

# The Use of Social Media by the Botswana Government and Governance of Liquid Communication

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## Abstract

Social media as a communication tool has enabled governments around the world to interact with citizens for customer service, access to information and to direct community involvement needs. The trends around the world show recognition by governments that social media content may constitute records and should be managed accordingly. The literature shows that governments and organisations in other countries, particularly in Europe, have social media policies and strategies to guide the management of social media content, but there is less evidence among African countries. Thus the purpose of this paper is to examine the extent of usage of social media by the Botswana government in order to determine the necessity for the governance of liquid communication. Liquid communication refers to the type of communication that goes easily back and forth between participants involved through social media. The study adopted a qualitative case study approach where data were collected through documentary reviews and interviews among purposively selected employees of the Botswana government. This study revealed that the Botswana government has been actively using social media platforms to interact with its citizens since 2011 for increased access, usage and awareness of services offered by the government. Nonetheless, the study revealed that the government had no official documentation in terms of policies and strategies that dealt with the governance of liquid communication. This study recommends the governance of liquid communication to ensure timely, efficient and accurate retrieval when needed for business purposes.

**Keywords:** social media; government; information governance; liquid communication; Botswana

## **Introduction**

A survey by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2014 has shown that governments around the world were actively using social media platforms (Mickoleit 2014, 12). Likewise, the Botswana government is also using social media to interact with its citizens through communications on public meetings notices, public service announcements, press releases, live speeches and requests for service (Masilo and Seabo 2015; Statistics Botswana 2014). High usage of social media platforms by the Botswana citizens has been attributed to the government commitment to providing internet accessibility and connectivity in the country (Batane 2013, 117). This access is mostly through the use of cell phones, as of March 2016, mobile phone access stood at 3.5 million subscribers, meaning that there were 3.5 million active mobile SIM cards in use in Botswana and also 1.4 million mobile phone internet users in Botswana, placing the country at position five in sub-Saharan Africa behind Mauritius, the Seychelles, South Africa and Cape Verde (BOCRA 2018b).

The increased usage of social media platforms has also affected traditional services in Botswana (Lesemela 2018). The increased usage of social media platforms has negatively affected the traditional voice-call services resulting in decreased turnover for the public-owned Botswana Telecommunications Corporation Limited (BTCL) (Lesemela 2018). The BTCL Annual report of 2017 recognised the need for the company to consider the use of the Internet and social media channels to serve customers directly instead of relying on a call centre as one of their initiatives (BTCL 2017).

This interaction offers governments an opportunity to create transparency and accountability, and to increase citizens' opportunities to participate and collaborate in decision-making (Guillamón et al. 2016, 460). In the same spirit, Latham (2014) posits that using social media as a communication tool can enable the government to reach new audiences, establish communities of practice, provide services, and deliver important and effective messages to the community. The interaction between the government and the citizens on social media results in liquid communication. In terms of information governance, there seems to be a lack of coordinated efforts to make social media records around the world (Franks 2010; Goh, Duranti, and Chu 2012; InterPARES Trust 2016). But Jeurgens (2017, 205) warns that if records, archives and archivists want to continue to be key players in ensuring and defending accountability, this evokes the question what meaningful record-keeping is in this new context of data ubiquity, and at the same time what meaningful records are. Franks (2010, 12) has recognised the need to govern social media content by noting that a historically decentralised approach to records management, when combined with the rapid changes underway in the use of social media by agencies, suggests the need to consider the development of a comprehensive records and information management governance structure which deal directly with social media.

## **Research Problem**

Notwithstanding the clear evidence of the Botswana government being active on social media platforms through its pages titled “BWgovernment” to engage with the citizens (Masilo and Seabo 2015, 124), the preliminary research in this study has shown that liquid communication generated through the use of social media was not regarded or managed as records by the government. Additionally, this is despite the fact that the National Archives and Records Services (NARS) Act of 1978, which is the principal records management legislation, recognises the existence of other records formats such as liquid communication. ARMA International defines a record as any recorded information, regardless of medium or characteristics, made or received by an organisation that is evidence of its operations, and has value requiring its retention for a specific period (ARMA International 2017). Hence the purpose of this paper is to examine the extent of usage of social media by the Botswana government in order to determine the necessity for the governance of liquid communication. The specific objectives of this paper are as follows:

- to establish the extent of usage of social media platforms by the Botswana government;
- to determine the factors which influenced the adoption of social media use by the Botswana government;
- to determine the penetration level of the Botswana government social media pages; and
- to propose a governance framework for the governance of liquid communication generated through the use of social media.

