

Chapter 11

21st Century Administration: The Office Information Management Nexus

ALIKORNWO, Peter Mezenye, PhD

peter.alikornwo@portharcourtpoly.edu.ng

Department of Office Technology and Management, School of Business and Administrative Studies, Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rumuola, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The twenty-first century has reconstituted the administrative office from a physical, paper-intensive setting into a dynamic nexus for the generation, processing, governance, and strategic deployment of information. This chapter examines the convergence of office administration and information management in contemporary organizational settings, with sustained attention to the Nigerian experience. Drawing on verified empirical studies conducted within the Nigerian academic and civil service contexts, the chapter engages critically with the contributions of scholars in administrative theory, records management, and information systems. The chapter advances the argument that sustainable administrative efficiency in the 21st century demands coherent alignment between information management strategy, technological infrastructure, and human capital development. The discussion surfaces the structural, institutional, and cultural impediments that have complicated this alignment within Nigeria, while identifying emerging opportunities offered by digital transformation. Implications for policy, professional practice, and tertiary education in Office and Information Management are articulated.

Keywords: *Office Administration, Information Management, 21st Century Administration, Nigeria, Digital Office Strategy, Electronic Records Management, Administrative Efficiency*

INTRODUCTION

The twenty-first century has ushered in a profound reordering of organizational life, driven principally by the convergence of digital technologies, the imperatives of the knowledge economy, and the growing complexity of institutional governance. Within this reordering, the administrative office — long conceived as a physical space for clerical and managerial support functions — has been reconstituted as a critical node in organizational information ecosystems. The office of the contemporary era is less a location than a process: a continuously operating set of activities through which information is generated, validated, stored, retrieved, and communicated in support of organizational decision-making, accountability, and service delivery.

In the Nigerian context, this reconstitution has unfolded on contested terrain. Organizations across the public and private sectors have been confronted with the twin imperatives of digital modernization and institutional reform, yet progress has been uneven, variegated, and frequently impeded by structural factors — inadequate infrastructure, skills deficits, institutional inertia, and resource constraints — that have resisted straightforward transplantation of international practice. Empirical research conducted within Nigerian tertiary institutions and civil service structures documents a persistent gap between the aspirations of digital transformation policy and the realities of administrative practice (Adetunji et al., 2023; Alikornwo & Orisah-Godfrey, 2026; Nwinyokpugi & Dornanu, 2022).

The discipline of Office and Information Management (OIM) and Office Technology and Management in Nigeria — institutionalized within universities and polytechnics, and given

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professional expression through bodies such as the Nigerian Institute of Office Technology and Information Management (NIOTIM) and Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (ABEN) — occupies a strategically significant position at the intersection of administrative practice and information science. Scholars have generated a corpus of empirically grounded, locally contextualized research that constitutes an indispensable resource for understanding the dynamics of 21st century administrative information management in Nigeria.

This chapter undertakes a comprehensive scholarly examination of the office-information management nexus, organized across eight principal sections: a conceptual framework situating the nexus theoretically; a historical trajectory tracing the evolution of the administrative office; theoretical foundations drawn from administrative theory, records management, and information systems; the technological dimensions of contemporary office practice; the human capital imperatives generated by digital transformation; the Nigerian administrative landscape examined through empirically documented scenarios; an analysis of challenges and prospects; and a concluding synthesis with recommendations for policy, practice, and education.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: THE OFFICE–INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NEXUS

Reconceptualizing the Office in the 21st Century

The concept of the “office” has undergone substantial evolution in the scholarly literature. Administrative theorists of the early and mid-twentieth century conceived the office primarily as a physical environment in which clerical, secretarial, and managerial functions were performed in support of organizational objectives. This spatial conception, rooted in hierarchical organizational design and paper-based information systems, served adequately in an era of stable technologies and relatively bounded organizational environments. The emergence of information and communication technologies from the 1980s onward, and the accelerating pace of digital innovation since the turn of the twenty-first century, have rendered this spatial conception progressively inadequate as a framework for understanding administrative practice.

Contemporary scholarship proposes a functional and systemic reconceptualization of the office. Alikornwo and Orisah-Godfrey (2026), in their empirical study of digital office strategy and administrative service delivery in higher education institutions in Rivers State, Nigeria, define the contemporary office in terms of its information processing and service delivery functions rather than its physical characteristics. Their study, which found significant positive relationships between digital workflow automation and service responsiveness ($r = 0.681, p < .05$) and between cloud-based information systems and process efficiency ($r = 0.643, p < .05$) across 862 administrative staff in six public higher education institutions, demonstrates that the 21st century office is constituted by its technological systems and information architectures at least as much as by its physical or organizational boundaries.

