

# ELECTRONIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT SKILLS REQUIRED OF OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT STUDENTS IN THE CONTEMPORARY OFFICE

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**Abstract:** The study was carried out to assess the electronic records management skills required by Office Technology and Management students in the contemporary office. Two research questions guided the study. The design of the study was descriptive research design. The population of the study comprised of 203, HND 1 & HND11, ND11 students from Federal Polytechnic Bali and ND 1 and ND 11 from Taraba State Polytechnic Suntai respectively. There was no sampling techniques adopted since the population is of a manageable size. A structured questionnaire tagged ‘Electronic Records Management Skills Required of Office Technology and Management Students Questionnaire’ (ERMSROTMSQ) with 5-point scale and 20 constructs was used to elicit data from the respondents. The instrument was duly validated by three experts in the department of Office Technology and Management in Federal Polytechnic Bali. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha method and it yielded a coefficient index of 0.79. The 203 questionnaires were distributed by the researchers and with the aid of four research assistance. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions. The study revealed that word processing and database management skills were crucial for office technology and management students to have in the contemporary office. It was recommended among others that Office management and technology Students should pay more attention to the learning of word processing and database management skills required for contemporary office as this would help in proper record management.

**Keywords:** Electronic records management, Skill, Office Technology and Management, Contemporary, Office.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The upsurge of the computer system as an essential instrument for organizing and maintaining records in the modern workplace has been facilitated by technological advancements over manual approaches. These equipment modifications have inevitably led to changes in curriculum and record-keeping practices as well as changes in skill. Information and communication technology refer to these devices and tools. Computer hardware, software, and other tools are used to digitally produce, gather, store, alter, and convey office information required to complete fundamental business activities and goals. The curriculum that is meant to generate office managers who can run modern offices has been restructured as a result.

Any location where business, administrative, and professional operations occur is referred to as an office. According to Ekpenyong in Okeke (2018), the modern workplace uses new innovations or gadgets to alter or transform how work is done

in an office. According to Ekpenyong, the reason for the fast shift in office technology that has occurred as a result of using computers to perform tasks that were formerly completed manually is what gives rise to the term "contemporary office." Compared to traditional offices, contemporary offices include more cutting-edge equipment that promotes productivity in the workplace. Large amounts of data can be processed quickly and affordably utilizing electronic technology, and records may be managed via electronic document exchange and electronic form completion.

Office Technology and Management (OTM) is the new name for what was once known as secretarial studies (Okoro and Odesanya, 2019). In 2004, the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) found it essential to make certain curriculum and course specification changes to the old secretarial studies award. The agency made the modification in order to reflect the technology advancements that have changed the contemporary corporate climate of the 21st century. According to Nwabuno (2010), the OTM education focuses on a mix of office knowledge, technological abilities, and suitable and pertinent business knowledge in order to address organizational issues. The goal is to create hybrid administrative professionals capable of meeting the demands of a fast-paced, highly automated workplace. When the introduction of a number of ICT courses into the new OTM curriculum is taken into account, this position is maintained. These are Information and Communication Technology I and II, Modern Office Technology, Desktop Publishing, Webpage Design, ICT Office Application II, Database Management System, Information Management System, Advance Desktop Publishing and Advance Web Page Design. The design of OTM is to equip students with the experience required to work in a modern office environment. The Nigeria National Policy on Education objective as contained in NPE (2013). The policy stressed the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies, both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live and contribute to the development of the society. Through these courses, students will acquire the technical know-how and skills required to succeed in their careers in Nigeria. The plan heavily emphasized the need for education and skills in order to acquire paid employment in an organization or work for oneself. Due to economic and technological advancements, the skills needed by office technology and management students have significantly changed. Because of technology, manual skills are no longer suitable for the workplace. Because the new technologies demand that students be highly trained in electronic abilities, it constitutes a paradigm change from the typical workplace where physical copies and non-electronic ways of processing, storing, and disseminating information held sway (Frank & Odesanya, 2019). Graduates in office technology and management must adapt to these changes and get ready for the demands of the modern workplace since business and office activities now differ significantly from those from a generation ago. Shafe and Nayan (2010) asserted that employees need to be extremely skilled and have a wide variety of academic, technical, and general skills in order to meet the needs of the always growing technology. Okoro (2017) stated that office automation is generating a rapid transformation in contemporary work environments since it has given rise to new ways of carrying out duties performed by humans in business organizations.