## **Brief Literature Review on the Use of Social Media by Governments**

The explosion of research on social media and e-government in 2010 revealed that in Europe, social media was used though not to its full potential as the governments lagged far behind the general public in making use of social media (Magro 2012, 152). These government communication channels are often regarded as a means to promote democratic values and public trust in government by helping the government provide the public with information and to respond to citizen inquires (Hong 2013, 346). With the liquid communication generated through the use of social media as Duranti (2014) argues, the nature of trust relationships is filled with risks, weaknesses and fault lines inherent in the management of records and their storage in rapidly changing technologies where authorship, ownership and jurisdiction may be questioned.

The InterPARES Trust has explored the issue of trust and social media in a study titled “NA05: The Social Media and Trust in Government” under the research agenda of which the goal was to develop case studies that analyse the citizen experience with government social media tools and use, with respect to issues of trust, including

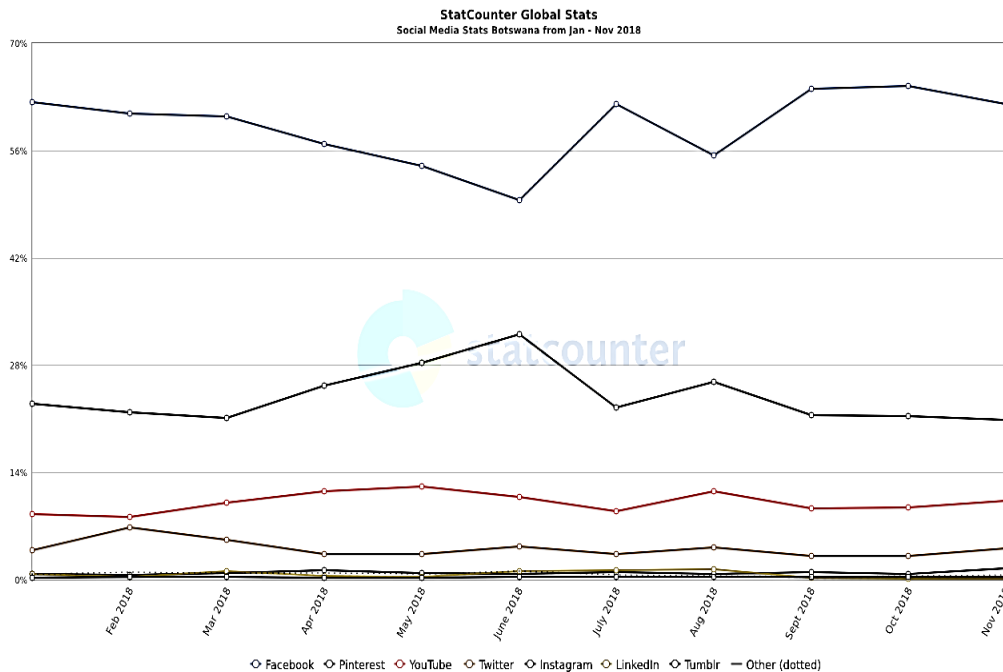
concepts of openness, transparency, accountability and authenticity. (InterPARES Trust 2016, 6). The two research questions which formed the basis of that study were “Can social media be used by local government to increase citizen trust?”, and “If so, what can be learnt about the relationship between the administration of social media and the increase of trust in local government that can then be shared with public administrators using illustrative case studies and recommended guidelines to improve social media strategies and increase social capital?” The theoretical foundation for the overall study was adapted from the archival and diplomatic theory related to trusted records and four other theories which were the Behavioral Trust Theory, the Resource-Based Theory, the Social Capital Theory, and the Social Network Theory (InterPARES Trust Project 2015). The major issues identified by NA05 were that trust in government is affected by a number of variables, of which relationships built through social media is merely one. Moreover, although global and country-specific data on levels of trust exist, it will be challenging to measure levels of trust in citizens for that type of survey (InterPARES Trust Project 2014).

Studies by Masilo and Seabo (2015) and Statistics Botswana (2014)) have shown that the Botswana government has made use of the advantage of social media to increase access to usage of and an awareness of their services in recent years. During the Botswana 2014 general election campaign, there was an unprecedented use of social media as a campaign tool by the three main political parties and their candidates as they all had a presence in social media (Masilo and Seabo 2015, 118).

The increased use of social media, particularly Facebook, as a mobilising tool for the Botswana 2014 general election increased young people’s interest in politics. Moreover, candidates did not have to rely on traditional media to communicate with the electorate; their messages could be delivered undiluted and in real time (Masilo and Seabo 2015, 118). The State of Digital Diplomacy 2016 Year in Review report, released in March 2017 by Diplomacy Live, showed that the Botswana government’s Facebook page “BWgovernment”, was ranked number five in the world among 2016’s Top Ten Government Facebook pages. The rankings were based on the total number of interactions independently monitored by CrowdTangle analytics from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016 (The State of Digital Diplomacy 2016).

