

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation represents my independent investigation and that all the sources I have quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I further declare that this dissertation has not previously been submitted for a degree, diploma or other qualifications at this or another university.

Signed.....Date.....

Candidate

Signed.....Date.....

Supervisor

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation entitled “E-Government: Usability of Government Ministry Websites in Zambia” has been approved as fulfilling the requirements for the award of the master of Library and Information Studies by the University of Zambia.

Examiner’s signature..... .Date.....

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the ministerial websites in Zambia to investigate their role as information communication channels. The study used the survey research strategy. The goal was to establish usability of government ministry websites with a view of providing recommendations for improvement. The present study selected West's (2005) stages of e-government model as the basis of the theoretical framework. This model is described as "Stages of e-Government: From billboards and service delivery to interactive democracy". According to this model, there are four general stages of e-government development that distinguish where government agencies are on the road to transformation: These are the billboard stage, the partial service-delivery stage, the portal stage with fully executable and integrated service delivery, and interactive democracy.

The population of the study was government ministries which made 16 units of analysis. The techniques for data collection were an interview schedule and an administered questionnaire and a website evaluation form. The data was then analyzed using SPSS version 11.0 for Windows for statistical processing. Data sets from the interview schedule and the open-ended questions from the questionnaire were analysed by content analysis.

The research established that the country has developed an appropriate ICT policy. This policy promises a favorable climate that would enhance the development and implementation of e-government in Zambia. The research further revealed that the country has already embarked on a number of e-government initiatives. These initiatives include information services (government organization and structures, directory information, access to information, and policy documents and reports). Information services are normally the first category of e-government components. The process began with the establishment of government websites to which different categories of government information are posted.

The overall research findings showed that web features that are critical in fostering government openness and citizen participation and satisfaction were still infrequent or completely absent in the ministerial websites. Zambia's e-government index stands at 0.3454, bringing the country to position 125 when rated against countries of the world in terms of e-government development and implementation. This state of affairs means the country's e-government is still at the infancy stage of development in terms of West's (2005) model of e-government.

The study concludes that government websites are partially effective and did not optimally fulfill their purpose as information communication channels. Evaluation results provide the Zambian Government with a clear picture of what needs to be improved according to international website design standards. The study suggests that the government needs to cultivate standards for its Web site design exploit the benefits offered by information and communication technologies to promote good governance through electronic government. The government should also continuously evolve the site design techniques to meet citizens' expectations.

Keywords: e-government, government websites, website usability, website evaluation, Zambia

DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to my wife Estellah N. Chewe, my family and friends. Thank you for your unconditional love, support and encouragement throughout this journey. I could not have done it without your support. You have all been quite wonderful and a source of inspiration to me in realizing my vision of acquiring a master's degree.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

No one ever writes a dissertation by oneself, and this is certainly true in this case. This dissertation entitled “E-government: Usability of Government Ministry Websites in Zambia” has come to be not through my ideas alone, but because of many other persons who gave of their time and ideas:

Specifically, I am greatly indebted to Dr. Vitalicy Chifwepa, my academic Supervisor and University of Zambia Librarian, who inspired and encouraged me even when I expressed doubt of my ability to complete the study. Dr. Chifwepa painstakingly read through my work and offered constructive suggestions that led to the successful completion of this study.

I acknowledge the invaluable contribution from Dr. Akakandelwa, Akakandelwa, my co-supervisor for his immeasurable words of encouragement and useful contributions. I would like to thank Dr. Hudwell Mwachalimba, my course coordinator for his wise counselling and words of encouragement, which served as a source of strength and actually inspired me to complete this study.

Special thanks to all my lecturers during my first year of study. These are Dr. Akakandelwa Akakandelwa, Dr. Chifwepa Vitalicy, Mr. Benson Njovu and Ms. Christine Kanyengo.

I thank Mr. Simaata Edwin from Cabinet Office and my research assistants for providing an invaluable service during data collection stages of the research.

Thanks to all government ministry respondents who participated in this study.

Finally, I am grateful to the Almighty God for blessing me with good health, wisdom and foresight to undertake this study and for providing me with good leaders, friends and associates who offered me valuable suggestions throughout the study.

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ACRONYMS

GRZ – Government of the Republic of Zambia

HCI- Human–Computer Interaction

HTTP- Hyper Text Transfer Protocol

ICTs – Information Communication Technologies

MCT- Ministry of Communication and Transport

MLIS- Master of Library and Information Studies

NGOs- Non Governmental Organizations

SPSS- Statistical Package for Social Sciences

UN –ASPAs- United Nations-American Standard Public Administration

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

WWW- World Wide Web

W3C- World Wide Web Consortium