as the records

exist in the ICT systems adopted in the labour organisation and, if not why not?

- Were there any supporting and application of security and access controls during the process of capturing records to ensure that the records are protected from unauthorised access, alteration and destruction/deletion and, if not why not?
- Did the existing ICT systems provide an easy method of checking the audit trails for changes to records and records' metadata within the system and, if not why not?
- Were there system rules consistent for physical, hybrid and electronic records (e.g. records are labelled or described for searching and retrieval purposes) and, if not why not?
- Were there any documented policies and procedures for assigning retention and disposition instructions to records and, if not why not?
- Were there any backup strategies capable of: providing backup for all records and the records' metadata within the ICT systems in use?
- What was the level of knowledge and training of the staff managing ICT systems and records in the organisation?

Based on the research questions above, the major issues covered in terms of the records management capacity of these ICT systems were:

i. Creating and capturing records;
ii. Managing and maintaining records;
iii. Searching, accessing and retrieving records;
iv. Retaining and disposing records;
v. Backup strategies;
vi. Linkages of ICT systems; and
vii. Staffing and training.

#### 3.2.1 Creating and capturing records

Records must provide evidence of the actions and transactions that generated them and must serve as a trusted source for future decision making and information needs. If records are to serve these purposes, the ICT system must incorporate defined rules and processes for creating and capturing records (International Records Management Trust, 2009) . For example, the question is - where in the business process will a record need to be created and what information about the record must be captured along with the record's content itself? Thus, records must have certain attributes: they must be authentic, complete and usable. In order to ensure that they have these attributes, the ICT system must have the capability to generate or capture the required 'metadata'. The metadata gives individual records their context within the business process that generated them, and it links the records together so that they can serve their purpose in documenting individual cases within the business process (International Records Management Trust, 2009) .

Although the existing ICT system could capture some minimum metadata, the study established that there were no clear procedures or standards to guide the creation or capture of records in all labour organisations surveyed.

#### 3.2.2 Managing and maintaining records

Once electronic records are created and captured, they must be maintained in such a way that their attributes of authenticity, reliability, completeness and usability are preserved for as long as the records are needed to serve the organisation's business needs, and to meet accountability requirements prescribed by law or policy (Ngoepe and Saurombe, 2016). They must be organised, classified and described in a manner that facilitates their access and retrieval, and they must be protected to ensure that they are secure from unwarranted alteration and destruction

(International Records Management Trust, 2009) . A major issue the survey sought to address was whether the ICT systems were capable of:

- validating metadata, for example against a range of pre-defined values such as a classification scheme
- creating rules to control the selection of metadata
- assigning appropriate retention and disposition rules to records during record creation
- creating and maintaining an audit trail that tracks user access to records contained within or managed by the system
- Creating and maintaining an audit trail that tracks changes to records and record metadata.

The survey found out that although some labour organisations have developed some in-house databases using excel for membership statistics, there are, however, no clear documented procedures for creating and capturing metadata values for recordkeeping.

### 3.2.3 Searching, accessing and retrieving records

Information needs cannot be met unless the records can be accessed and used when needed. In terms of searching, accessing and retrieving records the survey sought to establish if the systems were capable of:

- Retrieving and listing a set of digital records and associated metadata that meet the search criteria;
- Restricting the definition and maintenance of access and security controls to an authorised system administrator;
- Supporting central management of access and security controls; applying these controls to users, records and associated metadata; and
- Supporting and applying security and access controls during the process of capturing records to ensure that the records are protected from unauthorised access, alteration and destruction/deletion

The survey established that the existing systems have limited key metadata profile for management of search, access and retrieval. No clear procedures, standards and processes exist to entrench this.

### 3.2.4 Retaining and disposing records

Records generated in ICT systems must be retained for as long as they are required to support business requirements. These may include:

- The need to provide evidence of a transaction or series of transactions; and
- The need to have authoritative and reliable information available to support decision-making, management reporting and accountability requirements.

This survey sought to determine whether labour organisations have retention and disposal procedures for records generated electronically. The results of this survey indicated that just as in the case with paper records, currently there are no clear rules and procedures that authorise retention and disposition of data held in the ICT systems. The implication of this is that the creators and users of records can capture, manipulate and delete data at their own discretion without any regard for the evidential value of the records in future.

The other key aspect this survey sought to determine was whether the ICT systems in labour organisations were capable of maintaining audit trails. The findings of the surveys established that the systems such as office packages have limited in-built audit trails that track the access and use of records. However, further examination indicated that there are no documented procedures on creating and maintaining audit trails.