The Botswana social media usage is also depicted by StatCounter GlobalStats, which provides a web analytics service. For social media statistics, the StatCounter analyses every page view referred by a social media site then summarise all the data to get global statistical information (StatCounter GlobalStats 2017). The Botswana social media market share of the different social media platforms for the period of January 2018 to November 2018, showed that Facebook was most commonly used, followed by Pinterest, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Tumbler and insignificant others (see Figure 1).

This is collaborated by a study done by Tsholetso, Maunganidze, and Faimau (2017) to establish the relationship between online social networking and academic performance of undergraduate students at the University of Botswana (UB), which determined that although students belonged to various online social networking sites, Facebook was identified as the most popular networking site among UB students. Figure 1 shows the market share of social media platforms in Botswana by StatCounter GlobalStats.



**Figure 1:** Social media statistics Botswana from January to November 2018 (StatCounter GlobalStats 2017)

The extensive usage of social media by governments calls for the resultant content herein referred as liquid communication to be governed for business purposes. This is mainly because social media posts created or received by public officers in the course of their duties are evidence of government business as they document the actions taken by public officers and should be retained for reasons of accountability and transparency (Victorian Government 2016). The ARMA (2017) principle of availability requires that to ensure information governance, an organisation shall maintain its information assets in a manner that ensures their timely, efficient and accurate retrieval. Franks and Smallwood (2014, 32) acknowledge that a major challenge for organisations is ensuring timely and reliable access to and use of information and that records are accessible and useable for the entire length of the retention period.

In the digital environment, the definition of a record, as defined by archival theory, has been broadened to include documents, data and digital objects of all types (Rogers 2015, 2). On the other hand, a record has been defined by ARMA International as any recorded information, regardless of medium or characteristics, made or received by an organisation that is evidence of its operations, and has value requiring its retention for a specific period (ARMA International 2017). According to proponents of the records continuum theories, a record status does not have to be determined by crossing the threshold of record-keeping systems, as even ephemeral records and informal communications have evidential characteristics that qualify them as records (Yeo 2015). Even for legal purposes, as stated by Yeo (2015), the fact that the selection decisions are imperfect, all records can be subject to discovery or disclosure (including drafts, casual messages, and records that survive by coincidence). The explanations by ARMA International (2017) and Yeo (2015) incorporate liquid communication generated through the use of social media and for the need to govern it.

## **Methodology**

Purposively selected participants were interviewed face-to-face and telephonically between November 2017 and January 2018. The researcher interviewed public relations officers (PROs) who are the administrators of the government of Botswana's social media pages, a records manager based at the Botswana Government Communications and Information Systems Office (BGCIS), a chief programmer at the Department of Information and Technology, and the director of corporate communications at the Botswana Communications Regulatory Authority (BOCRA). More data were collected from archivists and records managers at the Botswana National Archives and Records Services (BNARS). The total number of the purposively selected participants was 12. The selected participants were believed to yield the most relevant and plentiful data required to deal with the objectives of the study (Yin 2011, 88).

The fact that the concept of liquid communication or even governance of information generated through the use of social media was new to the participants, influenced the number of participants. Most of them did not, before the interview, think that social media content may be governed for future access and preservation. As a result, some potential participants completely refused to participate in this study. Nonetheless, the interviewed participants generated data that were considered sufficient to make generalisations in this study. To mitigate any shortcomings, a documentary review of the official publications, internal and external reports, research articles, presentations, newspapers, legislation and policies was done.

This study also analysed the Botswana government's social media pages as directed by the participants for more information. The qualitative data collected in this study were coded and analysed through thematic analysis. Information collected through the interviews was transcribed, coded and sorted. The themes for analysis were generated in line with the constructs of the research framework for this study (Creswell 2014, 249).

ARMA International's Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles (2017), also known as "the principles" were used as a lens to examine the extent of usage of social media by the Botswana government in order to determine the necessity for the governance of liquid communication.

## **Results and Discussions**

This section presents the study findings, provides an interpretation and also the discussions. The interpretation and discussions of the findings are presented according to the research objectives of this study.

### **The Extent of Usage of Social Media**

The participants were asked to comment on the extent of usage of social media by the Botswana government and its services provided in order to determine the necessity for the governance of liquid communication to ensure timely, efficient and accurate retrieval when needed for business processes. The responses from the participants indicated that the government communication is coordinated by the BGCIS office through the e-communication function. The government of Botswana joined Facebook and Twitter in June 2011, YouTube on 1 November 2013, while the Instagram account was created during data collection for this study on 3 November 2017.