This functional reconceptualization resonates with international scholarship on the transformation of administrative work. The emergence of virtual work environments, distributed administrative teams, cloud-based collaboration platforms, and mobile office technologies has progressively decoupled administrative work from fixed physical locations, creating what has been termed the “boundaryless office” — a configuration in which administrative information management occurs across geographic, temporal, and institutional boundaries simultaneously. For Nigerian organizations, the implications of this reconfiguration are both liberating, in the sense that it enables administrative functions to continue even in the absence of reliable physical infrastructure, and challenging, in the sense that it imposes new requirements for digital literacy, information security, and inter-organizational coordination.

Information Management: Definitional Parameters

Information management, as a field of scholarly inquiry and professional practice, is concerned with the systematic processes through which organizations identify, acquire, create, organize, store, maintain, retrieve, and disseminate information in support of their goals and activities. The discipline draws from multiple intellectual traditions — library and archival science, computer science, organizational theory, and management studies — and is applied across a wide

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range of organizational contexts, from government archives to corporate knowledge management systems.

In the administrative science literature, information management has been closely associated with records management — the systematic control of the creation, maintenance, use, and disposition of organizational records throughout their lifecycle. International standards for records management, including ISO 15489-1 (2016), which defines the fundamental requirements for records management in organizational settings, provide authoritative frameworks for the design and assessment of administrative information management systems. The records continuum model, which conceptualizes records as existing in a continuous process of creation, capture, organization, and pluralization rather than a linear lifecycle, has particular relevance to the contemporary digital environment in which organizational records may exist simultaneously in multiple formats and locations.

Nigerian OIM scholarship has engaged substantively with these international frameworks while generating locally grounded insights into their application. Nwinyokpugi and Dornanu (2022), in their empirical study of electronic administration strategies and organizational efficiency in the Rivers State civil service, found that dimensions of electronic administration including enterprise content management, electronic transaction processing, document management systems, and workflow management systems were all significantly and positively correlated with measures of organizational efficiency including cost reduction and service quality. Their study, conducted across twenty ministries in the Rivers State civil service, provides direct empirical evidence of the operational significance of information management systems for administrative performance in the Nigerian public sector.

The Nexus: Integrative Dimensions

The nexus between office administration and information management is characterized by three integrative dimensions: the technological, the organizational, and the human. The technological dimension encompasses the systems, platforms, and tools through which organizational information is created, processed, and managed — from electronic records management systems and enterprise content management platforms to cloud storage, digital workflow automation, and mobile applications. The organizational dimension encompasses the policies, procedures, governance structures, and institutional cultures that shape how information is managed within the office environment. The human dimension encompasses the competencies, attitudes, and behaviours of administrative personnel who interact with, and through, information systems in the performance of their work.

Alikornwo and Echendu (2026) provide empirical grounding for this integrative conception. Their correlational survey study of 248 administrative officers across three tertiary institutions in Rivers State — Rivers State University, Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education — found significant positive relationships between electronic records management and information accessibility ($r = 0.614, p < .05$), electronic records management and information security ($r = 0.573, p < .05$), digital communication systems and information accessibility ($r = 0.589, p < .05$), and digital communication systems and information security ($r = 0.541, p < .05$). These findings confirm that the technological systems of the office environment (electronic records management and digital communication) have direct and measurable effects on the information management outcomes (accessibility and security) that are central to organizational administrative performance.

HISTORICAL TRAJECTORY: FROM PRE-DIGITAL TO DIGITAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

The Colonial Administrative Legacy

The administrative systems of Nigerian public and institutional organizations are deeply imprinted with the characteristics of the colonial bureaucracy from which they emerged. The British colonial administration imposed upon Nigeria a paper-intensive, hierarchical, and centralizing administrative paradigm whose fundamental design assumptions were carried forward into the post-

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independence civil service. Written correspondence, file registries, minute sheets, and the hierarchical referral of decisions upward through chains of authority — all hallmarks of colonial administrative practice — remained the organizational DNA of Nigerian public sector administration well into the post-independence era.

This colonial administrative inheritance has proved remarkably persistent. Nwinyokpugi and Dornanu (2022) document the continued centrality of paper-based documentation and hierarchical information flows in the Rivers State civil service, even as electronic administration tools have been progressively introduced. Their finding that information and communication technology exerted a high moderating effect on the relationship between electronic administration strategies and organizational efficiency suggests that ICT adoption is necessary but not sufficient for administrative modernization: the organizational cultures, procedures, and governance structures within which ICT is deployed also require transformation if digital tools are to yield their potential efficiency benefits.