### 3.2.5 Backup strategies

Another aspect this survey sought to determine were backup strategies capable of providing backup for all records and the records' metadata within the system. The findings of the survey show most labour organisations were aware of, and used, the backup system provided by the on-site and off-site ICT support to their organisations. However, there were no ICT back-up and recovery policy in place in most labour organisations. This implies there was lack of coordinated approach to disaster preparedness.

### 3.2.6 Linkages of ICT systems

ICT systems in labour organisations are increasingly creating, holding and providing access to the records and information on which labour organisations and its stakeholders and clients depend. This implied ICT systems must be able to provide trusted information that is reliable, complete, unaltered and useable. The experience worldwide has been that in many cases, ICT systems have been introduced without the essential processes and controls for the capture, long-term safeguarding and accessibility of electronic records (International Records Management Trust, 2009) . For this reason, this survey further sought to establish whether the systems were seamlessly integrated and functioning networked environment.

The survey found out that most of ICT systems in labour organisations were function-specific except for a few ad hoc links that created interfaces.

### 3.2.7 Staffing and training in electronic records management

As earlier observed, the need for staffing and professional training in records management emerged as one of the critical areas in understanding the depth and breadth of ICT in the records management in labour organisations. Respondents were asked if there is any training provided to anyone in electronic records management. As shown in Figure 1, findings indicated that 18 (40%) of the labour organisations had not received such training while only 5 (13%) had. The rest, 22 (47%) could not even state they understood such training. This was an indication that there is lack of training and awareness on the importance of record management in labour organisations.

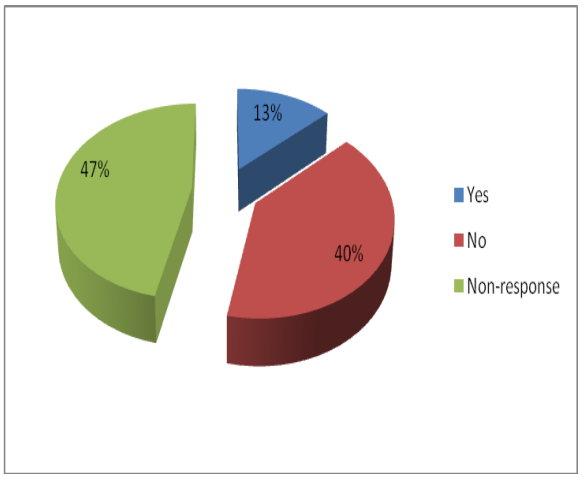


**Figure 1: Training for the management of electronic records**

In fact, the most prevalent challenges of managing electronic records that labour organisations experienced was cited as inadequate staff with expertise in managing records (24.5%); lack of relevant training (21.7%); and low awareness of ICT issues as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Challenges of managing electronic records in labour organisations (N=45)**

| Challenges of managing electronic records | Frequency | |
|---|---|---|
| | Total | Percent |
| Inadequate staff with expertise in managing records | 26 | 24.5 |
| Inadequate funding to purchase enough computers and accessories | 21 | 19.8 |
| Lack of relevant training | 23 | 21.7 |
| Poor communication between users and IT officers | 4 | 3.8 |
| Security | 7 | 6.6 |
| Technology obsolescence | 7 | 6.6 |
| Low awareness of ICT issues | 18 | 17.0 |
| Total | 106 | 100.0 |

These challenges cited above are not very different in other organisations in Botswana (Mampe and Kalusopa, 2013, Mosweu et al., 2016) or other parts of Africa (Katuu, 2015a, Katuu and Ngoepe, 2014).

### 3.3 Integration of ICT systems across computing platforms

As earlier observed, ICT systems in labour organisations are increasingly creating, holding and providing access to the records and information on which labour organisations and their stakeholders and clients depend. For this reason, this survey also sought to establish whether the systems are: (i) integrated across the different computing platforms and (ii) in a functioning networked environment. The survey confirmed that there is low network infrastructure in the form of intranets. Most of ICT systems in labour organisations systems operated as disparate and function-specific, in most cases as 'stand-alone'. There was therefore no integration between ICT systems except for a few ad-hoc links that created interfaces for say printing. It is important to underscore the fact that sound ICT infrastructure more particularly, stable networking environment is critical for effective implementation of any electronic records management programme because a functioning networked environment and the integration of different computing platforms remain a critical priority for labour organisations if they have to be integrated effectively in knowledge society.