In establishing the extent of the use of social media by the government of Botswana, the participants of this study were further asked to state the social media platforms used by the Botswana government and the purposes of adopting each platform. All the participants acknowledged that the Botswana government uses online platforms classified as:

- multimedia sharing, such as YouTube, a repository platform for government video footage such as the State of the Nation Address, the Budget Speech and other government-related events. Videos are captured and later uploaded on YouTube;
- microblogging, such as Twitter. The government has a Twitter account as @BWgovernment used to disseminate government information;
- social networks, such as Facebook, and Instagram have been adopted recently;
- an SMS notification system, which is used to send reminders to citizens of different services like the expiry date of their national identity documents or their driver's licences; and
- the BW portal, which is a repository platform of content but dysfunctional. Efforts were made in the past to transform it, but without success. The platform used the content management system of Epi-Server, which is a commercial source. The government planned to operate the portal on SharePoint. The transformation was unsuccessful because the content had to

be transformed to be compatible with the SharePoint platform and to operate well with the open source without tampering with its functionality.

Although social media includes social networking applications such as Facebook and Google+, microblogging services such as Twitter, blogs, wikis and media-sharing sites such as YouTube and Flickr, Facebook is the most commonly used in Botswana. During the Botswana 2014 general election, Facebook was particularly commonly used in the country as a mobilising tool (Masilo and Seabo 2015, 118). A study by Mpoeleng, Totolo, and Jibril (2015) on the perceptions of the usage of Web 2.0 technologies carried out among library staff of the University of Botswana also revealed that Facebook was more popularly used than other platforms such as wikis, podcasts, Twitter, LinkedIn and blogs. The situation seems not to be different from other parts of the world as, according to Kallas (2018), Facebook users increased by 70 million monthly active users from 2.13 billion in December 2017 to 2.20 billion as at 31 March 2018. The rate of growth seems to continue at 20 million active users per month.

### **Factors which Led to the Adoption of Social Media**

As it was evident that the government of Botswana was using social media platforms extensively as revealed by the study participants, this study also sought to establish the factors that influenced the government of Botswana's decision to adopt or expand its social media efforts and whether there were any specific events that led to this adoption. To give an example of how the government is able to get feedback from the public through social media, one of the participants, BGSCIS5, said:

At the end of 2016, the government had a deadline for people to have registered their land with the National Land Registration, Kwadisa Setsha, but the public gave us immense feedback on Facebook, requesting for an extension. Some people were overseas, some people did not know, some did not have documents, one reason or another. Because of that information gathered on Facebook, a report was compiled and it was adopted by the Ministry of Land Management to extend the land registration.

The participants in this study did not indicate any documented factors that led the Botswana government to adopt the use of social media platforms. As alluded to by Mickoleit (2014, 12), the use of social media by the Botswana government happened without much planning going into it. One of the participants in this study indicated that they just used social media as one of their marketing tools to be taken advantage of. Some of the factors that led to the Botswana government using social media platforms that rose from the participants responses included the following:

- Social media was viewed as an effective and efficient tool for reaching out to the public given that the Botswana mobile phone penetration was at 100% +.
- Facebook provided an application (Zero-Facebook) which facilitated access to accounts at no costs.



- The ability of Facebook to spread important messages such as on disasters in real time.
- It was easier and cheaper to reach the target audience.
- It was a strategy to take government services to the people and to have a direct link to the nation.
- It was effective in gathering feedback.

Although governments around the world were reported by a survey of the OECD in 2014 to be actively using social media platforms, the use of social media by most of them was largely one of “laissez faire” and experimentation (Mickoleit 2014, 12). Only one quarter of the responding governments (7 out of 25) had a dedicated social media strategy. These countries were Australia, Austria, Belgium, Chile, Colombia, Korea and the Netherlands. Nevertheless, there were others like the United States where social media was an integral part of the government strategy to “engage and connect” and the United Kingdom where social media was deeply embedded in the government’s digital strategy (Mickoleit 2014, 12). Not to be left behind, the Botswana government also started to use social media platforms by 2011, although this study did not find any documented reasons for factors that influenced the government to adopt social media platforms. Guíllamón et al. (2016, 460) argue that social media offer governments an opportunity to create transparency and accountability, and to increase citizens’ opportunities to participate and collaborate in decision-making.

### **Penetration Level of Government Social Media Pages**

Through content analysis as one of the data collection methods, this study also assesses the Botswana government’s social media pages to determine the level of penetration of these pages. Figures 2, 3 and 4 show the Botswana government’s Facebook page overview insights, people reached and interaction with the public.

