Research article
UDC 34:004:347.962:004.8
EDN: https://elibrary.ru/FYYDHY
DOI: https://doi.org/10.21202/jdtl.2026.3

Digitalization of Justice in Zimbabwe: Institutional Challenges and Practical Solutions

Walter T. Chikwana

Judicial Service Commission of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe

Keywords

access to justice,
cybersecurity,
digital literacy,
digital technologies,
electronic filing of documents,
electronic justice,
interagency cooperation,
judicial proceedings,
law,
virtual hearings

Abstract

Objective: to investigate the process of implementing an Integrated Electronic Case Management System in Zimbabwean judicial system; to describe key problems, results achieved and lessons learned in order to facilitate access to justice and overall effectiveness of judicial proceedings.

Methods: the research was carried out in the genre of applied doctrinal-legal analysis with a descriptive approach to the phased implementation of the Integrated Electronic Case Management System. The methods used included studying legislation, analyzing the technical architecture of the system, integrating stakeholders and operational impacts, as well as a systematic review of internal reports of the Judicial Service Commission (JSC) of Zimbabwe, support service query logs, user registration statistics and empirical observations of the implementation stages and the change management program.

Results: the introduction of the Integrated Electronic Case Management System automated the full cycle of the judicial process, from electronic filing of documents to the execution of decisions and appeals. It provided a noticeable increase in transparency and accountability through online case tracking and audit logs. Case review rates in higher instances increased, while accumulation of cases significantly decreased. Online registration mechanisms, virtual hearings, electronic signatures and online payments were introduced. At the same time, systemic obstacles were identified – unstable electricity supply, limited Internet access in remote areas, a shortage of devices, a low level of digital literacy, language barriers, and concerns about cybersecurity.

Scientific novelty: the article presents a comprehensive empirical analysis of the nation-wide digitalization of judicial proceedings in Zimbabwe, which

demonstrates the relationship between technological transformations and institutional parameters of independence, accountability, and access to justice. The author substantiated the role of a phased strategy and change management programs as conditions for sustainable digital transformation of the judicial system.

Practical significance: the results provide practical recommendations for court administrators and policy makers: preference for phased implementation; strengthening infrastructure support and electronic registration centers; large-scale training programs; strengthening cybersecurity and harmonizing legislation to ensure inclusive, reliable and sustainable development of electronic justice.

For citation

Chikwana, W. T. (2026). Digitalization of Justice in Zimbabwe: Institutional Challenges and Practical Solutions. *Journal of Digital Technologies and Law, 4*(1), 26–72. https://doi.org/10.21202/jdtl.2026.3

Contents

Introduction

The Judiciary in Zimbabwe embarked on a metamorphic process to digitise the courts. 1 May 2022[1] with the introduction of a digital platform which allowed for the filing of all manner of court processes or pleadings as well as the hearing of matters electronically. The system leverages technology to enhance judicial administration generally and the management of the courts in particular. When fully operational it entails the total discontinuation of paper-based pleadings and obviates the need for litigants and legal practitioners to physically appear in court to argue their cases. That digitisation is enabled by a computerised court and case management software called the Integrated Electronic Case Management System (hereinafter IECMS). The IECMS integrates all courts under one system by automating the entire lifecycle of a case from the initial filing, to its disposition, execution of judgment and the subsequent appeal processes. At its full implementation, it is also intended to fully integrate the courts with other justice sector stakeholders, such as the National Prosecuting Authority of Zimbabwe (NPA), the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP), the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC), the Law Society of Zimbabwe (LSZ), and the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services (ZPCS). After full integration, all those stakeholders will be able to directly interact with courts online via the IECMS. The integration process must therefore be understood in two senses. First, it is between and amongst the entirety of the courts and the users and litigants who come before them. Second, it is an integration between and amongst the courts and stakeholders in the justice sector.

The IECMS represents a complete shift in the direction in which the courts in Zimbabwe were hitherto run. It typifies the abandonment of the traditional paper-based processes and the advent of a streamlined, digital framework. At its core, the IECMS is a comprehensive web-based application, inherently reliant on robust and ubiquitous internet connectivity. That fundamental dependency on connectivity cuts across the entire judicial ecosystem, from the centralised data centre where the system's vital components are hosted to every court station where judicial staff, legal professionals, and the public interact with it daily (Gómez, 2024; Helberger & Felzmann, 2025; Maroz, 2023; Sourdin & Weller, 2025; Grudtsina, 2025; Luo, 2024; Stepanov et al., 2021; Wang & Chen, 2022; Boldyrev & Maksimov, 2025; Alekseevskaya, 2020).