### 3.4 Integration of electronic and paper-based record management systems

The International Records Management Trust (2009, p. 33) posits that ICT systems generate records in multiple forms. This implies records may be produced both in paper and electronic form. Thus in many cases ICT systems must also account for paper-based records generated as a result of an earlier manual system. It is stated that "if records are to be complete and if the complete 'evidence' of a set of transactions or case is to be maintained, links must be established between electronic and related paper, digitised and other forms of records".

The current study confirmed that records were produced both in electronic and paper-based form. There is, therefore, the need to manage such a hybrid environment. One interesting finding was that related to the way labour organisations viewed the organisation of paper and electronic records. It was observed that labour organisations tend to organise these formats separately and systems seemed to operate in a disparate manner and they appeared content with this. There was clearly de-linkage

between the management of paper-based and electronic records management in relation to inter-connected business process. These issues were not generally taken into account when planning new information systems. As the study has established, the major reason for this was the lack of depth in knowledge and skill in records management.

In the review of literature, reference was made by the International Records Management Trust (2004) to the fact that the level of integration between paper-based systems and electronic systems should therefore be assessed adequately in an organisation as it is critical to understanding e-record readiness. The International Records Management Trust (2004) argued that success or failure of electronic records management projects was usually driven by success or failure to understand the nexus of paper-based and electronic systems. The International Records Management Trust (2004) argued that lessons learned in Ghana, Tanzania and Uganda had conclusively shown that automated systems cannot simply be overlaid on dysfunctional or chaotic paper-based systems.

Keakopa (2006, p. 200) also found this very prevalent in the public sector in Botswana where there was a preference to deal more with paper records separately from electronic records. Keakopa (2006, p. 200)cites the lack of skills and knowledge in electronic records and cautioned against the over reliance on the use of paper-based system by stating that "although personal knowledge of the physical layout of a manual records unit may lead to quick retrievals, this is greatly impaired where storage covers a wide expanse of space…well designed computer systems will, however, retrieve information more quickly".

The current study demonstrates that the need for an integrated approach is favourable to labour organisations given that while the adoption of ICTs is evolving, there is still a lot of information being produced dominantly in paper format. Several scholars also agree that the integrated approach is the most feasible in such circumstances (Hofman, 1996, p. 41, Keakopa, 2006, p. 218-200, Shepherd, 1994, p. 41, Shepherd and Yeo, 2003, p. 21-22) They argue that such an approach would ensure that all records are managed throughout their life-cycle regardless of their format. Shepherd (1994, p. 41), for example, stresses the possibility of a hybrid system and argues that even if different media are stored separately and have to be retrieved manually, an intellectual structure can be devised and controlled centrally. Keakopa (2006, p. 219) concurs and alludes to examples of the Department of Public Enterprise (DPE) in South Africa that have implemented such a hybrid system. Keakopa (2006, p. 219), however, cautions that such "kind of system can only be successful if alliances between professionals in the two environments are formed…[since] IT experts will be needed by archivists and records managers to help in the design and maintenance of the new systems". More recent studies in South Africa found the same principle relevant in a hybrid environment (Katuu, 2015b, p. 322-323, Ngoepe, 2013, p. 200)

### 3.5 Integration of e-mail management in records management functions

The study also confirmed that though as per organisational policy e-mail had not been adopted and therefore may not be used mostly (ranked low in applications used), there was evidence that labour organisations were now slowly adopting it as an official means of communication with a combined score of 35 (77.8%) in the affirmative. Labour organisations also justifiably indicated that challenges of authenticity and admissibility were key reasons that had led to this slow adoption. Thus, this seems to suggest that e-mail poses huge challenges for most labour organisations. One of the major reasons was that there were no policies or procedures on the use and management of e-mails. For example, in

most of the labour organisations visited, users created and disposed of e-mails and attachments mainly at their own discretion without reference to institutional standards or controls. Some users said they 'archive' messages, while others printed and filed messages that they considered to be official and important.