Early Computerization and the Phase of Technological Hybridism

The introduction of personal computers into Nigerian organizations during the 1980s and 1990s initiated a transitional period in office administration. Word processing replaced the typewriter; spreadsheet applications introduced new possibilities for financial record-keeping; and early database systems offered primitive capabilities for records management. However, this early computerization was largely additive rather than transformative — it grafted digital tools onto pre-existing analogue administrative architectures without reconceiving the information management logic of the office. The result was what may be termed “technological hybridism”: a coexistence of paper-based and computer-based systems that generated duplication, inconsistency, and administrative complexity rather than the efficiencies that computerization was intended to produce.

This hybridism has persisted into the present era. Adetunji, Singh, and Mkhize (2023), in their quantitative study of Management Information System (MIS) maturity concerns in Nigerian Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), found that integration of MIS initiatives, creation of MIS vision, implementation of MIS management policies, and development of supportive MIS objectives were the primary factors influencing MIS maturity in Nigerian government organizations. Their study, which collected data from 109 key stakeholders across selected federal government departments using factor analysis as the primary analytical tool, revealed that Nigerian MDAs continued to struggle with inter-sectoral MIS integration and the development of management information systems capable of supporting effective service delivery — a finding consistent with a broader pattern of partial and uneven digital transformation across the Nigerian public sector.

The Digital Era: Contemporary Dynamics

The diffusion of broadband internet, cloud computing, mobile technology, and social media platforms from the 2000s onward has created the conditions for a more fundamental transformation of the administrative office than any previous technological development. Unlike the early computerization of the 1980s and 1990s, which primarily automated existing manual processes, the current wave of digital transformation has the potential to reconstitute the organizational logic of the office itself — enabling new forms of distributed work, real-time information sharing, automated workflow management, and data-driven decision support that were inconceivable in the pre-digital era.

Okoro and Orjiako (2025), in their study of office information systems and service-delivery efficiency in federal universities in South-East Nigeria, found that while information systems technologies have been deployed in many tertiary institutions, their contribution to administrative performance was uneven and sometimes marginal. The authors, anchoring their analysis in the DeLone and McLean Information Systems Success Model, identified inconsistent institutional support as a critical factor inhibiting the translation of digital investments into measurable administrative service improvements. This finding underscores the point, consistent across the Nigerian OIM literature, that technology adoption without corresponding organizational development and

institutional commitment will fail to deliver the administrative improvements that digital transformation promises.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Classical Administrative Theory

The theoretical foundations of information management in organizational settings are traceable to the classical administrative theorists of the early twentieth century. Fayol's (1916/1949) identification of planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and controlling as the five primary functions of management implicitly established information management as a foundational administrative competency: effective planning requires reliable intelligence; coordination requires clear channels of communication; and control requires timely, accurate feedback on organizational performance. Similarly, Weber's (1922/1968) theory of bureaucracy, with its emphasis on written rules, formal documentation, and archival records as the basis of rational organizational authority, constitutes an early and influential prescriptive model of organizational information management — one whose deep imprint on Nigerian public sector administration has already been noted.

Simon's (1945/1997) theory of bounded rationality offers a particularly important contribution to the theoretical framing of administrative information management. Simon argued that decision-makers are constrained by limitations of cognitive capacity, incomplete information, and insufficient time for comprehensive analysis — a condition he termed "bounded rationality." This insight has profound implications for the design of administrative information systems, which must be oriented not merely toward the accumulation and storage of data but toward the provision of filtered, organized, and contextualized information that can support effective human judgment under conditions of cognitive constraint. The implications of Simon's theory for contemporary Nigerian administrative practice are immediate: the design and deployment of information management systems must be evaluated against the criterion of their capacity to enhance the quality of administrative decision-making, not merely their technical functionality.

Information Systems Theory: The DeLone and McLean Model

The DeLone and McLean (1992, 2003) Information Systems Success Model provides one of the most widely applied theoretical frameworks for evaluating the effectiveness of organizational information systems. The model identifies six interdependent dimensions of IS success: information quality, system quality, service quality, use and user intentions to use, user satisfaction, and net benefits. The model's power as an analytical tool lies in its recognition that IS success is a multi-dimensional construct that cannot be reduced to any single metric — a recognition that is particularly important in the Nigerian context, where organizations may invest in technologically sophisticated information systems while achieving limited organizational benefits due to deficiencies in user training, system integration, or institutional support.