The paper explores Zimbabwe's experience in implementing the IECMS. It draws insights from the challenges and successes encountered during the process. The digitisation initiative was driven by inefficiencies in the manual, paper-based case management systems, which had resulted in document losses, delays in finalisation of cases, limited access to justice and complaints of corruption generally associated with human-driven processes.

[1] This was the same day the Judiciary saw the establishment of the first paperless court in the form of the stand-alone Commercial Division of the High Court. See remarks by Chief Justice Luke Malaba on the occasion of the opening of the 2023 legal year on 9 January, at p9 of the speech.

The paper equally highlights the role of judicial digitisation in promoting judicial accountability, transparency, independence, efficiency, and access to justice, all of which are at the core of principles guiding the judiciary and the JSC in Zimbabwe[2]. The digitisation, mechanisms such as online case tracking and performance monitoring have enhanced transparency by ensuring that judicial officers remain answerable to constitutional and legal standards while maintaining their judicial autonomy. Digitisation eradicated bureaucratic inefficiencies by enabling precise monitoring of judicial officers' workloads and performances. For instance, the progression of cases can now be tracked online by judicial officers, court staff, and litigants. Heads of courts and court managers can also monitor case backlogs and performances of judicial officers and other members of the judicial service without the need to physically visit the court stations. Instead, they rely on the court monitoring tools which are in-built in the IECMS. The transparency which results from the system fosters public trust in the judiciary, because of the enhanced access to case statuses and progress (Gafar, 2024; Reiling & Contini, 2022). In addition, the introduction of virtual hearings, e-filing, online payments, e-signatures and e-stamping has further improved processes turnaround times and made the Zimbabwean judicial system more user-friendly and accessible.

The paper also traverses the connection between judicial digitisation and judicial independence. Digitisation contributes to judicial independence by reducing reliance on manual processes and paperwork. In the process, the external pressures that are traditionally attendant and may serve to influence court operations are limited. Equally, judicial officers benefit from better workload management which allows them more time to focus on delivering informed and better reasoned decisions.

The paper underscores the importance of aligning technological advancements with public needs to ensure streamlined processes and improved access to justice. The public awareness campaigns, training programmes, and technical support mechanisms, such as e-filing centres, IECMS help desks, and 24/7 call centres, were critical in driving the adoption of the IECMS and ensuring a smooth transition. The phased implementation approach, where implementation started from the apex courts such as the Constitutional Court and Supreme Court before gradually moving down to the Magistrates' Courts, allowed for iterative improvements which in turn fed into user confidence-building.

Finally, the writer fully acknowledges the contributions previously made by other writers in critiquing the Zimbabwe IECMS implementation matrix. Those contributions stirred an interesting discourse on the trajectory adopted by the judiciary of Zimbabwe thus far. It is hoped that this paper will play its small part in the development and improvement of the body of knowledge around the digitisation of the courts in Zimbabwe.

[2] See sections 165 and 190 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe.

1. Methodology

This paper is grounded in applied legal research, undertaken for a practical purpose, namely to support and strengthen the ongoing digitisation of court administration in Zimbabwe (Chynoweth, 2008)[3]. In line with applied legal research that is produced with a particular purpose in mind, the analysis is directed at identifying implementable lessons that can facilitate improvements in the administration of justice through the IECMS rollout.

Methodologically, the paper employs applied doctrinal legal research by analysing the legal and institutional framework relevant to court administration and the digitisation of judicial processes. Doctrinal legal research formulates legal understanding through analysis of legal rules found in statutes and cases and is often described as black-letter law. The paper also relies on desk-based documentary analysis of available rollout materials and implementation information reflected in the phased account set out in the paper, consistent with legal research that is commonly conducted through reading and analysing published sources to develop an argument.

2. Evolution of the judiciary: from paper-based court procedures to digitization

Prior to the introduction of IECMS in the courts, the judicial system in Zimbabwe operated under a manual, paper-based case management framework, which limited accountability, efficiency, and accessibility. Court users and litigants were required to file all documents physically and to attend hearings in person. The service of court processes and pleadings was not spared. It could only be done physically. The payment of court and other user fees was limited to cash transactions at court registries. That manual system resulted in numerous inefficiencies, bottlenecks and at times in outright deliberate manipulation of court processes. Critical court documents and often times, entire case files were lost or stolen. Stories of pleadings and other court documents having been fraudulently back-date-stamped were not uncommon giving an unfair if not illegal advantage to litigants guilty of tardiness in defending claims against them. The tracking of cases was disjointed, access to information was difficult, and accountability mechanisms were weak. There was no centralised system to monitor the progress of cases, which led to huge backlogs, inconsistencies in court processes, and general poor monitoring of court performances and reporting. Whilst the judiciary in Zimbabwe was stagnant and became saddled with al these man-made challenges, other countries were taking steps to mitigate them or had already ridden the crest of that wave.

