

Topic

E-Governance in Africa: Governing the continent through AU and Nepad websites.

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Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Masters of Arts in Media Studies in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other University.

Signature

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Friday, October, 2007

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DEDICATION

To my family

I dedicate this dissertation to my family (Mr Ronald Mukhudwana, Mrs Margret Mukhudwana, Shathi, Mushe and Tshilidzi) for their love, support and encouragement during my period of study and during the writing of this dissertation.

GLOSSARY

Adopted from Debean and Garrison (1998)

Forums are areas on web pages that allow posting of continuous discussions by readers about any topic.

Chart rooms are areas on Web pages that allow real-time discussions by readers

Electronic mail is any link that allows users to send electronic mail to anyone, including the reporters, editors and people in a story. (On this case, it may include AU, Nepad directors.

Polls with instantaneous results are a sport on a web page that allows the reader to answer a question and pushes on the next page results, including all participants up to and the user.

Search tool is the ability to enter keywords to find articles or other information on the web site.

Sigh-up for electronic delivery of personalized news and updates.

Instantaneous updates of information are information found on a page that is loaded current with each reload.

Other languages scroll to find other languages in which the website can be viewed.

Hypertext is blocks of text and the electronic links that join them (McMillan, 2002, 174)

User-to-user interaction is interaction between users; it may be through emails and chart forums (McMillan, 2002).

User-to-documents interaction is interaction of users with contents and content creators, in such a way where the user have control of the presentation or flow of the content through navigation of hyperlinks (McMillan, 2002).

User-to-system interaction is interaction between the user and the system. This is exemplified by polls or web based forms filled in the website. The computer can tell that something is not filled in (McMillan, 2002)

ABSTRACT

Africa's way forward requires integration, democracy, good governance, participation and inclusive communication of all issues. Intergovernmental organizations are essential to facilitate the above mentioned goals. New thinking highlights the role of new media especially the Internet in democracy and governance in Africa. Therefore, the question solicited here is whether e-governance facilitates continental governance in Africa and under what circumstances would this be possible?

This research introduced the internet (web) as a distinct medium of communications with distinct features and characteristics. A number of scholars argue that the Internet as a distinct medium of communication can better facilitate the democratizing role of the media in society, while others argues that the internet has not changed the nature of politics since ordinary politics in all its complexity and vitality has invaded and captured cyberspace. These arguments are divided respectively between Technological Determinism and the Social Shaping of Technology.

This research investigates (AU, EU and Nepad) e-governance websites in order to understand practices, prospects and challenges of continental e-governance systems. It was found that the AU and Nepad use the websites for institutional information rather than interaction with citizens and online service delivery. However, significant steps are taken to enhance interaction in Nepad. It is therefore recommended that, the AU and Nepad need to invest time and commitment in enhancing interactivity and rising awareness for these e-governance systems. As projected, EU performs much better than the above two in terms of interactivity. This is because it has more experience and internet penetration and uses is widespread in Europe than it is here in Africa.

Keywords: New Media, E-governance, E-politics, Internet, Websites, Technological Determinism, Social Shaping of Technology, Interactivity, Nepad, African Union. European Union.

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