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Assessment of the Status of the Social Media Records: The Case of the Mpumalanga Government, South Africa

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ABSTRACT

This paper assesses the status of social media records in the Mpumalanga Archives. The Mpumalanga Province (MP) faces challenges with regard to the management of social media records (SMR) due to the lack in the Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 1998 of policy elements such as a preservation strategy, lack of capacity building, technological capabilities, collaboration, privacy, and the accessibility of social media. The International Records Management Trust-E-readiness Tool was used to assess the readiness of organizations to preserve SMR. The research findings show a lack of skills and knowledge in how to handle SMR and gaps in the act.

Introduction

The Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 2008 was enacted without the consideration of legislative components such as a preservation strategy, capacity building, technological capabilities, collaboration, privacy, and the accessibility of social media records (SMR). The lack of legislative components raises the possibility of a lack of capacity building and the loss of institutional memory. Social media platforms create records management challenges that ¹require organizations to develop effective and appropriate strategies to manage SMR. The International Records Management Trust (IRMT) E-readiness Tool will be used in this study to provide a high level assessment that will determine whether a government records and information infrastructure is capable of supporting e-government strategies.

Brief background information on the Mpumalanga province

The Mpumalanga Province is one of nine South African (SA) provinces established after the first democratic governments were formed in 1994.¹ The regulation of provincial archives was established according to Schedule 5 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996).²

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The constitution also provided for the enactment of the Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 2008.^{3,4} This act established the Mpumalanga Archives (MA) and provided for matters connected with the management and care of the records of provincial departments and the preservation and use of a provincial archival heritage. In this research context, provincial archival heritage refers to social media records with historical, cultural, and scientific importance, deemed significant within the context of a province. The Mpumalanga Archives is the branch of the Mpumalanga provincial administration which serves ten departments, fifty two district municipalities, seventeen local municipalities, tribal authorities, and non-profit organizations.

The aim and objectives of the Mpumalanga Archives are as follows:

- To preserve public records with enduring value for use by the public and the state
- To make records accessible and promote their use by the public
- To ensure the proper management and care of public records
- To collect public records with enduring value of provincial significance, which cannot be preserved more appropriately by another institution
- To promote cooperation between institutions having custody of non-public records with enduring value
- To promote an awareness of archives and records management and encourage archival and records management activities and organizations
- To promote the empowerment of previously disadvantaged people and groups through archival usage
- To promote the preservation and use of the provincial archival heritage.

Problem statement

A review of the literature demonstrated that research on the management of social media in South Africa is still in its infancy. Hence, there is an expectation for an archives institution to be at the forefront of managing SMR.⁵ There is a limited number of studies that address the management of SMR. Jonathan Mukwevho and Mpho Ngoepe's *Taking Archives to the People* showed that the use of social media is limited as a tool to promote public archives.⁶ The study never researched the management of SMR. Chern Li Liew, Vanessa King, and Gillian Oliver report that their study, "Social Media in Archives and Libraries" that "no in-depth studies have been done examining and addressing the preservation of user-contributed contents, resources, and infrastructure to sustain social media activities in archives."⁷ This case study seeks to narrow that gap by assessing whether SMR is in compliance with the Mpumalanga Archives Act of 1998.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this paper is to assess the status of SMR in Mpumalanga Province by identifying gaps in the Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 1998 with regard to the legislative components such as a preservation strategy, capacity building, technological capabilities, collaboration, privacy, and accessibilities of SMR.

Methodology

This research used a qualitative research methodology which enabled the researcher to reconstruct the data through the generation of multiple subjective realities.⁸ The use of open-ended questions was key to the generation of rich descriptive data that forms the mainstay of qualitative research.

This methodology combined content analysis and document analysis with one-on-one interviews. The purpose of using content analysis was to examine the extent to which MA repository Web sites are implementing Web applications with respect to SMR. Content analysis is one of the common methods for studying the web. This is a form of a Web site survey.⁹ This content analysis was completed by analyzing whether MA is preserving SMR.