Skills include proficiency, ability, and competency that are sufficient for a certain job when it comes to knowledge and creativity (Inalegwu, 2016). A person must obtain crucial training or understanding of the work at hand, whether it is formal, informal, or a combination of the two. According to Boytziz (2010), skills is the ability to demonstrate a system and a series of activities that are functionally linked to reaching a goal. A skill may also be defined as the ability to perform anything well, which is often obtained via training or experience. According to Okoro and Ifesi (2016), skill is the capacity that results from a person's knowledge and aptitude to carry out a task effectively. Once obtained, these skills would make OTM students eligible for employment after completing their polytechnic institution. The sensitive position of office managers in the contemporary office demands that they should possess remarkable skills in order for them to be effective in performing their duties. One of such duties is the electronic records management.

Electronic records management is the practice of managing records with the use of electronic technology. Electronic records management, according to Franks (2013), is the process of using records management principles for electronic records. Garland (2019) described it in a similar manner as the administration of electronic files, papers, or records. Modern secretaries need to learn electronic record management skills to keep up with the changing business environment and secretarial functions as the secretary's role evolves to reflect the realities of the twenty-first century and as most traditional office procedures become technological. Electronic records management, commonly referred to as records information management or RIM, is a vital part of attempts to ensure corporate business compliance. Learning how to digitize records is a requirement for OTM students. According to Ovbiagele and Mgbonyebi (2019) a record is a document created or received in the course of business by a person or organization and kept by that person or organization. The assets of a

company are its records, which are produced, processed, transferred, used, stored, retrieved, kept, and ultimately destroyed. An electronic record, on the other hand, is any data that has been created, used, and stored in a format that a computer can only process. Electronic records include things like emails, texts, backup tapes for disaster recovery, and data on portable devices like memory sticks, BlackBerry cellphones, or PDAs. An electronic record is one that can be modified, sent, or processed by a computer (International Records Management Trust IRMT in Ezech el at 2021). It may be retrieved using computer hardware and software and is saved on a magnetic or optical medium (such as magnetic tapes, Cassettes, CD-ROMs, hard drives, etc.) that is encoded in binary code. This may easily be updated, deleted, modified, etc. Electronic records are described by the author Tafor (2016) as computer software and hardware that require the appropriate equipment for access or viewing. A non-tangible soft record that is generated, maintained, shared, and saved utilizing an ICT system for information and communication, according to McDonald (2018), is what is meant by an electronic record. The author stressed that the word "electronic records" symbolizes the reality of the current workplace, where the bulk of duties depend on the availability of computers.

Olatunde (2021) stated that it is essential for secretaries to learn a variety of skills, such as word processing, database processing, office communication, image processing, reprographics, and office communications. Word processing and database management skills are therefore the only ones that can improve the office manager's effectiveness in handling electronic records in today's work environment for the purposes of this paper.

Word processing software can be used by an office manager to keep records electronically. Word processing is the term used to describe the process of creating, editing, saving, and printing documents on a computer. Word processing requires the use of word processors, which are specialized pieces of software. These tools allow users to create a variety of documents, such as letters, memos, newsletters, and brochures. Using a word processor, you can add contents to documents outside text, such as photographs, tables, and charts. The ability to manipulate information by opening, copying, pasting, saving, and deleting files, previewing, printing, and saving documents are just a few of the tasks graduates with a working knowledge of word processing would be able to perform (Okoro & Ndinche, 2013). According to Hope (2018) the author stated that the act of producing or modifying a document using a word processor is referred to as word processing. According to Ajike (2015), some word processing skills include the capacity to input text, set page setup, delete text, set margins, tabs, paragraphs, specify font specifications, and editing documents. Others includes cut and paste, search and replace, merge text from one file to another file, check spelling and sentences, saving files—to hard disk, disk drives and networks, print: selecting printer, the paper source, number source, number of copies, then send documents to printer to get hardcopy. These skills can be grouped into the ability to: Enter text, edit text (such as insert, delete, copy, and move), Validate text (example spelling, grammar and thesaurus) add graphics (such as pictures, graphs, equations and objects from other applications), save and open text documents, format text and documents, and reuse documents in the form of templates.