Okoro and Orjiako (2025) deploy the DeLone and McLean model as the theoretical anchor for their investigation of office information systems in South-East Nigerian federal universities, providing a direct application of this framework within the Nigerian OIM context. Their finding that digital investments have not uniformly translated into improved service delivery — attributed to factors including inadequate staff training, poor system integration, and inconsistent institutional commitment — is consistent with DeLone and McLean's proposition that IS success requires coherent alignment across all six dimensions of the model. This finding has direct implications for Nigerian institutional administrators and policymakers engaged in digital transformation initiatives.

Records Management Theory: The Continuum Model

Records management theory provides the most direct theoretical scaffolding for understanding information management in the administrative office. The records lifecycle model, which conceives of organizational records as passing through distinct phases of creation, active use, semi-active retention, and final disposition, has been the dominant framework for records management practice in most organizational settings. ISO 15489-1 (2016), the international standard on records management, is grounded in this lifecycle conception and provides authoritative

guidance on the principles and requirements of records management systems applicable to organizational settings across sectors.

The records continuum model, developed within the Australian archival tradition, offers a more dynamic conceptualization that understands records as existing in a continuous process of creation, capture, organization, and pluralization across time and organizational space. This model is particularly apposite for the contemporary digital environment, in which a single administrative record may exist simultaneously in multiple formats (paper, digital, cloud-based), at multiple organizational locations, and in multiple stages of its administrative lifecycle. The continuum model's emphasis on the ongoing, dynamic character of records — rather than their sequential passage through fixed lifecycle stages — provides a more adequate theoretical framework for understanding information management in contemporary digitally transformed administrative offices.

TECHNOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF 21ST CENTURY OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

Digital Office Practices and Their Administrative Significance

The technological landscape of the 21st century administrative office is constituted by a constellation of digital systems and platforms whose combined effect is to radically alter both the substance and the process of office work. These include electronic records management systems (ERMS), enterprise content management (ECM) platforms, cloud-based collaboration tools, digital workflow automation systems, management information systems (MIS), and mobile administrative applications. Each of these technological categories has specific implications for the practice of information management in organizational settings, and their deployment — or absence — constitutes a primary determinant of administrative capacity and efficiency.

Alikornwo and Echendu (2026) provide direct empirical evidence of the administrative significance of digital office practices within Nigerian tertiary institutions. Their study, anchored in Information Systems Theory and employing a correlational survey design, found that electronic records management and digital communication systems were each significantly and positively associated with both information accessibility and information security — the two dimensions of information management effectiveness measured in their study. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients for the study instruments ranged from 0.78 to 0.84, and all four null hypotheses were rejected at the 0.05 level of significance, providing robust empirical support for the conclusion that digital office practices significantly determine information management effectiveness in the tertiary institution administrative context.

Electronic Records Management: The Foundational Imperative

Electronic Records Management Systems (ERMS) — applications designed to capture, manage, and provide access to organizational records throughout their lifecycle in electronic form — constitute the foundational technological layer of administrative information management in the 21st century. The adoption of ERMS in Nigerian organizations has been a policy priority of successive e-government initiatives, driven by recognition that the management of organizational records is the bedrock of institutional accountability, transparency, and administrative efficiency.

However, the practical implementation of ERMS across Nigerian organizations has been impeded by a convergence of technical, financial, and organizational barriers. Adetunji et al. (2023) found that Nigerian MDAs continued to grapple with the integration of MIS initiatives, noting that “external integration between inter-sectoral MIS technology devices that increase government employee service delivery must be improved” — a finding that highlights the systemic fragmentation of information systems across the Nigerian public sector as a critical impediment to effective electronic records management. The absence of a comprehensive, enforceable national records management policy framework that specifically addresses the requirements of electronic records compounds these implementation challenges by leaving organizations without clear regulatory guidance on the standards and requirements to which their ERMS must conform.

Digital Workflow Automation and Cloud-Based Information Systems

Digital workflow automation — the use of software systems to route, track, and manage administrative processes according to pre-defined rules and procedures — and cloud-based information systems represent two of the most transformative technological capabilities available to contemporary administrative offices. Alikornwo and Orisah-Godfrey (2026) found that digital workflow automation was significantly and positively associated with administrative service responsiveness ($r = 0.681, p < .05$), and that cloud-based information systems were significantly and positively associated with process efficiency ($r = 0.643, p < .05$), across 273 administrative staff in six public higher education institutions in Rivers State.