Twenty (20) participants were selected from departments of the Mpumalanga Provincial Government to participate in this study. The criteria for selecting participants include their knowledge of the Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 1998 and extensive experience as either records managers or archivists. The participants were also clients of the MA.

Theoretical framework

This research used a tool developed in 2002 by the International Record Management Trust (IRMT) to enable governments to conduct high-level assessments of key areas of SMR readiness in association with aspects of e-government and to determine whether the records and information management infrastructure are able to support e-governance initiative. IRMT E-readiness Tool assessed readiness of the Mpumalanga Province adoption of SMR, compliance with the Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 2008, awareness, collaboration, staff competencies, ICT strategies, and privacy. Doctor Roslyn, in her study "Accelerating E- government E-readiness at Work," indicated that the concept of e-readiness include "assessment of the organization to adopt the e-records management system."¹⁰

Information communication technology (ICT) infrastructure provides a platform to manage SMR. The implementation of SMR preservation

requires organizations to develop an ICT strategy in line with the current archival legislation.¹¹ Paul Mullan and Mpho Ngoepe in their study, “An Integrated Framework to Elevate Information Governance to a National Level in South Africa,” found that “change in corporate governance, legislation, and regulation and the rapid information created through social media in use in organizations have led to the need to clearly define a framework of SMR collection.”¹²

This implies that all records and archives management legislations are to make a provision for the management of social media records.

Justus Wamukoya and Stephen Mutula in their study, “E-Records Management and Governance in East and Southern Africa,” show that “few institutions in Southern Africa have undergone e-records readiness assessments using the IRMT tool.”¹³ The e-readiness assessments that have been undertaken by the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) E-readiness Task Force in 2002 revealed that the staff competencies and skills required to manage SMR in a shared work environment have not been developed in many public sector organizations in Southern Africa.¹⁴ Generally, archivists recognize and argue for the preservation of records kept through social media platforms for future research.¹⁵

The IRMT E-readiness Tool was chosen for this study because it is flexible and adaptable in various contexts. The IRMT E-readiness Tool is able to assess why organizations are not ready to adopt the preservation of SMR. It is worth using because it collocates the various segments of organizational, ICT, human resources and external readiness into a single tool.

Literature review

Literature was reviewed based on the objectives of the study.

Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 2008

Sidney Netshakhuma in his article, “The Role of Archives and Records Management Legislation after Colonialism in Africa,” shows the weaknesses of legislation in the inclusion or management of SMR.¹⁶ This is supported by Brendan Eze Asogwa and Ifeany Jonas Ezema in their article, “Freedom of Access to Government Information in Africa.” They found that archival laws in most African countries lack a policy statement about the “preservation of SMR.”¹⁷ The study conducted by Justus Wamukoya and Stephen Mutula, “E-records Management and Governance in East and Southern Africa,” shows that “most of the countries had no specific legal framework to manage SMR.”¹⁸ Zawedde Nsibirwa, Ruth Hoskins, and Christine Stilwell, in their article, “Building the South African Nation

through Legal Deposit,” stated that the “lack of revised archives and records management legislation and the ability of archives to implement laws lead to loss of archives materials.”¹⁹ The current Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 1998 is unclear regarding the preservation of SMR.

Shadrack Katuu writes in his article, “Assessing the Legislative and Regulatory Framework Supporting the Management of Records in South Africa’s Public Health Sector,” that public organizations in South Africa are “to comply with regulatory provisions that are associated to the management of SMR.”²⁰ A review of the literature shows that some of South Africa’s organizations have developed measures to manage SMR.