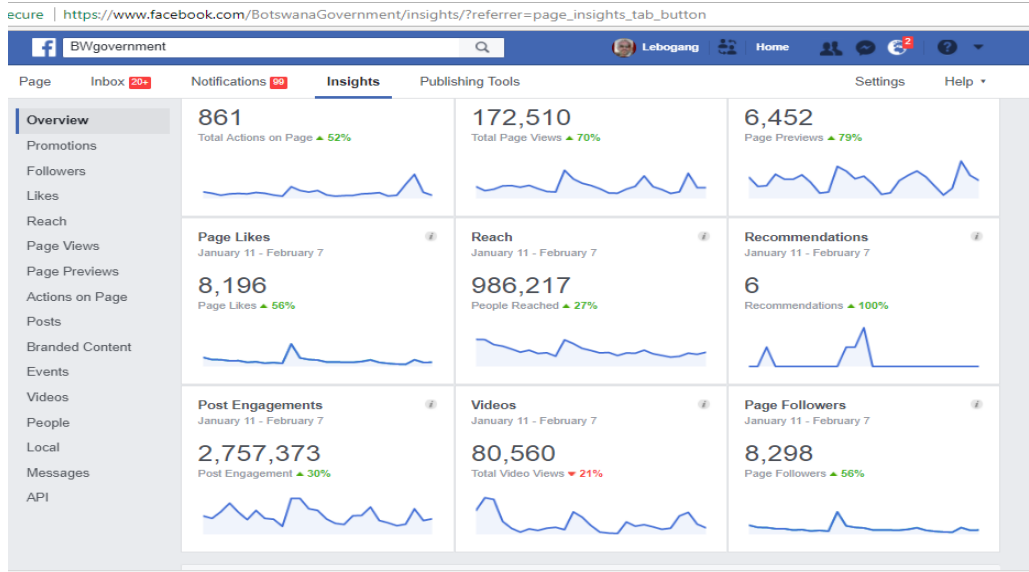
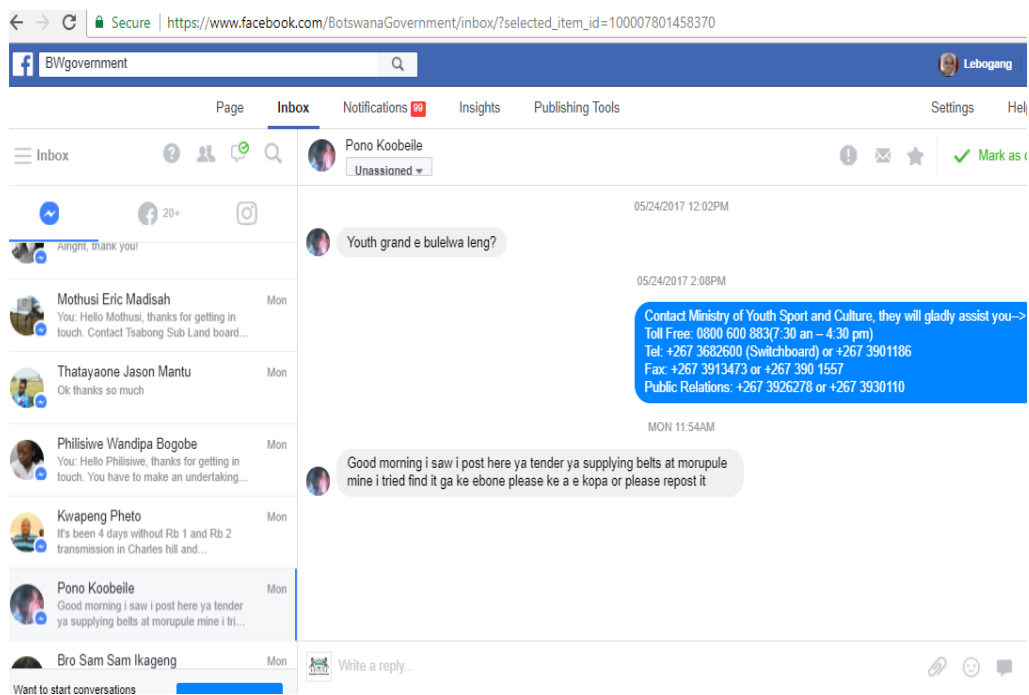


Figure 2: BWgovernment page indicating overview insights, January 2018



Figure 3: BWgovernment page indicating people reached, January 2018



**Figure 4:** BWgovernment communications with the public on Facebook Messenger, January 2018

Social media is different from other media in that it produces measurements which can be used by organisations to track their impact and the effectiveness of their tactics and strategies. Social media platforms such as Facebook, offer analytics in their “insights page” and Twitter has an “analytics” page. The information on these analytics pages is best used for guiding strategy and reporting impact purposes (United States Department of Defense 2016).