These findings have direct practical implications for Nigerian higher education administrators and policymakers. They indicate that targeted investments in digital workflow automation and cloud-based information systems — not merely the general digitization of administrative processes — are likely to yield measurable improvements in service responsiveness and process efficiency. The study's recommendation that university administrators prioritize the adoption and integration of these specific technological capabilities, rather than pursuing broad-based but unfocused technology acquisition, reflects a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between specific technological affordances and administrative outcomes.

HUMAN CAPITAL AND COMPETENCY IMPERATIVES

The Evolving Competency Profile of Administrative Personnel

The transformation of office administration in the 21st century has generated a fundamental restructuring of the competency requirements for administrative personnel. The traditional competency profile of the Nigerian administrative officer — centred on correspondence management, filing, record-keeping, and the operation of office equipment — is manifestly inadequate for the demands of a digitally transformed administrative environment in which the governance of complex information systems, the management of digital records, the navigation of cloud-based collaboration platforms, and the provision of data intelligence to organizational decision-makers have become central administrative functions.

Chux-Nyeche (2020), in her book on e-administration and office information management provides a locally contextualized articulation of the competency requirements for effective administrative practice in digitally mediated organizational environments. Her work underscores the need for administrative personnel to develop competencies not only in the technical operation of information systems but also in the management of information as an organizational resource — encompassing the classification, governance, security, and strategic deployment of organizational information assets.

Office and Information Management Education: The Curriculum Challenge

The preparation of administrative professionals for 21st century practice is fundamentally dependent upon the quality and currency of Office and Information Management (OIM) education in Nigerian tertiary institutions. OIM programs — offered at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels in universities and at the National Diploma and Higher National Diploma levels in polytechnics across Nigeria as Office Technology and Management — bear the primary responsibility for developing the competency foundations upon which effective administrative information management practice is built.

The scholarly literature documents significant curricular challenges in Nigerian OIM education. Research by Chux-Nyeche and Nwinyokpugi (2020), which examined the infopreneurship implications of OIM education for employment sustainability among SME operators in Rivers State, found that the alignment between educational preparation and the information management demands of organizational practice remained imperfect, with graduates frequently lacking the entrepreneurial and digital competencies required for employment in dynamic organizational environments. This finding is consistent with broader critiques of Nigerian tertiary education that identify curriculum-industry misalignment as a persistent structural problem with significant consequences for graduate employability and organizational performance.

Digital Literacy and the Administrative Workforce

Digital literacy — the ability to effectively use digital tools and platforms for information creation, management, communication, and decision support — is the foundational competency of the 21st century administrative office worker. The absence or inadequacy of digital literacy among administrative personnel constitutes a primary constraint on the ability of organizations to realize the benefits of their investments in digital information management systems.

Okoro and Orjiako (2025) document the constraints that inadequate staff training and development impose on the effectiveness of office information systems in Nigerian federal universities, observing that “sustainable efficiency gains in higher-education administration require not only robust systems but also continuous staff training, system integration across departments, and management commitment.” This tripartite formulation — robust systems, continuous training, and management commitment — captures the integrative nature of the challenge facing Nigerian organizations: digital transformation is not a technological project that can be completed by the procurement and installation of information systems, but a sustained organizational transformation that requires equally sustained investment in human capacity.

THE NIGERIAN ADMINISTRATIVE LANDSCAPE: SCENARIOS AND DYNAMICS

The Civil Service: Structural Challenges and Digital Aspirations

The Nigerian civil service — encompassing the federal civil service and its state counterparts, together constituting the largest single administrative system in the country — presents a particularly instructive case study of the dynamics of information management modernization in a complex institutional environment. The civil service is simultaneously the primary vehicle for public service delivery and the primary locus of administrative information management in Nigeria, generating and managing the records, data, and correspondence upon which governance decisions and service delivery depend.

Nwinyokpugi and Dornanu (2022), in their rigorous empirical study of electronic administration strategies in the Rivers State civil service, found that all four dimensions of electronic administration examined — enterprise content management, electronic transaction processing, document management systems, and workflow management systems — were significantly and positively correlated with organizational efficiency outcomes. These findings, derived from data collected from forty senior management officials (directors and deputy directors) across twenty ministries, provide concrete empirical evidence that electronic administration strategies have measurable positive effects on civil service performance in the Nigerian context.