The last straw which spelt the doom of the manual systems came unexpectedly with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic at the end of 2019. The situation rapidly

[3] Assim, L. (2015). An overview of research design and methodology. ERS Consultants CC.

deteriorated and by the beginning of 2020, practically all courthouses in the country were closed for long spells. The Government in compliance with the World Health Organisation recommendations imposed strict curfews often supervised by the security forces. There were severe restrictions on human movement[4]. As a result, court attendances by both court staff and members of the public became impossible. Routine court operations were suspended for extended periods. Legal practitioners were unable to operate, persons remanded in custody for criminal violations could not be brought to court, and the general public was effectively denied access to the courts. The consequences of the COVID-19 restrictions included an increase in court backlogs and significant difficulties in accessing the courts. Needless to say, the suspension of court proceedings did not halt the emergence of legal disputes, thus resulting in an untenable situation where the judiciary could not perform its constitutional mandate of dispensing justice. It impacted on the rule of law. While the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the fragilities of the justice delivery system, in Zimbabwe, it also became an opportunity for the JSC to innovate new justice delivery methods, such as the virtual court platforms, which are part of the core features of the IECMS[5].

The glaring limitations prompted the judiciary to accelerate its long-standing ambition to digitise court operations[6]. It increasingly became inevitable that the only way the integrity of the courts and the administration of justice could be preserved was to digitise the courts and enable court processes to be undertaken from anywhere. The Chief Justice of Zimbabwe, the Honourable Mr Justice L. Malaba graphically captured the scenario when he commented as follows:

"The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, though traumatic and harrowing in many respects, has revealed a certain truth about the use of technology. Various professionals have now embraced digitisation in their day-to-day activities…The Judiciary appears to have been slow in adopting electronic justice, as it has found comfort in traditional ways of doing things, such as reliance on hard copies of books, allowing physical appearance in courts, and filing of physical documents. The Judiciary is doing this at its own peril, as the use of information communication technology has increasingly become the normal way of doing any business, including the business of delivering justice…The problems presented to the Judiciary by the nature and gravity of the impact on the justice delivery system by the consequences of the lockdown and restrictive

4 See, for example, the Public Health (COVID-19 Prevention and Containment) Regulations, 2020 [SI 77 of 2020].

5 Sibanda, A. (2022). Zim moves closer to virtual courts. https://goo.su/c9glXX

6 During the 2021 Legal Year Opening ceremony in Zimbabwe, the observation was made that, "It became apparent to the JSC that, in the midst of the raging pandemic, Information Communication Technologies ("ICT") had evolved from being an option to an absolute necessity. Courts could not afford to lag behind in harnessing the potential of ICT in ensuring that access to justice is not disrupted". See The Honourable Mr Justice L. Malaba, 2021 Legal Year Opening Speech: Ensuring Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Judiciary (Harare: Judicial Service Commission of Zimbabwe, 2021) at p. 21.

measures put in place by Government to prevent and contain the spread of COVID-19 are enough justification for the reform of the justice system"[7].

Notably, the decision to digitise the court system in Zimbabwe was also grounded in the Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013 ("the Constitution"). Section 190(2) of the Constitution mandates the JSC to promote the efficient, effective, and transparent administration of justice[8]. Against the backdrop of inefficiencies caused by the paper-based case management system, the JSC was legally obligated to correct the issues which militated against the efficient administration of justice in the country by adopting strategies aimed at enhancing the efficiency of the courts. It was on that basis that the IECMS was formulated and designed by the judiciary as a tool to further its mandate in terms of section 190(2).

In addition, section 165 of the Constitution outlines the foundational principles which are supposed to guide the Judiciary of Zimbabwe. They include judicial impartiality, the imperative to perform judicial duties efficiently and with reasonable promptness, and the requirement for members of the judiciary, individually and collectively, to respect and honour their judicial office as a public trust and to strive to enhance their independence to maintain public confidence in the judicial system[9]. In keeping with section 165, digitisation of the courts aligns with those principles. A system which requires litigants to physically file processes at court stations which are often situated long distances from where the litigants live can never by any yardstick allow the dispensation of justice efficiently and with reasonable promptness. Instead, the introduction of virtual hearings as a component of digitisation made it possible for judicial officers, legal practitioners, and litigants to participate in proceedings remotely. That facilitates the performance of judicial duties efficiently and with reasonable promptness, among other outcomes.