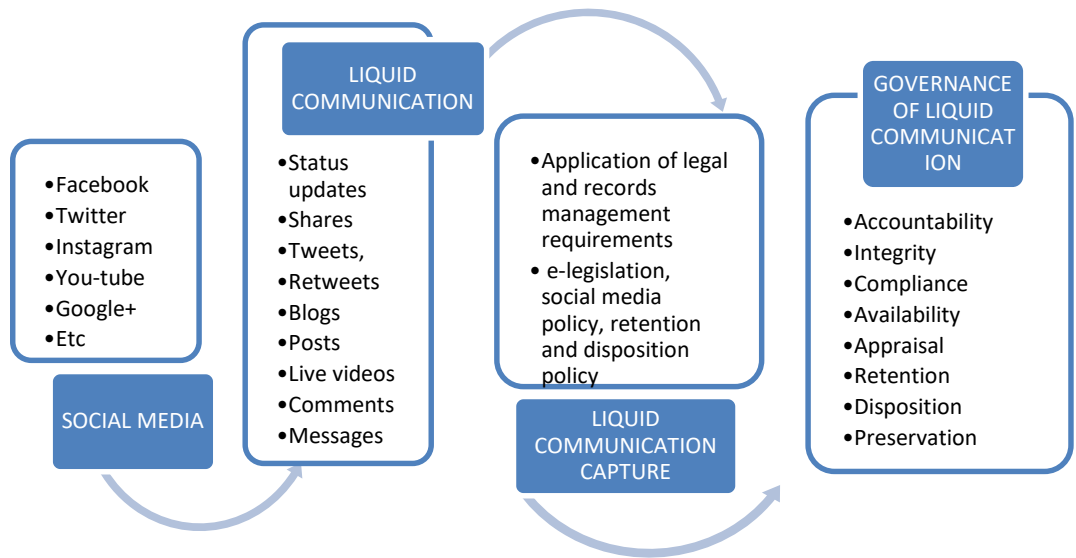
One of the metrics tracked in this study was the level of penetration of the Botswana government’s Facebook page through insight into the number of people who had any contact with the BWgovernment Facebook page by age and gender. The statistics showed that most of the people who interacted with the page were in the bracket age of 25 to 34 years (females at 19%, males at 17%). The next largest group of people was in the age bracket of 18 to 24 years (11% female, 9% male) and those in the age bracket of 35 to 44 years (10% female, 11% male). As indicated by these results, the Botswana government social media pages enable the government to reach out to the youths in the country. These age brackets form what constitute the “youth” according to the Botswana Revised National Youth Policy (Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture 2010, 5). Botswana had been considered one of the countries with a relatively youthful population, with about 46.5 per cent being youths at the 2011 population census (Statistics Botswana 2013).

In terms of the number of people reached in countries in the world, statistics from the BWgovernment Facebook page indicated that most were from Botswana (478 261), followed by South Africa (133 143) and, for some reason, the United States of America (76 829) and the United Kingdom (31 271) that came before other African countries. The page insights also showed that the most people reached by city came from Gaborone (317 151), which was not surprising as the city's population was dominated by the youth aged between 15 and 39 who also constituted the working age group (Statistics Botswana 2014, 25). This also tallies with the above statistics which showed that the youth interacted more with the BWgovernment Facebook page than other age brackets. The second city in the country was Francistown (52 803), followed by Johannesburg (28 419), a city in South Africa. Far below them was Maun (19 604) from the north-west of Botswana.

### **Proposed Framework**

In accordance with the last objective of this study, which sought to propose a framework for the governance of liquid communication generated through the use of social media by the government, this section presents the proposed framework. This study has established that despite the continuous use of social media platforms since 2011, thereby generating liquid communication, formalised processes and procedures for the governance of liquid communication were lacking. The lack of formalised processes and procedures for the governance of liquid communication poses risks for the government which relate to legal and compliance requirements. It is mainly for this reason that this study proposes a framework for the governance of liquid communication. The proposed framework, as shown in Figure 5, would assist the government in ensuring that there is effective and efficient use of information in enabling the government to achieve its intended goals with the use of social media platforms.

This study acknowledges social media, including social networking applications such as Facebook and Google+, microblogging services such as Twitter, blogs, wikis, and media-sharing sites such as YouTube, where official government business takes place. The interaction between the government and the citizens results in liquid communication. As liquid communication may be requested as evidence before the courts of law in accordance with the Botswana laws, there is a need for liquid communication governance for such legal and compliance purposes.