However, the same study documented the high moderating effect of ICT infrastructure on the relationship between electronic administration strategies and organizational efficiency — a finding that highlights the extent to which the benefits of electronic administration are contingent upon the quality of the underlying ICT infrastructure. For the Nigerian civil service, characterized as it is by significant infrastructure deficits — unreliable power supply, inadequate network connectivity, limited broadband access, and insufficient ICT maintenance capacity — this infrastructure dependence represents a fundamental structural constraint that must be addressed if electronic administration strategies are to realize their organizational efficiency potential.

Nwinyokpugi and Robinson (2019), examining discipline management strategies and compliance success in the Rivers State civil service, found that the effectiveness of compliance mechanisms — including those related to information management policies and procedures — was significantly dependent on the quality of organizational communication and the perceived fairness of organizational governance. Their study, grounded in cross-sectional survey research across twenty ministries in Rivers State, underscores the point that information management in the civil service is not merely a technical challenge but an organizational governance challenge that implicates issues of communication, trust, and institutional legitimacy.

Higher Education Administration: A Focal Scenario

Nigerian universities and other higher education institutions (HEIs) represent a particularly important — and particularly well-documented — context for understanding the dynamics of 21st

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century administrative information management. As knowledge-intensive organizations whose administrative systems must support an exceptionally wide range of complex activities — student admissions and academic records management, research administration, personnel management, financial management, and institutional governance — universities generate substantial volumes of organizational information and impose demanding information management requirements on their administrative offices.

Alikornwo and Orisah-Godfrey (2026) provide the most comprehensive recent empirical study of digital office strategy in Nigerian higher education administration, examining six public higher education institutions in Rivers State and finding that digital workflow automation and cloud-based information systems are significant predictors of administrative service responsiveness and process efficiency respectively. Their study population of 862 administrative staff, from which a stratified random sample of 273 was drawn using Taro Yamane's formula, provides a solid empirical foundation for conclusions about the relationship between digital office strategy and administrative service delivery in the Nigerian higher education context.

Alikornwo and Echendu (2026) complement these findings with their investigation of the specific information management outcomes — information accessibility and information security — associated with different dimensions of digital office practice. Their study, which examined administrative officers and OIM staff across Rivers State University, Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, found that both electronic records management and digital communication systems were significantly associated with improvements in information accessibility and security. The study's conclusion — that digital office practices significantly determine information management effectiveness in tertiary institutions — has direct implications for institutional policy on digital infrastructure investment and administrative staff development.

Okoro and Orjiako (2025) extend the geographic scope of this empirical picture to the South-East geopolitical zone, examining federal universities in Imo State. While finding that office information systems had been deployed in these institutions, their study identified a persistent gap between technological investment and service-delivery improvement, attributable to inadequate institutional support, insufficient staff training, and poor system integration. Their study highlights the risk of “technology theatre” in Nigerian university administration: the visible procurement and installation of digital information systems without the organizational investment required to enable those systems to perform effectively.

The Healthcare Sector: Enterprise Alignment and Information Governance

The healthcare sector provides an instructive cross-sectoral illustration of the relationship between information systems governance and service delivery in Nigerian organizations. Okwu, Tantua, and Obara (2023), in their study of enterprise alignment adoption strategies and quality healthcare in South-South Nigeria, published in the *Journal of Office and Information Management*, found that enterprise alignment strategies — which encompass the coherent integration of organizational strategy, information systems, and administrative processes — were significantly associated with healthcare quality outcomes. Their study, which examined healthcare institutions across the South-South geopolitical zone, demonstrates that the principles of administrative information management — particularly the concept of enterprise alignment between organizational strategy and information systems — have direct implications for service delivery quality in the healthcare sector.

This finding from the healthcare sector reinforces the broader argument of this chapter: that effective information management in organizational settings is not merely a matter of technical systems management but of strategic organizational alignment — the coherent integration of information management strategy with organizational mission, governance structures, human capital development, and technological infrastructure. When this alignment is achieved, information management becomes a driver of organizational performance; when it is absent, information management remains a support function that fails to realize its potential contribution to organizational effectiveness.

CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

Structural and Institutional Challenges

The development of effective administrative information management in Nigerian organizations faces a constellation of structural and institutional challenges whose depth and complexity should not be minimized. At the infrastructural level, the inadequacy of Nigeria's ICT infrastructure — including unreliable power supply, limited broadband coverage, and insufficient network connectivity — constrains the operational effectiveness of digital information management systems in ways that have no direct equivalent in higher-income country contexts. Nwinyokpugi and Dornanu's (2022) finding that ICT infrastructure significantly moderates the relationship between electronic administration strategies and organizational efficiency illustrates the extent to which infrastructure quality is not merely a background condition but an active determinant of administrative information management outcomes.

