EFFECTIVENESS OF NEW MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA: A CASE STUDY OF THE INTRANET AND TEXT MESSAGES (SMS)

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED AS A PARTIAL REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF A DEGREE OF MASTER OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION, FACULTY OF ARTS MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to provide researched data on the effectiveness of new media technologies for internal communication in parliament of Uganda. The objectives of this study were to establish the influence of the intranet and SMS on internal communication in Parliament of Uganda, and to assess the attitudes of Parliamentarians and staff toward the usefulness of these communication tools. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used in the study design. This research was based on the case study design and used in-depth interviews, participant observation and thematic content analysis to collect data. Research instruments included an online-questionnaire and a hard copy questionnaire. There was also an interview guide. This research found that age and gender indeed had a big influence on intranet and SMS use. It was found that the young adults aged between 30 to 45 were more apt to use these communication tools than their older counterparts who were above 60 years of age. In the same vain, it was found that the male users were more likely to use these tools than their female colleagues. This was partly attributed to the fact that majority of MPs and staff are males aged above 30 years. It was found that the intranet was quite significant in the day-to-day communications within parliament, and the e-mail was the most used facility on the intranet. This was attributed to the fact that email is recognised as an official form of communication within Parliament. It was found that SMS was slightly below the intranet in importance, but showed more rapid pace of adaptability and threatened to surpass the email in particular if all factors remain constant. This was partly due to the fact that the SMS system was a relatively new tool for internal communication in Parliament of Uganda as compared to the intranet. Major challenges included too much spam mails from within and without Parliament which inconvenienced e-mail users and filled up their in-boxes faster than expected. This challenge

would be solved by the IT department using tougher anti-spam software and sensitizing users to avoid reckless exposure of their email addresses. The Parliament SMS system faced a challenge of a short queuing up period of only 24 hours. It also lacked a feedback mechanism. These would be solved by negotiating with the service provider to solve them.