**Figure 5:** Framework for the governance of liquid communication generated through social media

### *Social Media*

This study has established that the Botswana government has been actively using social media platforms to interact with the citizens since 2011 for increased access, usage and awareness of its services. The government recognised that there was need for this function to be allocated an office in the government structure. As a result, the BGCIS office was mandated to coordinate and manage the government’s social media pages through its e-communication function. The government of Botswana mainly used Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram. These accounts were primarily used to disseminate government information, advertise government business and deal with citizen enquiries. The use of social media in government was supported by the national ICT policy which recognised the need for government presence online for quick and easy access to government services by the citizens.

### *Liquid Communication*

This study terms liquid communication as records generated by the government on social media for customer service, access to information and direct community involvement needs. The concept of liquidity was introduced by Bauman (2000) who stated that liquids, unlike solids, cannot easily hold their shape. While solids have clear spatial dimensions, fluids do not keep to any shape for long and are constantly ready. It is the flow of time that counts, more than the space they happen to occupy (Choi, Im, and Yoo 2013, 3). Liquid communication generated through the use of social media encompasses status updates, shares, tweets, retweets, blogs, posts, comments, live

videos and messages. By applying the concept of liquidity to records management, it is possible to capture or govern this liquid communication. Although this study did not reveal any incidents where information was disclosed or lost inappropriately or inadvertently, especially because liquid communication was not taken to require any governance, it revealed that government activities on social media such as status updates, shares, tweets, retweets, blogs, posts, live videos, comments and messages generated the fragile liquid communication. Liquid communication generated through the use of social media is unstable; there is an uncertain durability and its future availability calls for its governance.

### *Capturing of Liquid Communication*

This study revealed that despite the fact that the government of Botswana was active on social media, thereby generating liquid communication, there were no measures for the capture of liquid communication. This study concludes that liquid communication generated through the use of social media by the Botswana government is evidence of government business and should be managed accordingly for other business requirements, as supported by the legal framework. The international standard for the management of records (ISO 15489-1 2016) and the NARS Act (Government of Botswana 1978) both recognise liquid communication as records. As a result, the records management requirements should be extended to the management of liquid communication when it is proven that the records possess the characteristics of authenticity, reliability, integrity and usability to be considered authoritative evidence of business events or transactions and to fully meet the requirements of the business (ISO 15489-1 2016). The moment an organisation is satisfied that the liquid communication generated through social media has the above characteristics, the liquid communication should be captured and managed according to the organisation's records management requirements. The communication that goes on between the government and the citizens should be retained for reasons of accountability and transparency under records management requirements and legal requirements. Some social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn and twitter have export capabilities built into their systems which convert content into files that can be available for downloading. Drawing from the discussions of this study and the digital archiving process of the Library of Congress, by Fondren and McCune (2018), this study recommends the following steps to be taken to capture liquid communication:

- Identify the social media platform
  - Locate all the content on the social media sites.
  - Include current information as well as any older (archived) content.
- Decide which information has long-term value
  - Select the information classified as records according to the records management requirements.

- Pick individual pieces of information or select whole pages or sites.
- Export the selected information
  - If saving a limited amount of information, use the “save as” command in the web browser to export the site as individual files.
  - If saving entire pages or sites, check into automatically exporting them as a series of linked files.
  - Save metadata for the content information, such as the site name or date created.
- Organise the information
  - Give individual files descriptive file names.
  - Create a directory or folder structure on the computer for the saved information.
  - Write a brief summary of the directory structure and its files.
- Make copies and manage them according to the records management requirements
  - Make at least two copies or more of the selected information.
  - One copy can remain on the computer or laptop; save other copies on separate media such as DVDs, CDs, portable hard drives, thumb drives or Internet storage.
  - Store copies in different locations that are as physically far apart as practical. If disaster strikes one location, the other copy of the important web content in the other place should be safe.
  - Store a copy of the summary description with the important papers in a secure location.
  - Check the saved files at least once a year to make sure they can be read.
  - Create new media copies every five years or when necessary to avoid data loss.

There is a need for a records management system to be set up to keep track of social media activities to comply with records management and legal requirements. The type of social media posts to be captured may include:

- the original post from the social media site;
- responses to the original post, if any;
- relevant posts identified when monitoring social media sites; and

- content republished when the content has come from elsewhere (Victorian Government 2016).

The legal and records management requirements may vary from country to country according to the existing laws and established records management requirements that regulate information governance in each country. Notwithstanding the above, the governance of liquid communication requires the existence of a social media policy to ensure a formalised process for the governance of liquid communication. This policy should regulate the control, creation, receipt, transmission, maintenance and disposition of liquid communication. It is through this policy that a records management system is established to keep track of social media activities. The social media policy would facilitate compliance with the BNARS' guidelines for records management and archiving as well as compliance with applicable laws and other binding policies in the country.