At the institutional level, the absence of a comprehensive national framework for organizational information management — encompassing both records management policy and data protection regulation — creates significant governance uncertainty for organizations seeking to develop compliant, effective information management practices. The Nigeria Data Protection Act (NDPA) of 2023, which succeeded the Nigeria Data Protection Regulation (NDPR) of 2019 and established the Nigeria Data Protection Commission (NDPC) as the primary data protection regulatory authority, represents significant progress toward a robust data governance framework. However, compliance levels across Nigerian organizations remain low, particularly among smaller organizations and in the public sector, where the regulatory enforcement capacity of the NDPC and associated agencies continues to develop.

The MIS maturity concerns documented by Adetunji et al. (2023) across Nigerian federal MDAs illustrate the institutional dimensions of the challenge. Their finding that Nigerian MDAs lacked well-defined procedures for governing connections between different categories of information system managers — and that infrastructure and application statements were primary MIS maturity concerns — points to a systemic deficit in the institutional governance of information management across the federal public sector. Addressing this deficit requires not merely the provision of new technologies but the development of information governance frameworks, institutional capacities, and professional cultures that can sustain effective information management over time.

Human Capital and the Skills Deficit

The human capital dimension of Nigeria's administrative information management challenge is among the most complex and consequential. The simultaneous demands of digital transformation — which requires high levels of technical proficiency, systems thinking, and information governance expertise — and the structural constraints on human capital development in the Nigerian context — including inadequate education quality, insufficient training investment, and the emigration of skilled personnel — create a chronic skills deficit that undermines organizational capacity for effective information management.

The phenomenon of mass emigration of educated and skilled Nigerians — popularly termed “japa” in Nigerian parlance — has significantly affected the human capital pool available to Nigerian organizations in all sectors. For the administrative information management workforce, this emigration represents a double loss: the departure of experienced practitioners who carry institutional knowledge and competency, and the loss of investment in the training and development of administrative personnel who subsequently seek employment abroad. Addressing this challenge requires organizational and systemic responses that go beyond training provision to encompass the creation of rewarding professional environments, competitive compensation structures, and career development pathways that can retain skilled administrative and information management professionals within Nigerian organizations.

Emerging Opportunities

Notwithstanding these challenges, the landscape of administrative information management in Nigeria is characterized by significant and growing opportunities. The rapid diffusion of mobile technology across Nigeria — with active mobile subscriptions exceeding the national population, reflecting the prevalence of multiple SIM card ownership — has created unprecedented possibilities for mobile-enabled administrative information management, including mobile-based workflow approvals, document management applications, and real-time data access platforms that can function effectively even in environments of limited fixed broadband connectivity.

The growth of Nigeria's technology startup ecosystem — particularly in Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt — is generating locally developed information management solutions specifically designed for the Nigerian organizational environment. These locally developed solutions are better positioned than imported enterprise software to address the specific infrastructural, cultural, and organizational constraints of Nigerian administrative contexts, including challenges of intermittent power supply, variable network connectivity, limited ICT literacy, and the need for multilingual user interfaces. The increasing willingness of government agencies and higher education institutions to partner with local technology providers — as evidenced by the proliferation of locally developed campus management systems and government service portals — suggests a growing recognition of the strategic importance of locally contextualized technology solutions.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY, PRACTICE, AND EDUCATION

Policy Recommendations

The analysis presented in this chapter generates several priority recommendations for policy at both the national and organizational levels. At the national level, the most pressing need is for a comprehensive National Records and Information Management Policy that establishes mandatory standards for organizational information management across the public sector, provides a coherent legal framework for electronic records management that interfaces appropriately with the Nigeria Data Protection Act (2023), and creates clear institutional responsibilities for policy implementation, monitoring, and enforcement. The development of such a policy should draw on existing international frameworks — including ISO 15489-1 (2016) and the principles of the International Council on Archives — while being specifically adapted to the Nigerian institutional, technological, and legal context.

The National Universities Commission (NUC) should review and update the Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) for Office and Information Management to ensure that accreditation requirements reflect the competency demands of the 21st century administrative workplace. Specifically, the BMAS should incorporate standards for information systems management, electronic records management, data governance, and digital literacy that are commensurate with international standards of OIM professional education and consistent with the empirical evidence on competency requirements documented in the Nigerian OIM literature.

