

THE TRANSITION OF REGISTRY SYSTEM IN THE GOVERNMENT SECTOR

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Abstract

The registry is a record system that helps government departments to link between content, context and the structure of records in improving information management (record keeping system). In the government of Malaysia, there are examples of a poor registry system which affects the availability of records as evidence and information. To illustrate, Malaysia lost Batu Puteh Island to Singapore in 2008 because there were insufficient records found as evidence in court. The hydrological disasters affected one of the states in Kelantan, Malaysia; including state government department on 2014 has affected the loss of government records. This paper shares the literature for the transition of the registry system in the government sector. This paper seeks to identify the transition process of the registry system as one of the predominant record keeping systems in the public sector. The registry system has acted as an audit trail for better record tracking. The implementation of the registry has improved the efficiency of record keeping in the government sector. This paper aims to discuss the management of registry in the government sector by understanding the nature, functions and the challenges in implementing the registry. To cover registry system in a comprehensive method, it is not only focusing on nature and functions, but the filing classification also needs to be concentrated. Filing classification is the main tools to ensure the accurate process of searching and retrieving the file in the registry. This paper could potentially contribute to the preparation of implementing the registry system in the government sector.

Keywords: Registry Information Management (record keeping system), Transition Registry, Audit Trail, Classification Scheme, Registry Filing Systems

1 INTRODUCTION

It is impossible to understand the records management without understanding registry filing systems (Stephens, 1995). The history of registry filing systems started in the 13th century, when British government implemented a formal system to register incoming and outgoing government documents in a book or register (Stephens, 1996). According to Stephens (1995), the registry filing system has been disseminated by the British government throughout the world. The British implemented the registry filing system in the

government especially in the Civil Services and colonies throughout their worldwide empire. Now, registry filing systems are used as the most significant and basic system in recordkeeping in Europe, Africa, Asia and the South Pacific.

The term registry, register and registration are related but have unique meanings in English registry filing systems. According to Stephens (1996), the term registry is referring to the physical location to place the document like file room. However, the term register can be classified into two; noun which referring to a physical to index and record the documents and verb which referring to the activity of locating a registered document on file. The term registration is a filing activity of a document as an official record.

The term registry is a common term used in records management. The term registry can be defined as records office where in charge for the receipt, control and maintenance of current records (IRMT, 1999). Besides, the main function of a registry is to house the entire series of records kept in a particular organization and to have intellectual control over the records. The methods of the registers can be books, cards and electronic formats like Microsoft Word, Excel and system application. This paper is to provide a preliminary view on managing registry system in the government sector.

2 REGISTRY AND REGISTRY FILING SYSTEM NATURE

The registry filing system is a system used to capture and link the context of the records with their content. The main function of registries is well described by Craig (2002) where it is discussed by agreed procedures to complete control records achieved by processes for managing their use, location, order, and contents. The registry is a system which helps users and the organization to a link between content (the records), context (the storage) and the structure (methods of displayed) of records in improving record keeping system as an audit trail. In addition, the main characteristic of the registry filing system is the method used to capture and list the receipt and movement of records that are actively used in the organization.

There are two types of the registry in the record keeping which are centralized and decentralized registries. The centralized registry is a registry for all divisions and the decentralized registry is a registry that based in every department of the civil service in the United Kingdom (Craig, 2002). Centralized and decentralized registries each have advantages and disadvantages. The advantage of centralized is there is an intellectual control over the records created because of the standard and centralized regarding policy, mail operations, classification scheme, procedural practices, and the retention and disposal schedule. Moreover, the security of centralized registry is easy to maintain because the records are stored at the same location. However, the advantages of the decentralized registry are in terms of speeding retrieval process due to small location and small numbers of records. Nevertheless, Craig (2002) states that the central registry also has complication regarding communication deficiency between Central Registry staff and division staffs. The division staffs prefer to have their own clerical staff to handle the records since the clerk understand the subject and the flow of the records in the division.

In British government, some departments run centralized registries; others have decentralized registries according to the divisions or branches (Stephens, 1996). The concept is slightly similar with the colonies of British, which is Malaysia. Malaysia government currently has applied centralized registry in the ministry. However, the centralized registry is focusing on open access records. Yet, the decentralized registry has implemented at the departments or division in the ministry to manage the classified records (confidential, secret and top secret) and called file room.

However, in German ministries of government, there is usually one registry for each division in a ministry. This registry is responsible for classifying the records according to the standard registry classification scheme (Stephens, 1995).

3 THE FUNCTIONS OF REGISTRY FILING SYSTEMS

The functions of registry filing system are to index and control the records before any processing takes place in the organization (Stephens, 1995). However, the key functions of registry filing system can be identified as to index, control and trace the movement of the records. Moreover, it also to create and capture the records as evidence in a business transaction and make a link between the records during the retrieval process in the organization (Packalen & Henttonen, 2015).

