Facilitating Policy Implementation using ICT in a Development Context: A South African Ubuntu Approach

by

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Declaration

I declare that the thesis which I hereby submit for the degree PhD (Information Technology) at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.
Acknowledgments

I thank my wife Anita foremost. Surely, we are one. Thanks for being so loving, you complete me and I am completed in you.

To our sons, Shallom and Migisha: You bring joy into our lives – like the fresh and sweet scent of a rose in the morning.

To Daddy and Mummy (Mr. and Mrs. Nshangano): Thanks for being pillars of strength and for hard coding the values that have shaped us into who we are.

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To the unmentioned: My Father who sees what you have done for me, shall He not bless you for blessing me as He promised?

My Father: What can I render to You for Your benefits towards me? I will fulfil my vows in the presence of all.
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<td>CDW</td>
<td>Community Development Workers</td>
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<td>CE</td>
<td>Collaboration Engineering</td>
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<td>GSS</td>
<td>Group Support System</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
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<td>ICT4D</td>
<td>ICT for development</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT4E</td>
<td>ICT for Entrepreneurship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS</td>
<td>Information Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAJA</td>
<td>Promotion of Administrative Justice Act 3 of 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAJA Project</td>
<td>The research project in which research was immersed</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEDA</td>
<td>State Enterprise Development Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEIDET</td>
<td>Siyabuswa Educational Improvement and Development Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCA</td>
<td>Jürgen Habermas' Theory of Communication Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>TSC</td>
<td>Thusong Service Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>UDF</td>
<td>Ubuntu Development Framework</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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Abstract

The road of development through e-government is covered with deep potholes and dead ends. This is because Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are adopted and e-government policies are developed with a blind focus on the ICT tools and with little reflection on the contribution of ICT to development (Heeks and Bailur, 2007, p. 243, Avgerou, 2009, p. 14). To assist with this reflection Information Systems (IS) researchers are increasingly calling for the development of local contextual theory or a framework in ICT for Development (ICT4D) (Avgerou, 2009, p. 14, Madon et al., 2007, Walsham, 2003, Walsham, 1997).

This thesis responds to that call by investigating the role of e-government towards development within the South African context. The means of inquiry was a three year ethnographic immersion in a longitudinal research project. The aim of the longitudinal research project was to investigate how a specialised type of ICT (Group Support Systems) can enable interaction between government and citizens in attaining specific human rights.

The research project centred on creating an awareness among the public in South Africa of a newly enacted Act, the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act No 3 of 2000 (PAJA). The rich data collected was analysed using Grounded Theory, resulting in a substantive theory that suggests that within the South African context e-government could contribute to development if it is used to facilitate policy implementation within the spirit of Ubuntu.

The thesis delineates the journey up to the emergence of the substantive theory. The substantive theory has important implications for IS theory and IS practice. For IS theory, the substantive theory demonstrates that research on ICT4D in Africa could usefully be undertaken by following an action research strategy within a critical-interpretive paradigm. The substantive theory also suggests the importance of taking into account the contextual collaborative nature of African culture in the spirit of Ubuntu when conducting such research. For practice, the substantive theory proposes a potential framework where ICT could provide the collaborative environment or shared space in the spirit of Ubuntu for policy implementation towards development. Checked against implementation requirements on the
South African policy on entrepreneurship, the substantive theory framework proves to be equally valuable.

**Keywords:**