The Declaration of Rights in the Constitution also presents a separate constitutional basis for the digitisation of the courts. Section 69(3) of the Constitution guarantees every person the right to access the courts, or some other tribunal or forum established by law for the resolution of any dispute. Access to the courts, which is usually mistaken for procedural rights of access far transcends that narrow conception. Rather, it is intrinsically linked to the principle of fairness in the treatment of all persons, guaranteeing the protection of their human dignity through the dispensation of justice by the courts[10].

---

7 Address by the Hon Mr. Justice Luke Malaba, Chief Justice of Zimbabwe, on the occasion of the official opening of the 2022 legal year on 10 January 2022, with the theme, 'Use of Technology to enhance efficiency and the rule of law in the Judiciary'.

8 The Judicial Service Commission (JSC) is a constitutional body established in terms of section 189 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013. Its primary administrative mandate, as provided in section 190 of the Constitution, is to promote and facilitate the independence and accountability of the judiciary and maintain the administration of justice in Zimbabwe in a high state of effectiveness, efficiency, and transparency.

9 See subsections (1) and (2) of section 165 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013.

10 See Museredza and Others v Minister of Agriculture, Lands, Water and Rural Settlement and Others. CCZ-1-22 at p. 11, para. 23.

There is little doubt if any therefore, that the full realisation of the constitutional right to access the courts anticipates unhindered access to the courts. In that regard, digitisation breaks down physical and economic barriers to access the courts, including the requirement for litigants to travel long distances to file processes or argue their cases at the nearest court stations. It follows, therefore, that the computerisation of the courts is further informed by broader principles of access to the courts, fairness and equity, which encompass the need to prioritise citizens' needs for justice delivery over institutional convenience, the pursuit of both procedural and substantive justice, the suitability of technology in ensuring access to the courts, judicial efficiency and ensuring equal treatment[11], especially for economically disadvantaged litigants.

In light of the constitutional foundations outlined above, the digitisation of the court system in Zimbabwe is appropriately recognised as a necessary and unavoidable development. Although prior to 2017, there had been efforts to integrate other forms of computer systems into court operations, what is noteworthy is that such efforts only involved the scanning of court records to enhance accessibility and to create some semblance of backup and traceability. The conceptualisation of full digitisation started in June 2017[12]. It was at that time, that a committee chaired by a Judge of the High Court of Zimbabwe was appointed to explore and recommend the feasibility of establishing an Integrated Electronic Case Management System (IECMS)[13]. The committee comprised various stakeholders, who included other judges, the Head of Information and Technology of the JSC, the Chief Registrar of the Superior Courts, and the Registrars of the High Court and the Labour Court. The team benchmarked the initiative against systems in other countries and conducted a baseline study to assess what would be required, given the limitations of the existing case management system. Following that assessment, a recommendation was made confirming that the implementation of an electronic case management system was indeed feasible[14].

Consistent with the adoption of the recommendations made by the aforementioned Committee, an implementation committee was later established to oversee the system design[15]. It carried out a system requirements analysis, a needs assessment, a system specification and selection, as well as the procurement of the system developer. Synergy International Systems, Inc. was subsequently selected as the developer[16].

---

11 Section 56 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013 guarantees every person the right to equality before the law and equal treatment and benefit of the law.

12 The Honourable Mr Justice L. Malaba, Remarks to Thank the Committee Appointed to Recommend an Appropriate Integrated Electronic Case Management System for Zimbabwean Courts (Harare: Judicial Service Commission, 19 November 2018) at p. 2.

13 The Chairperson of the committee was the Hon Justice Dr E Tsanga, a judge of the High Court.

14 The Justice Dr E Tsanga report was presented to the JSC by the committee on 19 November 2018.

15 The committee was led by the Senior Judge of the commercial division of the High Court, the Hon Mr Justice J Mafusire.

16 This is a Global Software Developing company, headquartered in Viginia USA, with regional offices in Netherlands and Rwanda and a development and learning Centre in Armenia.

According to Muserere and Watson:

"The IECMS software vendor, Synergy International Systems, Inc., was selected because of the flexibility of their e-Case platform and the company's extensive regional experience, including national-level systems in Rwanda and Uganda. This experience included the critical best practices and lessons learned from rolling out similar systems in both countries, which were eagerly applied by the JSC"[17].

After rigorous processes of system development, trials, testing, and the procurement of both software and hardware requirements, the IECMS, was ready for launch in 2022. It was designed to integrate the Constitutional Court, Supreme Court, Commercial Division of the High Court, the General Division of the High Court, Labour Court, Administrative Court, Magistrates' Court, and the Office of the Sheriff for Zimbabwe under a single IT framework[18]. The system also has the capacity to integrate other justice sector players into the court system. It automates and tracks all aspects of a case's life cycle, from initial filing of the case through to its disposition. It also covers post-disposition processes such as execution, appeals and reviews. Accordingly, the IECMS, as a digital tool, reimagined the courtroom not just as a physical space, but also as a dynamic platform for both virtual and physical hearings.