Preservation strategy

It is the aim of the Mpumalanga Archives to preserve public records with enduring value for use by the public. This implies that organizations are to develop “a preservation policy.”²¹ Such policy is to be informed by a legislative framework, which plays a role in determining the e-readiness status with regard to the implementation and preservation of SMR.^{22,23}

A study conducted by Schellnack-Kelly, “The Role of Public Archivists in Post-apartheid South Africa,” indicated that “more archives users are concerned about security, control, and access” of SMR.²⁴ Nsibirwa, Hoskins, and Stilwell in their previously mentioned study reported that “obsolescence, data corruption and loss, high cost and the need to preserve SMR at creation is not done by most of the organizations.”²⁵ Furthermore, Sara Day Thomson and William Killbridge, in their article “Preserving Social Media,” write that “organisations are to develop effective storage in line with the legislative framework to manage SMR.”²⁶ A preservation plan is essential for the management of SMR.²⁷

Asogwa commented that the enactment of archives legislation is to be supported by qualified and experienced archivists.²⁸ Furthermore, it also needs to be supported by a preservation strategy that is aligned with the organizational objectives. Zawedde, Hoskins, and Stilwell indicate that “preservation policies provide opportunities to provide frameworks for ensuring access to information is guaranteed to various stakeholders.”²⁹ If organizations have not set business objectives, then a social media strategy is unlikely to be successful.³⁰

Preservation planning that accommodates restrictions can make positive advances toward future access to SMR.³¹

A review of the literature showed that developed countries such as Britain and the United States of America are advanced in terms of collecting SMR. Andre Villino and Inge Alberts in their study, “Assisting the Appraisal of E-mail Records with Automatic Classification,” found that

“the National Library of Scotland archives social media harvested Websites to preserve its records for the long term.”³² The Kingdom Government Web Archives developed a strategy of capturing the Twitter data for the public tweets issued by official central government Twitter accounts.³³

Capacity building

The Mpumalanga Archives Act of 2008, Section 5(20) states that “the provincial archivist may provide professional and technical support in aid of archival activities and the archival community.”³⁴ It is the role of MA to plan and oversee the development and implementation of preservation of SMR. Staff development and training are the integral cornerstones for archivists to implement the preservation of SMR. The ICT only plays a role by offering technical support in terms of building the archives infrastructure and managing SMR. Thanuskodi Shanmugam, in his study, “Awareness of Library 2.0 Applications among Library and Information Science Professionals,” found that a “lack of social media skills discourages archivists and records managers from adopting the electronic records management system.”³⁵

Justus Wamukoya and Stephen Mutula in their study, “E-Records Management and Governance in East and Southern Africa,” found that “there is insufficient capacity and training on SMR preservation in most of the countries in Africa.”³⁶ Schellnack-Kelly in her study, “The Role of Public Archivists in Post-apartheid South Africa,” showed that there is an urgent need to address “the issue of information culture by dedicated undertakings to enable archivists to attain appropriate skills, knowledge, and competencies.”³⁷ Inadequate ICT skills and competencies are the most significant challenges for archivists in managing SMR in most of the African institutions.³⁸ These skills are required to make effective, sustainable records-based knowledge management part of the way modern archives operate.³⁹ Archivists need to possess ICT skills to ensure that records created in social media platforms remain available, understandable, and usable to clients, as well as a knowledge of migration strategies, and the ability to manage, appraise, acquire, and provide access to SMR.⁴⁰ Collaboration with regard to the ICT is essential to enhance SMR management and to provide a variety of educational opportunities to acquire records and improve SMR-related competencies at the introduction, advanced, and continuing educational levels.

Technological capabilities

The Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 2008 was enacted without regard to the development of ICT as the enabler to preserve SMR. Day and Killbridge indicated that “most of the system designers do not consider ICT needs in inadequate attention being paid to long-term preservation of

records.”⁴¹ The research found that the technological infrastructure was necessary to make archives accessible to researchers and policy makers was the major challenge in preserving SMR.⁴²