### *Governance of Liquid Communication*

This study discovered that, after liquid communication is captured from social media, there is a need to govern it accordingly. Governance of liquid communication in this study was premised upon the ARMA Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles (ARMA International 2017). The eight principles are outlined as accountability, transparency, integrity, protection, compliance, availability, retention, and disposition. As these principles describe effective information governance, they were considered relevant for this study as they apply to all types of organisations, in all types of industries, including government or the public sector (Franks and Smallwood 2014, 29). These ARMA principles apply in the governance of liquid communication generated through the use of social media as follows:

- **Accountability:** For the governance of liquid communication, responsibility for records management should be assigned at a senior level to ensure effective governance with the appropriate level of authority. This officer will be responsible for delegating responsibilities for the governance of liquid communication to records managers in an organisation. Responsibilities in the monitoring and removal of social media content should be assigned, the role of other business unit members contributing to social media should be clearly spelt out, there should be adequate staffing on social media efforts and the role of other stakeholders on the governance of liquid communication should be stated.
- **Integrity:** Liquid communication generated through the use of social media should have a reasonable and suitable guarantee of authenticity and reliability to be considered authoritative evidence of business events and to fully meet the requirements of the business. To ensure the integrity of liquid communication, an organisation should have established processes for introducing new records-generating systems, diplomatics should be used to assess the authenticity of liquid communication, integrity controls for liquid



communication should be audited regularly, actions undertaken on liquid communication should be documented to provide an audit trail, and access controls responsibilities should be assigned by a senior officer to prevent unauthorised access and disclosure of liquid communication.

- **Compliance:** Governance of liquid communication requires compliance with applicable laws, other binding authorities, and the organisation's policies. To ensure compliance, there should be existence of appropriate legislation and policies that support the management of records generated in cloud environments, social media entries should be regarded as records, captured and managed in accordance with an organisation's records management requirements, existence of retrieval processes of social media entries and risks management in the use of social media tools to ensure trust in liquid communication.
- **Availability:** An organisation should govern liquid communication in a way that it can be retrieved in a timely, efficient and accurate manner when required. This may be achieved through the documentation of organisational goals for the use of social media tools, maintenance of active social media platforms through regular updates and the use of social metrics to track the impact of social media and the effectiveness of an organisation's social media strategies.
- **Retention and disposition:** Retention requires that liquid communication be maintained for an appropriate time, taking into account the legal, regulatory, fiscal, operational and historical requirements. In terms of disposition, organisations should provide secure and appropriate disposition of liquid communication that is no longer required to be maintained by applicable laws and the organisation's policies. To achieve this, an organisation should have a records retention schedule or policy to document the processes used to guide the transfer or disposition of liquid communication. Moreover, the national archival institution should give guidance on the development of guidelines for the retention and disposition of liquid communication and also associated decisions.
- **Appraisal:** Appraisal, as the process of determining the value of the records is a crucial exercise to undertake in any organisation especially for records generated in cloud environments. Appraisal in cloud environments should focus on the functions and transactions of the record creator, rather than on individual records and their potential uses because there are countless ongoing series of multimedia records to appraise within unstable organisations (Cook 1997). Unlike in a paper environment where the records managers would wait for the records to reach the inactive stage according to the life cycle of records to appraise and archive them, liquid communication requires that appraisal be done from the creation stage. Following the ISO 15489-1 (2016, 10–11) guidelines, appraisal of liquid communication should combine an

understanding of business context with the identification of requirements for evidence of business that should be met through records which involve:

- developing an understanding of the nature of the business and its legal, resourcing and technological settings;
- using risk assessments to determine what records should be created and how they should be managed to meet the range of applicable requirements. This involves assessing the risks affecting the business generally, and risks that can be managed through the creation, capture and management of records.

In order for the framework for the governance of liquid communication generated through social media to effectively work, it requires liquid communication to be governed according to the records management and legal requirements, as in its nature on social media platforms, liquid communication is not fixed by space nor bound by time. These activities require a cross-functional approach where the roles and responsibilities of the PROs, IT application analysts, records managers and other stakeholders are consolidated and documented.

## **Conclusion**

The Botswana government has been actively using social media platforms to interact with its citizens since 2011 for increased access, usage and awareness of services offered by the government. Even though there were no documents on social media use, policies and strategies, the government recognised that social media efforts need to be taken into account as the BGCIS office was mandated to coordinate and manage the government's social media pages through its e-communication function. The national ICT policy was cited in this study as the main instrument which drove the government to give more people access to the Internet and this led to the increased adoption and use of social media platforms in Botswana. Notwithstanding this, much had not been done by the government in terms of the governance of liquid communication generated through the use of social media, especially for the Botswana public sector, as this study revealed. The heavy use of social media platforms by the Botswana government demands that liquid communication generated in the process be governed as suggested in the proposed governance framework for liquid communication in this study.

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