2.1. Legislative framework and regulatory alignment

The successful implementation of the IECMS inevitably required comprehensive amendments to existing statutes and court rules to provide a legal foundation on which the adoption of the electronic procedures could ride. It is in that respect that a legislative evolution has been systematically undertaken over the years. Those legislative amendments in many ways, mirrored the phased approach[19] to implementation whilst also ensuring that legal frameworks remained synchronised with technological capabilities.

2022: Legislative Developments. The initial IECMS deployment required amendments to the rules governing the affected courts to accommodate the electronic procedures which were alien under the physical regime. Resultantly, the amended Constitutional Court Rules were published[20], followed by the Supreme Court Rules and High Court (Commercial Division) Rules[21]. Those amendments established the legal basis for electronic filing, service of processes, and case management in the respective courts.

2023: Legislative enactments. The expansion of the IECMS to cover more courts, required corresponding legislative amendments to align court practices and procedures

17 Muserere, S. & Watson, A. (2023). Best practices and approaches to judicial digital transformation: Zimbabwe IECMS case study. The Court Administrator, 15 (Fall 2023). At p. 11.

18 Ibid.

19 The phased-out approach will be discussed in greater detail later in this paper.

20 Statutory Instrument No 8 of 2022.

21 This was done under Statutory Instruments 79 and 80 of 2022.

in those courts with system capabilities. The High Court Rules 2021, the Labour Court Rules and the Administrative Court Rules (Miscellaneous Appeals) were enacted through various statutory instruments[22].

Most significantly, the Judicial Laws Amendment Act 2023[23] was enacted to comprehensively amend multiple statutes, which deal with the administration of justice. The amended statutes included the Constitutional Court Act, Supreme Court Act, High Court Act, Administrative Court Act, Labour Court Act, Magistrates Court Act, and the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act. The amendments introduced virtual court sittings and provided the legislative foundation essential for full IECMS utilisation and implementation.

2024: Regulatory Refinements. During the implementation of the system in the High Court General Division, the legislature raised concern that the High Court (Amendment) Rules 2023 (No. 1), did not sufficiently support access to justice objectives. Significantly, the Parliamentary Legal Committee issued an adverse report on the High Court (Amendment) Rules 2023 No 1[24]. The report noted that the requirement for electronic filing of pleadings and notices was problematic given that large segments of the population in rural areas lacked reliable internet connectivity[25]. It also noted that not everyone had electronic devices which would enable them to access the IECMS. The Committee's report argued that online hearings undermined the public hearing component of court proceedings by limiting public participation. Concern was also raised that the English-only instructions on the IECMS created language barriers. The further contention was made that, because the country's power supply was erratic with long hours of load shedding experienced countrywide, yet the system heavily relied on uninterrupted power supply, its efficacy would be minimal. As a result, Parliament requested the JSC to revise the rules. The JSC agreed and the earlier rules were consequently repealed and replaced by new ones, in the form of the High Court (Amendment) Rules 2024 (No. 2), gazetted on 8 May 2024[26]. The new rules explicitly integrated the concepts of IECMS accounts and the IECMS platform into the High Court Rules, 2021, effectively putting in place clear legal authority for electronic filing, service, and virtual hearings and addressing the concerns raised by the legislature.

---

22 High Court (Amendment) Rules 2023, under Statutory Instrument No 153 of 2023 and Statutory Instrument No 2 of 2023 respectively.

23 Act No 5 of 2023.

24 In terms of section 152 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013, the Parliamentary Legal Committee is responsible for examining all Bills, except Constitutional Bills, statutory instruments and draft legislation referred to it. Its function is to assess whether any provision in such legislation contravenes the Constitution or exceeds the authority granted by the enabling Act, and to report its findings to Parliament or the relevant authorities.

25 Parliamentary Legal Committee. Adverse Report of the Parliamentary Legal Committee on Statutory Instrument 153 of 2023, High Court (Amendment) Rules, 2023 (No. 1) (Harare: Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2023). https://clck.ru/3SKsqz

26 Statutory Instrument 81 of 2024.

2025: Magistrates' Court Alignment. In preparation for the implementation of phase 4 deployment of the IECMS in Magistrates' Courts, the Magistrates' Court (Civil) Amendment Rules were promulgated[27]. The amendments aligned the Magistrates Court Rules 2018 with key IECMS features, ensuring that the lower courts possessed the same electronic capabilities and legal framework as the Superior Courts, thereby promoting consistency across the judicial system.