The skills required to creating, storing, retrieving, and using databases are known as database management skills. A database is a group of data that has been arranged for storage in a computer memory and created for authorized users to easily access (Agomuo in Olatunde, 2022). A number of skills were listed by Eze in Olatunde (2022) Olatunde (2022) who stated that creating records and spreadsheets, defining fields and cells, entering and editing data, switching between records, inserting rows and columns, and having a basic fundamental understanding of how to develop mathematical formulae are all required for database management.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Due to the widespread adoption of information technology (IT), which includes electronic record keeping, in the workplace, significant changes have occurred. Records are generated, processed, transferred, used, saved, accessed, and finally deleted by an organization as needed in a machine-readable manner. The success of any organization, no matter what size will be impacted if information saved cannot be retrieved. A negligent OTM graduate could be imprudent in the area of keeping records and quickly accessing stored information while trying to keep the company running. Employers of labour expect OTM graduates to have the record-keeping skills necessary in today's offices to ensure the efficient execution of all mundane duties. Students learning office technology and management must acquire electronic management skills with the goal to develop, capture, keep, and properly dispose of information. There seems to be a gap in the level to which these skills office Technology and Management students possess in the polytechnics. In light of this, the researchers plan to investigate the electronic records management skills required of Office Technology and Management students in the contemporary office.

### Purpose of the Study

The main objectives of the study was to assess the electronics record management skills required of Office Technology and Management students in the contemporary office. Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. Determine the Word Processing skills required of Office Technology and Management students in the contemporary office.
- ii. Examine the database management skills required of Office Technology and Management students in the contemporary office

### Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study;

- i. What are the Word Processing skills required of Office Technology and Management students in the contemporary office?
- ii. What are the database management skills required of Office Technology and Management students in the contemporary office?

## 2. METHOD

The research design for this study was a descriptive survey. Nworgu (2015) defines a survey research design as one in which a group of individuals or objects is examined by gathering and analysing data from only a small number of individuals or objects thought to be representative of the full group. Due to the fact that this design collected data from Office Technology and Management students at Taraba State Polytechnic Suntai and Federal Polytechnic Bali, it was deemed appropriate for the study. 203 students made up of 150 male and 53 female students made up the study's population. There was no sampling techniques adopted since the population is of a manageable size. The data for the study were collected using self-designed structured questionnaire tagged "Electronics record management skill required of Office Technology and Management students Questionnaire" (ERMSOTMSQ) with 20 items. It was designed and developed by the researchers. The instrument consists close ended questions that was designed to answer the two research questions. The construct were measured using five-point Likert scale of Very Highly Required (VHR) 5 points with boundary limits of 4.50-5.00, Highly Required (HR) 4 , points with boundary limits of 3.50-4.49, Required (R) 3 points with boundary limits of 2.50-3.49, Moderately Required (MR) 2 points with boundary limits of 1.50-2.49, Not Required (NR) 1 points with boundary limits of 1.00-1.49. Three professionals from the Office Technology and Management department verified the instrument in Federal Polytechnic Bali, Taraba State. Their feedback was taken noticed of and considered. The researchers' administered the questionnaires with the help of four research assistance. The entire questionnaire was obtained and utilized for data analysis. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions. The decision rule was rule was based on the boundary limits.

**Research Question 1.** What are the Word Processing skills required of Office Technology and Management students in the contemporary office?

**Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of response on Word Processing skills are required of Office Technology and Management students in the contemporary office. N= 203**

S/N	Item Statement	MEAN	SD	Decision
1	Use of word processing package is a skill required	4.51	0.86	VHR
2	Creating documents like, letters, memos	4.43	0.73	HR
3	Formatting, editing and proofreading	3.92	0.67	HR
4	copying, pasting, and cutting text in document	4.49	0.77	HR
5	Deleting or recalling of files from recycle	3.71	0.04	HR
6	Replacing words/names automatically throughout an entire document	4.11	0.81	HR
7	Inserting pictures and symbols in a document	4.01	0.80	HR
8	Adding titles, tables and design	4.13	0.33	HR
9	Ability to use spell check appropriately	4.14	0.72	HR
10	Preview and printing of documents	3.81	0.72	HR

Source: Field work, 2023

Table 1: Shows that the respondents rated one item (1) to be very highly required for word processing skills in contemporary office with the mean of 4.51. The remaining nine items were highly required skills in word processing as these skills are the bedrock of contemporary office tasks. The mean ranges from 4.51- 3.71, while the standard deviation ranges from 0.04 0.86. From the responses of the respondents, it can be deduce that there is no way contemporary office can strive when these sub-listed word processing are inadequate or not available.

Research Question 2: What are the database management skills required of Office Technology and Management students for in the contemporary office?

**Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of response on the database management skills required of Office Technology and Management students in the contemporary office. N=203**

S/N	Item Statement	MEAN	SD	Decision
1	Create and maintain data	4.50	0.60	VHR
2	Extract and list all records	4.71	0.87	VHR
3	Classify data into convenient groups	3.91	0.86	HR
4	Interpret programme instruction	4.13	0.83	HR
5	Sort records in ascending or descending order	3.59	0.46	HR
6	Sort data into sequence	4.02	0.84	HR
7	Generate formulated text with title and subtitle	4.06	0.78	HR
8	Classify data into convenient groups	4.59	0.68	VHR
9	To find, sort and print information	3.89	0.51	HR
10	Create pay roll for workers of different levels	4.59	0.53	VHR

Source: Field work, 2023

Table 2: The table shows the mean ratings of the responses of OTM students 4 out of the 10 identified items in table 2 showed that the skills were very highly required. The means range from 3.57 - 4.71 with the boundary limits of 4.50-5.00 on a 5 point Likert scale. The remaining 6 items on database management skills are highly required by OTM students in the contemporary office. The standard deviation values for the 10 items were between 0.51 and 0.87. Based on the respondents' responses it can be seen that database management skills are necessary for proper maintenance of records in contemporary office.

### 3. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results in Table 1 showed that Office Technology and Management students required word processing skills in the contemporary office. The result shows that for proper record management, skills that are related to electronic record management (word processing skills) like adding titles, tables, and design format for all office drafts require high level of electronic skills. This is in agreement with the study of Okoro & Ndinche (2013), stating that graduates with Word Processing skills are required in order to use a word processor for all office correspondences and thus be able to keep, retrieve them when necessary. In the same vein Ajike (2015), pointed out some word processing skills which include the capacity to input text, set page setup, delete text, set margins, tabs, paragraphs, specify font specifications, and editing documents were skills generally required proper maintenance of records in contemporary office.

In Table 2, the results suggested that database management skills are highly needed by OTM students in the contemporary office for effective record keeping. This corroborate with the finding of Olatunde (2022) who stated that creating records and spreadsheets, defining fields and cells, entering and editing data, switching between records, inserting rows and columns, and having a basic fundamental understanding of how to develop mathematical formulae are all required for database management.

### 4. CONCLUSION

Electronic records management skills are essential and are required of office Technology and Management students because no organization/establishment can survive without records which have to be created and captured, retained for the period of schedule and disposed as at when due. OTM students required to be acquainted with word processing and database management skills to meet up with the demands of the contemporary office.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following were recommended:

1. Office management and technology Students should pay more attention to the learning of word processing and database management skills required for contemporary office as this would help in proper record management.
2. Stakeholders like lecturers, instructors should be willing to impart the necessary skills required for proper record management in their students especially word processing and database management skills. This would go a long way in preparing them for the contemporary office.

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