Wamukoya and Stephen show that “the East and Southern Africa region faces challenges with regard to the management of SMR due to technological factors.”⁴³ Yiannis Mylonas in his article, “Witnessing Absences: Social Media as Archives and Public Spheres,” points out how the remembrance and forgetting of individuals, groups, and societies is shaped by technological, political, social, and cultural factors.⁴⁴ Through the use of social media, archives are often re-contextualized in contemporary settings and become sources to think and reflect on a common socio-historical, political, and cultural heritage. Archives connected to important socio-political affairs can function as alternative public spheres.⁴⁵

The study conducted by Jonathan Mukwevho and Mpho Ngoepe, “Taking Archives to the People,” found that for an archive to remain relevant to a community, it is essential for archivists “to keep abreast of trends in ICT to provide opportunities for sharing, linking, collaborating and inclusion of user generated content.”⁴⁶ Digital archives can fulfill all the storage demands of long-term preservation of social media in a cost-effective way.⁴⁷ Technological storage capabilities are able to offer huge capacity with minimal storage cost/bit and should incur less infrastructure, maintenance, and operational costs.

The study conducted by Mpho Ngoepe and Patrick Ngulube, “Assessing the Extent to Which the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Has Fulfilled its Mandate of taking the Archives to the People,” found that most archival institutions preferred to “preserve only paper based records because of lack of skills to preserve records in the electronic environment.”⁴⁸ Despite this, most of the developed countries embrace ICT to support social media information flows and collaborative work.⁴⁹

The introduction of social media changes the concept of interaction between archives and societies because archiving of SMR requires ICT skills and knowledge.⁵⁰ Most institutions do not use social networking such as Facebook, blogs, podcasts, wikis, YouTube, and Twitter to market their archives products.⁵¹

Mukwevho and Ngoepe indicate that “MA has a platform to use social media to promote their archival collections.”⁵² However, the assessment of the MA found that there was no electronic repository to preserve SMR.

Collaboration

The Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 2008 promotes the collaboration of organizations in preserving records. The statement is referenced by

Sabah, Faha, et al. in their study “Scientific Collaboration Networks in Pakistan and Their Impact on Institutional Research Performance.” The authors found that the legislative statement implies that “organisations are to develop policies towards the formation of collaboration.”⁵³ Social media provides a platform for organizations to collaborate and to promote the “preservation of social memory records.”⁵⁴ Thomson, Day and Killbridge William remark that “many social media platforms, such as Twitter, forbid the sharing of any licensed data to protect the information integrity.”⁵⁵ Southern African ministers responsible for archives and records programs initiated collaboration on SMR management because there was a low awareness of the role of records management in support of organizational efficiency and accountability; a lack of stewardship and coordination in handling SMR; the absence of competencies in archives management; the absence of budgets dedicated for records management, poor security and confidentiality controls; a lack of records retention and disposal policies; and the absence of migration strategies for records.⁵⁶ These initiatives led to the sharing of skills and knowledge on the management of SMR.

Katharine Stuart in her article, “Methods, Methodology and Madness,” writes that the trustworthiness and reliability of records are key for building relationships with organization that transfer records to archives repositories. Thomson, Day, and Killbridge allude to the fact that collaboration can overcome “the challenges of capturing, distribution and sharing of social media data through providing coordinated negotiations with platforms.”⁵⁷

Mary Samouelian in “Embracing Web 2.0” indicates that “archivists and records managers are to work together to meet the need of users without any challenges through the implementation of the ICT to manage SMR.”⁵⁸ Social networks require continuous updating, an awareness of current changes to social tools, and an active monitoring of user comments.⁵⁹ In South Africa, there is a pronounced culture of not embracing ICT to preserve institutional memory; hence, there is the challenge of the low usage of the social networking site.⁶⁰

Privacy

A review of Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 2008 found that it contained no policy statement about the management of privacy. Thomson, Day, and William found that social media data “create a threat to the privacy of individuals due to its size and intrinsically linked structure.”⁶¹ Organizations must develop an effective filing system to ensure that SMR are preserved and that security threats by malicious software are handled. In addition, a reliance on external software, untrustworthy information

sources, unproductive use of organizational resources, and other factors that expose an organization to legal liability must be curtailed.