2.2. The launch of the IECMS

As already stated, the IECMS overhauled the paper-based case management system and replaced it with a paperless electronic case management system.

Earlier, it was pointed out that the introduction of the IECMS is centred on the constitutional obligation of the JSC to ensure the proper, efficient, effective, and transparent administration of justice, as well as the duty of the State to ensure the realisation of citizens' right to access the courts. The constitutional grounds for the adoption of the IECMS as a tool for efficiency in the administration of justice achieve several allied objectives, including to enhance the operational efficiency of the courts in Zimbabwe, reduce the costs of and delays in litigation, improve access to justice, and promoting transparency, integrity, and accountability in the administration of justice.

2.2.1. The Phased Implementation of IECMS

The JSC deliberately decided against an omnibus approach in rolling out the IECMS. Instead, the implentation is being done in four phases. The staggered implementation is a strategy designed to gradually roll out a new system in stages rather than in one fell swoop. It is intended to reduce risk and to allow for better change management[28]. Each phase introduces a specific set of features or serves a particular part of the court system, providing time for adaptation, troubleshooting, and integration of feedback before moving to the next step. Phased implementation works through a series of distinct and planned stages, which are incremental in that they introduce new components gradually over time, allowing different user groups to adopt the new system at different times while supporting the old system until the new one is fully operational[29].

The phased implementation matrix adopted by the JSC is informed by various realities. The approach was adopted to support the gradual uptake of the system by the courts and all stakeholders, while allowing the JSC the opportunity to observe how the IECMS functions and assess both the system's strengths and limitations. It also provided the space for resource mobilisation to allow the putting together of both material and

27 Statutory Instrument No 52 of 2025.

28 Phased Implementation: A Better Way to Onboard SaaS Clients. (2025, March 28). Dock. https://clck.ru/3SKsvz

29 Understanding Implementation Strategies in the Software Development Life Cycle (SDLC). (2024, October 27). Business Analysis Coach. https://clck.ru/3SKtFo

human resources for each phase[30]. The incremental approach further allowed adequate training to be conducted for all role players in the IECMS, such as members of support staff, judicial officers, other stakeholders like the police, prosecutors, legal practitioners, and members of the public. It further presented time and opportunity to carry out massive publicity campaigns as part of the change management programme to ensure that all stakeholders, members of the Judicial Service, and the public at large had a clear understanding of what IECMS was all about and to appreciate the benefits drawn therefrom. Notably, before the official launch of the first phase, the JSC had already piloted virtual court hearings connecting the courts and inmates at prisons, laying the groundwork for the IECMS implementation. The virtual court hearings were launched at the Harare Magistrates' Court, the Harare Remand Prisons, Chikurubi Maximum Security Prison, and the Harare High Court in February 2022[31]. The arrangement facilitated the speedy hearing of urgent and routine cases in criminal matters, including remands and bail applications, for persons in custody. That initiative resulted in huge savings to the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services when it shed off the unnecessary expenses for transport and kindred obligations which came with ferrying prisoners to and from the courts daily. More importantly, the strategy also served as a precursor to the IECMS implementation dynamics and functionalities.

In some jurisdictions, as noted by Djuraev et al. (2025), the phased approach was mainly informed by the geographical locations[32], where the authorities decided to start with cities and other urban areas and then moving to the countryside, in Zimbabwe the approach was based on the hierarchy of the courts and their workloads. The JSC saw it prudent to start with less busy courts and gradually moving to those with punishing workloads. The implication of that approach is therefore that at each and every one of the four phases of the implementation matrix, the IECMS was introduced in every part of the country, but with particular focus on a certain court or courts. The first phase of the IECMS roll-out on 1 May 2022, saw the deployment of the IECMS in the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court, and the Commercial Division of the High Court. On 1 February 2023, the second phase was launched in the Labour Court and the Administrative Court. The third phase was launched on 1 September 2023 in the General Division of the High Court as well as the Office of the Sheriff of Zimbabwe. The fourth and final phase, which is ongoing, commenced on 1 July 2025 and involves the deployment of the IECMS in the Magistrates' Courts.

30 The procurement and funding for the whole IECMS implementation process have been funded by the Government of Zimbabwe through the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

31 The prison to court virtual court project was carried out by JSC in partnership with the United Nations Development Projects (UNDP).

32 See comments by Djuraev et al. (2025). They commented that in South Africa urban areas have benefitted from its Integrated Justice System (IJS) and the rurtal areas still rely on manual processes as there are no data centres in the rural areas. The same comments were also expressed in regards to Kenya digitization process by Krupina et al. (2020).