Practice Recommendations

For organizational administrators and managers, the empirical evidence reviewed in this chapter points to several priorities for administrative information management practice. First, organizations should prioritize the development and implementation of Information Governance Frameworks — comprehensive policy statements that define the principles, standards, roles, and responsibilities for information management within the organization, and that provide a foundation for consistent, accountable administrative practice. Second, organizations should invest in targeted digital capability development for administrative personnel, focusing particularly on the skills associated with the specific digital systems — electronic records management, digital workflow automation, cloud-based information platforms — that the empirical evidence identifies as most significant for administrative performance outcomes.

Third, organizations should establish Communities of Practice (CoPs) among their administrative personnel as a mechanism for peer learning, knowledge sharing, and the cultivation of professional cultures oriented toward continuous improvement in information management practice. The establishment of such communities within and across Nigerian OIM departments and

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professional bodies — building on the existing infrastructure of ABEN, NIPAS, and disciplinary associations within the management sciences — could accelerate the diffusion of effective information management practices across the Nigerian administrative professional community.

Educational Recommendations

For OIM educators in Nigerian tertiary institutions, the imperatives of the 21st century administrative environment demand comprehensive and sustained curriculum renewal. OIM programs must be redesigned to ensure their graduates possess not merely the traditional administrative competencies — correspondence management, records keeping, office procedures — but the expanded competency profile demanded by digitally transformed organizational environments: information systems management, electronic records management, data analytics, digital communication management, information governance, and cybersecurity awareness. These technical competencies must be embedded within strong foundations in administrative theory, organizational behaviour, professional communication, and research methodology.

The development of stronger and more systematic linkages between OIM departments and organizational partners — through structured internship programmes, curriculum advisory committees that include practitioners, joint research projects, and continuing professional development offerings — is essential to ensuring the continuing relevance of OIM education to the evolving demands of the administrative workplace. The empirical studies reviewed in this chapter — including those of Alikornwo and Echendu (2026), Alikornwo and Orisah-Godfrey (2026), and Okoro and Orjiako (2025) — themselves demonstrate the kind of research-practice linkage that should characterize OIM scholarship, generating empirically grounded knowledge that is directly actionable by organizational administrators and policymakers.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has undertaken a sustained scholarly examination of the nexus between office administration and information management in the twenty-first century, with specific attention to the Nigerian organizational experience. The analysis has drawn throughout on empirically verified research conducted within Nigerian universities, polytechnics, and civil service structures — research that provides a locally grounded, empirically robust foundation for the theoretical and practical claims advanced.

Several overarching conclusions emerge from this analysis. First, the contemporary administrative office is constituted primarily as an information management system, and the effectiveness of administrative practice in the knowledge economy is inseparable from the quality of the information management strategies, systems, and competencies that organizations deploy. This proposition, long asserted in the theoretical literature, is now supported by empirical evidence from the Nigerian context — including the findings of Alikornwo and Echendu (2026), Alikornwo and Orisah-Godfrey (2026), Nwinyokpugi and Dornanu (2022), and Okoro and Orjiako (2025) — that directly links specific digital office practices to specific information management and administrative service delivery outcomes.

Second, the Nigerian administrative information management landscape is characterized by a persistent and consequential gap between the aspirations of digital transformation policy and the realities of organizational practice. This gap is attributable to structural factors — infrastructure deficits, institutional fragmentation, skills shortages, and resource constraints — that are not amenable to resolution through technology procurement alone but require sustained, coordinated investment in institutional governance, human capital development, and organizational culture change.

Third, the scholarly tradition in Nigerian OIM constitutes a growing and increasingly rigorous body of locally contextualized, empirically grounded knowledge that is essential for the development of appropriate, contextually sensitive approaches to administrative information management modernization in Nigeria. The continued development of this scholarly tradition — through high-quality empirical research, theoretical innovation, and sustained engagement with both international

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scholarship and Nigerian organizational realities — is itself a contribution to the nation's administrative development and institutional capacity.

Finally, the office-information management nexus is not merely a technical or administrative challenge but a governance challenge of strategic significance. The quality of organizational information management determines the quality of organizational decision-making, the accountability of organizational governance, and the capacity of organizations to learn, adapt, and deliver value in a rapidly changing environment. For Nigeria — a nation committed to democratic governance, institutional development, and the realization of its economic potential — the cultivation of effective information management in its administrative offices is among the most productive investments that organizations, governments, and educational institutions can make.

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