Accessibility

The Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 2008, states that “a public record in the custody of the provincial archivists shall be available for public access for a period of 20 years.”⁶²

Asogwa and Ifeanyi in their study, “Freedom of Access to Government Information in Africa,” indicated that “public information should be made available on a social media platform for free online access.”⁶³ The institutional archiving of social media seems justifiable and of collective cultural interest since social media is information in the public realm.⁶⁴ Elisabeth Fonden and Meghan Menard McCune in their study, “Archiving and Preserving Social Media at the Library of Congress,” found that SMR, its accessibility and use, depend upon “the technologies that change and evolve; this implies that 20 years is too long a period to preserve SMR because of technology obsolescence.”⁶⁵

The author proposes that MA Mpumalanga Archives Act, 2018 be amended by adding a clause on the management of social media to ensure that archives remain accessible. The importance of context needs to be highlighted to ensure that SMR are accessible to various stakeholders.⁶⁶ A survey conducted by Chern Liew Li, Vanessa King, and Gillian Oliver Gillian, on social media in archives and libraries, found that reaching new audiences and access to a large audience were among the top factors prompting the exploration of the preservation of SMR.⁶⁷ The major challenge experienced by organizations is that most of the SMR created or received by organizations does not end up in a recordkeeping system.⁶⁸ This approach is commented on by Daniel Noonan in his study, “Email: an Appraisal Approach.” Noonan remarks that the preservation of records and providing access to SMR are a challenge because of “lack of competencies and skills in archiving.”⁶⁹

Data analysis

A literature review was conducted, based on the purpose of the study.

Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 2008

Twenty participants (100%) were asked whether they were aware of the Mpumalanga Archives Act, 2008. The majority of participants, 17 (85%), indicated that they were aware of the act.

Table 1. Awareness of Mpumalanga Archives Act, 2008.

Participants	Responses
17 (85%)	Yes
3 (15%)	No

Table 1 shows that three (15%) participants were not aware of SMR. As indicated in Table 1, three (15%) participants indicated that they were not aware of the legislations governing ARMP. One of the respondents said that “staff know about the act on paper, but they never implemented the act.”

Preservation strategy

Questions about a preservation strategy were asked to gain a snapshot of whether or not MA preserve the contents generated on their social media platforms and if they do, to what extent. Sixteen (80%) participants said that MA lack a plan for the preservation of SMR. The remaining four (20%) said that “there is a plan in place to preserve SMR in their institutions.” It seems that MA perceived SMR as archives not worth preserving because of the continuous change of ICT.

A significant number of participants, 16 (80%), acknowledged that they did not have strategy to preserve SMR compared to four (20%) participants who said they had a policy. Table 2 shows that four (20%) participants who indicated that they had a strategy are most probably referring to the draft social media strategy. The head of provincial archives clearly stated that staff within the department lack SMR strategy.

Transferring of SMR

The table below analyses the transfer of SMR. The participants were asked if they transfer SMR to MA for preservation and future access. Table 3 shows that 100% of participants confirmed that their departments never transfer SMR to MA. Twenty participants (100%) indicated that an overwhelming majority of government departments are aware that they should be coordinating with MA when they collect, organize, and display SMR. The author observed that few departments are complying with the Mpumalanga Archives Act, No 14 of 1998 to transfer their archival materials to MA. All participants 20 (100%) indicated that because the MA lack capacity to manage ERM systems, the majority of departments have not yet transferred any records to the MA. One participant put it this way: “MA cannot expect government department to transfer SMR to our repository as staff do not have skills and knowledge to keep such records.” The fact that

Table 2. Preservation strategy.

Preservation Strategy	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Plan in place	16	(80%)	4	(20%)

Table 3. Department on transferring social media records.

Number of participants	Responses
100 (100%)	No
0 (0%)	Yes

provincial departments are not transferring electronic records is a major concern for the preservation of institutional memory.