A phased-out approach has also been adopted for the fourth phase of implementation, in that the system is introduced in the Magistrates' Courts in two provinces at a time. What is unique about the fourth phase is that, the implementation matrix has shifted from court by court to geographical areas. The Magistrates' Courts are not only the busiest courts in Zimbabwe[33] but are also the most widespread. They are located in all provinces and districts of the country. They mostly serve the indigent and the vulnerable who can barely afford the cost of litigation. It was therefore important that a carefully planned implementation methodology be adopted to cater for the unique needs of the persons who frequently use those courts[34]. The preparations for the launch of the fourth phase commenced on 1 January 2025[35]. Fig. 1 illustrates the phased implementation of the IECMS across court levels, as explained above, culminating in the province-based approach adopted for Magistrates' Courts in phase four. The approach was designed to manage scalability and maintain continuity during implementation.

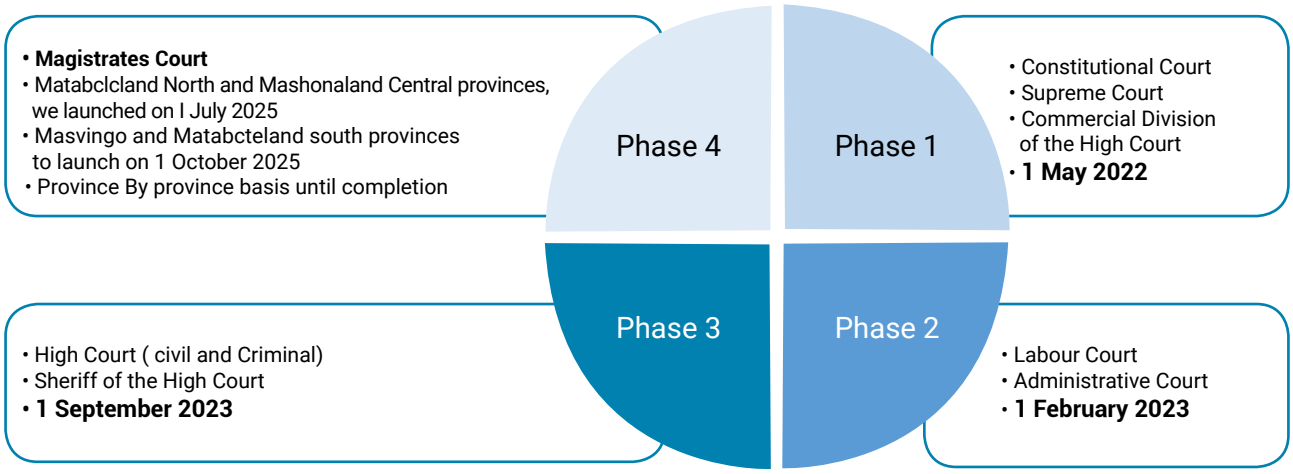

Fig. 1. The phased approach in the implementation of IECMS

2.2.2. The IECMS Architecture

The IECMS contains several key functionalities, which include e-filing, e-payments, e-calendars, virtual hearings, automated case tracking and notifications, electronic access to court records and judgments, and use of e-signatures and e-stamping, amongst others. Fig. 2 summarises the IECMS, showing its scope and the courts it integrates and

33 92 558 criminal cases and 121 503 civil cases were completed in 2024. See JSC Annual Report 2024, at pp. 33–34.

34 At the time of writing this paper, phase 4.1 for Matabeleland North and Mashonaland Central Provinces and phase 4.2 for Masvingo and Matabeleland South provinces had been implemented on 1st of July and 1st October 2025, respectively.

35 Madzianike, N. (2025, June 4). Magistrates Court to go digital starting July. The Herald. https://goo.su/b32tiR

highlighting that the IECMS is a web-based case management platform designed to track the full life cycle of a case and to integrate court processes across the judiciary.

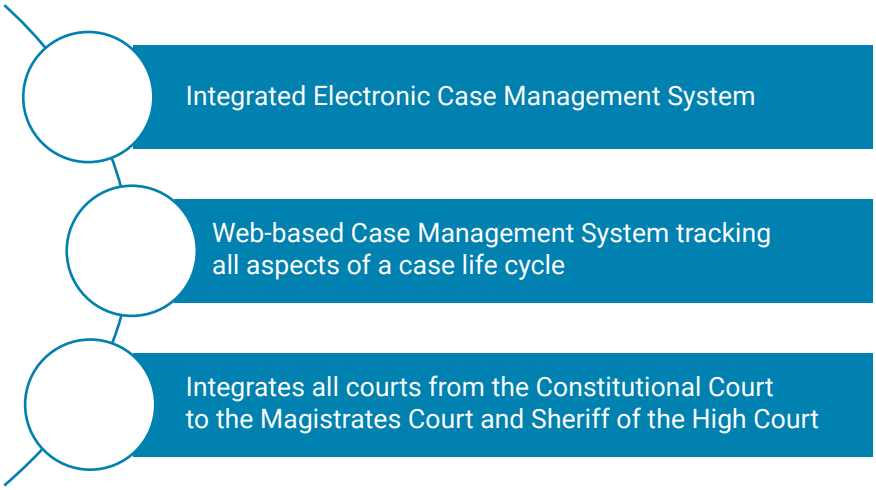

Fig. 2. Life cycle of cases and integration of court processes

The discussion that follows explains its core features, beginning with e-filing.