The process of indexing and classifying the records are significance. The vocabulary control process needs to be taken to ensure the records can be accessed and retrieved by the users immediately. According to Henttonen (2012), one of the classification schemes in records and archive management happened in the

registry. This complied with the registry function to serve information from registered records. According to Lindh (1993), the registry filing system makes it easy to establish the original order and to return documents to their exact location. Overall, the major function of registry filing system to the department or government sector is not only to make the records are available for business processes used, but to help the government in maintaining the corporate memory which have a high value towards the country.

4 REGISTRY CLASSIFICATION SCHEME

The registry system includes a classification file that assists the public servant in retrieving the records accurately and efficiently. The British in the registry filing system have adopted many trial and error practices. The registry filing system in British has been improved by 20th century where the system has been designed to solve the problems of office work instead to be the storage for the records (Craig, 2002). After restructured, the government decided to identify the subject of the records upon receipt at the registry. Moreover, the process of sorting the records has been changed from physical object to the subject classification order (Craig, 2002).

England started a formal registry filing system for government documents in the 13th century by using the incoming and outgoing classification (Stephens,1995). The change has related with recognition from the government on the real control over the records, and the procedures also changed were at the beginning of the registry, the classification and indexing of the records had been done when the papers were filed away at the conclusion of the business. By 1946, the British government has decided to create a division of records into unofficial, semi-official and official where it has been used until now in any records management field throughout the world (Craig, 2002).

In Iceland, there were two registry systems used at the early implementation which is; 'rentukammerkerfi' and 'kansellikeffi'. 'Rentukammerkerfi' is the process of registering the incoming letter without considering the content and 'kansellikeffi' is the process of registering letter according to the subject or sender. However, these systems have been supplanted by a numeric-subject system (based on letter subject) and numeric system (based on division, group, and sub-group) (Gunnlaugsdottir, 1999).

In German, the files classification schemes which a four-level/digit hierarchical system has been used. The files have been classified according to hierarchy designate. The primary subject is located at the top of the hierarchy designate, followed by the main functions or activities of an organization, categories and the individual files units (Stephens, 1995).

The filing classification in Government of Malaysia started since 1986 when MAMPU (Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit) published The Guidelines for Filing System for Government Agencies Malaysia. The Guidelines is to persuade the government agencies to develop classification file based on subject classification and coding. However, in the year 2003, National Archives of Malaysia has been received a mandate from Government of Malaysia to have an authority in managing archives and records for the public sector in Malaysia according to National Archives Act 2003 (Act 629) (Malaysia, 2003). National Archives of Malaysia has improvised the filing system by MAMPU and introduced the block numeric system. The new system is focusing on housekeeping or facilitative file based on Circular Number 5 The year 2007, Subject 7.4 In the year 2008, National Archives of Malaysia being the first agency in Malaysia using Electronic Records Management System (TRIM Software is also known as HP Records Manager). The classification file that has been developed for the system is Functional Classification File. This functional classification file was referring to ISO 15489 (Malaysia Standard MS 2223:2009). (Shafie, 2017). Moreover, National Archives of Malaysia has published The Developing Classification File Guidelines for Public Sector June 2012 to encourage the use of functional classification file in the government sector. In the year 2015, with the implementation of Digital Document Management System (DDMS) acted as 33 ministries and government agencies have used the electronic registry for government sector in Malaysia.

The classification scheme is fundamental for an effective registry. It assists in the process of searching and retrieving the records by locating the records with a similar theme together and to identify the ownership of the records.

5 THE CHALLENGES OF REGISTRY SYSTEMS

The advantage of the registry filing system is when the records have been classified at the early capturing process before sent to the recipient. However, Morddel (1989) states that even the British government, colonies and ex-colonies have implemented dozens of registries but none of them fully works and is able to cope with a number of paper files stores. In contrast, the registry has been changed from traditional registry

and paper-based records to the electronic registry and electronic records. By that, the challenge is not only focusing on the paper-based records but the biggest challenge in the registry filing system now is to link the registry filing system with the Electronic Documents and Records Management System. Moreover, another challenge is to ensure the correct metadata for different formats of records and individual selection to handle the registry systems. According to Tough (2003), with the upcoming of registry system and the use of software, the staff who handle the registry filing system need to be trained. This makes some organizations facing the challenge of providing training from their own resources.

The strength of the registry filing system relies on the level of service to the users and the satisfaction towards on filing system in storing the records. According to (Packalen & Henttonen, 2015) a registry may be disorganized and poorly equipped with insufficient manpower. The result could be that the record system is failing, with the result that files cannot be retrieved easily, or at all; information is unavailable; and because of this, government as a whole is liable to duplication of effort and poor decision making. All the major problem areas identified above are in evidence here, and each would need to be examined and the main points tackled before the old registry could be transformed into a new records office.

6 CONCLUSION

In a conclusion, the main function of the registry is as audit trail for the government sector to trace and use the records in their business processes and future reference in any circumstances. The successful of registry system is relying on the sufficient and skillful staff at the registry together with a better system and classification schemes. Moreover, the registry is to ensure the records have been captured and refined in the registry system to address a broader range of record keeping needs and to help the government from record loss. This paper will provide a preliminary indication to the record keeping practitioners on the registry system.

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