Capacity building

In this section, archivists and records managers' awareness of and familiarity with different social media applications were assessed.

Table 4 summarizes responses based on archivists and records managers' familiarity with diverse social media. Evidence from the 15 participants (75%) showed that they were aware of social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Google Chat, Twitter, YouTube, Skype, and blogs and wikis. Even though these participants acknowledged that they are aware of various forms of other social media, such applications are not used to preserve institutional memory. These participants are of the view that social media are applicable for use on personal level. The study further established that although archivists and records managers were aware of the existence of wide-ranking social media technologies, they were selective in their use. This majority of participants said that they use social media to communicate with friends and family and to keep abreast with latest developments in their own environment. Others indicated that social media could be used for leisure activities. These participants reported that SMR preservation is to be piloted in the National Department of Arts and Culture and rolled out to the Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Arts and Culture. These national departments are to champion the use of social media. This majority of participants stated that they are not willing to adopt social media because it requires organizations to adjust or change according to technological developments.

Factors against the use of social media

Table 5 shows that 20 (100%) participants agreed that the absence of social media policies, lack of management support, and staff unwillingness to change are the cause for the lack of the adoption of social media. Few

Table 4. Awareness of social media.

Participants	Type of social media
5 (25%)	Mix Flickr, Delicious, Picas, podcasts, Tags, Dropbox, RSS Wiki, Blogs
15 (75%)	YouTube, Twitter, Google Chat, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Facebook

Table 5. Factors against the use of social media.

Participant response	Factors
20 (100%)	Absence of policies
5 (25%)	Lack of infrastructure
7 (35%)	Lack of knowledge and skills
16 (80%)	Lack of management support
2 (10%)	Lack of staff commitment and cooperation on ERM
20 (100%)	Staff unwillingness to change

Table 6. Factors influencing the use of social media.

Number of Participants	Factors
20 (100%)	Marketing and promotion of archives
0 (0 %)	Flexible social media policies
0 (0%)	Organizational policies
0 (0%)	Tools easy to use
20 (100%)	Personal knowledge and skills

Table 7. Technological capabilities.

Participants	Response
7 (35%)	Yes
13 (65%)	No

participants, seven (35%), as reflected in Table 5, indicated that lack of knowledge and skills and staff commitment and cooperation on ERM was the major reason for the lack of the adoption of the ERM system.

The participants, 20 (100%), were asked to indicate factors influenced by the use of social media in their organizations. Most of the participants reported that social media was only used by organizations for the marketing and promotion of records management activities.

Technological capabilities

The participants were asked whether they had the technological capabilities to collect, organize, and dispose of SMR. The majority of participants 13 (65%) acknowledged that they did not. Participants indicated that due to the lack of skills on the ERM, it was impossible to manage all SMR. The remaining three (35%) participants indicated that they are aware of the technological capabilities needed to preserve SMR.

Collaboration

The 20 participants were asked to respond about any collaboration done within their organization with regard to SMR. The majority of

Table 8. Level of collaboration within the institution.

Participants	Response
18 (90%)	Collaboration in place
02 (20%)	Not aware of any collaboration

participants 18 (90%) indicated that there was a high level of collaboration in records management. Table 8 indicates that 18 participants (90%) acknowledged that collaboration is in place with the National Archives of South Africa, Auditor General of South Africa, Provincial Departments, Mpumalanga Records Management Forum, and Mpumalanga Municipalities. However, this collaboration does not touch on the aspects of SMR.

Privacy

Participants were asked if there were any threat with regard to the collection, preservation, transfer, and processing of SMR. The majority of participants 17(85%) indicated that introducing the SMR system will have implications on the privacy of information. The majority of participants 17 (85%) indicated that the enactment of the Mpumalanga Archives Act 14 of 2008 has implications for the management of personal information in the sense that archivists and records managers need take this into consideration when arranging, classifying, and disposing of records.