These challenges are not unique to labour organisations. E-mail management remains a thorny issue in most organisations of the world and there are currently on-going attempts in its management as authentic records. Lamont (2011, p. 1) pointed out that "even the legal department at Microsoft [was] not immune...and that "we are in an e-mail culture... [and]…many…e-mail messages [were] electronic records". Lamont (2011) bemoaned the problems associated with e-mails in terms of ensuring long-term retention and how challenging it was to enforce compliance of organisational policies. Referring to a study by the Association for Information and Image Management **(**AIIM) in 2010 in the United States, Lamont (2011) observed that there were a lot of inconsistencies in e-mail management. According to the AIIM study, about one-fourth of the responding organisations reported that they maintain everything, while nearly one-third had either no policies or non-enforced policies. Another one-fourth had deletion policies that do not discriminate among e-mails. In 26% of the organisations surveyed, records maintained beyond their retention period affected a court case, and the effect was usually adverse. Most respondents, however, showed an increasing awareness of risk and the importance of records management, while 37% were still not confident that their records were protected from deletion or inappropriate access. Thus, Lamont (2011, p. 1) recommended SharePoint, that has an automated "behind the scene record centre" which has a taxonomy on which the content type or classification scheme is based and which also supports security measures. According to Lamont (2011, p. 1), such a solution would support retention automatically through automatic tagging and classification so that there is "a business process at the front end and compliance [of the policies] at the back". This makes the implementation of EDRMS applications appealing in Botswana (Mosweu et al., 2014, Mosweu et al., 2016) as well as other parts of Africa (Katuu, 2012, Katuu, 2013, Ngoepe, 2015)

In Botswana, several scholars have also alluded to these challenges too. Keakopa (2008, p. 80) confirmed that most organisational policies tended to concentrate on the regulation of usage rather than the management of resultant records. Keakopa (2008, p. 80) revealed that there were no clear or defined policies in terms of creation, use, storage, retention and disposal of e-mail in Botswana. Similar studies in Botswana (Moloi, 2006, Tshotlo and Mnjama, 2010), Namibia (Nengomasha, 2009) and Lesotho (Sejane, 2004) all point to the lack of clear policies on the management of e-mails. As recently revealed by Tshotlo and Mnjama (2010, p. 30) at the Gaborone City Council (GCC) in Botswana, "basically, respondents use[d] computers for e-mail… typing of documents and sending of correspondence, but whatever information is sent or received via e-mail remain[ed] with individuals who [were] at [liberty] to delete or save the e-mail..."

## 4. Conclusion

This survey sought to determine the extent to which labour organisations are using ICTs in the manner in which the resultant records generated electronically are being systematically managed as per best records management practice. The following were some of the findings:

- The survey indicated that almost all labour organisations had access to computers and the majority used these in the course of their day to day work.
- It was established that both structured and unstructured electronic records were being produced. Structured records were

those held in databases and often contain statistical and/or transactional data. This data is held in a series of centralised tables that are manipulated via the database coding, whereas, unstructured records are created and maintained in systems such as e-mail and MS Office application such as MS Word.

- It was established that there were no defined standards capture or tag metadata for authenticity.
- There were also no policies, guidelines and systems to enable records/information management through applications such as Electronic Records Management System (ERMS).
- The creation and use of information was up to the discretion of the individual users.
- There were no institutional procedures that guide the filing, arrangement and disposition of electronically created documents by staff using desktop computers.
- E-mail remained a big challenge for most labour organisations in terms of recordkeeping. Thus, there were no policies or procedures on use and management of e-mails. In most of the labour organisations visited, users created and disposed of e-mails and attachments mainly at their own discretion without reference to institutional standards or organisational controls. Some organisations 'archived' messages in some folders while others printed and filed such messages that they considered official and important.

It has been established that records are created in any organization to support and provide evidence of transactions; and that electronic records are therefore an important source of information for any organisation. This implies that labour organisations need to re-strategise and put benchmarks in relation to the manner in which they manage electronic records and information: be it planning, evaluation, monitoring, dissemination or decision making. In Botswana, the challenge of managing electronic records in particularly critical and a research project titled "Enterprise digital records management in Botswana (AF04)" is investigating the implementation of enterprise content management systems within the public sector (InterPARES Trust, 2016). The aim is to develop a policy framework that would guide the management of trustworthy electronic records.

Arising from the above, by implication, labour organisations were found to be no different from many other organisations around the world that are making the transition to the electronic environment and have yet to establish standards and guidelines for the management of electronic records.

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Trywell Kalusopa has attained the level of Associate Professor and now currently works at the Department of Information Studies, University of Zululand in South Africa. He serves in various portfolios in the areas of information and records management as well as in labour relations in Africa. He has taught and done research and consultancy for close to 22 years and is credited with several articles in international journals as well as book chapters. His current research interests are electronic records management, emerging technologies, e-government, labour information systems and labour relations.