Accessibility

Like paper-based records, electronic records should remain accessible and usable over time, in spite of technological changes.

The participants were asked their attitudes toward the potential use of social media in providing and accessing archives material. The majority of participants 16 (80%) were positive toward using social media to access archival materials. Four (20%) participants did not show willingness to use social media platform to preserve SMR. The perceived positive attitudes of archives toward the use of social media could lead to the success of service offering on this platform. The findings could be attributed to lack of knowledge and skills in the preservation of ERM. The lack of required skills is also reported across the literature as a cause for MP failure to embrace social media as records. The respondents show that technological obsolescence is one of the challenges of the collection of SMR. Four participants (20%) indicated that inconsistency with descriptive standards led to the difficulty of the implementation of social media by the provincial archives.

Table 9. Implication of privacy of information.

Participants	Response of participants
03 (15%)	No threat to information
17 (85%)	Threat to information.

Table 10. Attitudes of staff toward the potential use of social media in providing and accessing archive materials.

Participants	
16	Yes (positive attitudes)
04	No (negative attitudes)

Findings

The results for this research were presented and discussed under the objectives of the study.

Legislation

The researcher found that there is a gap in the Mpumalanga Archives Act, 1998 in terms of managing SMR. There is no clause in the act that defines SMR management.

Preservation strategy

The study found that there is a loss of institutional memory generated through the use of a social media platform because of the lack of a preservation strategy, which has implications for the management of records. The participants acknowledged that their organizations have an archives and records management strategy but such strategies do not include the management of SMR.

Capacity building

The participants lack skills to manage SMR. The skills that are related to SMR management include ICT capabilities. The findings showed that all participants attended basic, intermediate, and advanced courses offered by the University of South Africa. The lack of skills has implications on the management of SMR.

Technological capabilities

From a technological perspective, social media platforms were considered secondary and complementary to the provincial archives existing Web sites. The research found that there is lack of capabilities to manage all records created in the ERM system.

The adoption of digital technologies to preserve SMR of course led to significant financial implications concerning preservation and the provision of enough space to preserve SMR.

Collaboration

The MPA are not capable of handling archiving of SMR without collaboration. MA require collaboration with private partners in archiving and accessing digital content. Private–public partnership between institutions and private vendor can contribute to the preservation of SMR.

The researcher found that there were initiatives such as Archives Week, during which communities collaborate to preserve institutional memory and local history. Through the Mpumalanga Records Management Forum, all provincial departments and municipalities can share common challenges with regard to the management of SMR. However, all initiatives failed to consider collaborative efforts concerning SMR.

Privacy

There is a perspective that if MA amend the Mpumalanga Act 14 of 2008 to include a clause on the management of privacy, and such a clause will have an impact on the privacy of information. The research found that the legislation lacks a policy statement about the privacy of information. The researcher found that most of departments are afraid to implement the Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 2008 because of lack of a clause on the management of privacy management, which has impact on the management of records.

Access

The Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 2008 makes a provision for public records to be made available for public access after a period of twenty years. The research found that even if MA developed an electronic records management system to preserve SMR, twenty years is too long to access records created in the social media platform. This is because of challenges such as technological obsolescence and the change of software.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

- To review the Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 1998 to include a policy statement on the preservation of SMR

- To develop public awareness that governmental provincial departments should deposit SMRs and that collaboration to be encouraged to ensure that SMR are preserved
- To develop a social media policy
- To ensure that access becomes a vital issue for archives and archivists in their efforts to collect and organize archival materials.

Conclusion

There is a need to amend the Mpumalanga Archives Act, No. 14 of 2008 to preserve SMR. This is because a large amount of crucial records are lost because of the lack of strategies to preserve such records. There is also a need to ensure that legislation is up to date to ensure that records with appropriate archival value are preserved. Hence, there is a need for the review of legislation governing SMR, development of preservation strategies, and raising awareness on the management of SMR.

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