1. E-Filing.

The feature allows litigants to create and submit their cases, pleadings, affidavits, letters, and miscellaneous documents to the courts via the system. Through this feature, litigants and legal practitioners can initiate and respond to cases electronically by submitting and receiving documents via their online portals. The feature eliminates the need to physically visit the court registry. In filing a new case in IECMS, the litigants must specify:

i) the Court Level, the Court, the Court Registry in which they want to file their case;

ii) the category of the case that they want to file, and;

iii) the cause of action, or the charge in criminal cases.

Other sections that they will complete include the case parties, case legal practitioners, and case documents.

2. Case tracking.

The system facilitates automated case tracking by assigning case numbers to all cases filed while issuing real-time notifications for scheduled hearings, deadlines and court orders, and judgments. That function allows litigants to monitor the progress of their cases online. Relatedly, access to court records and judgments is streamlined. In this regard, parties and their legal representatives can retrieve case files, records of proceedings, orders, and judgments directly. The feature promotes transparency by negating the need for access through court staff or intermediaries.

Every case has its prescribed stages, which it must pass through as guided by the court rules. All these stages are captured by the system, and the progress is displayed on what is called a subway map. That map comprises nodes and a horizontal bar. A node (circle) represents the state of the case, or a distinct stage in a case's life cycle, a horizontal bar

between two nodes depicts progress, or transitioning of a case from one stage to the next in its life cycle. The last node, which is also the biggest, shows the case's current status, state, or stage in the case's life cycle. For sake of brevity, Figure 3 provides an illustrative screenshot of a subway map generated from the system.

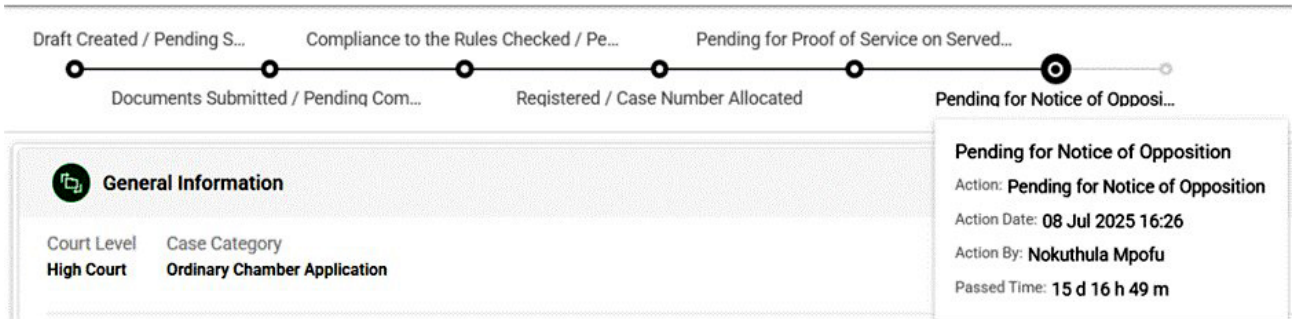

Fig. 3. Screenshot of a subway map generated from the system

Source: IECMS platform screenshot.

The above feature allows litigants and court staff to quickly see the case history and the current state of the case. Each node is clickable, and when clicked, it displays a dropdown showing the actions done on that node by the responsible court staff as the case moves through its life cycle. It gives the details of the user who performed an action, including the date and time.

3. Online Payments.

Through the PayNow gateway, which is integrated into the IECMS, a litigant can make payments online using Mobile Money and Zim Switch for local currency. Foreign currency payments can be made on the platform using Visa Card, Mastercard, and Inn-bucks.

The feature allows litigants to make payments for a variety of issues. The payments are possible regardless of whether one is in Zimbabwe or outside the country. In either case, there is no need to visit a courthouse for that purpose. Once an e-payment is made, the system automatically confirms payment and records the transaction. It has greatly eased administrative duties and reduced the handling of cash by members.

4. Virtual Hearings.

The virtual hearing platform is a feature in which court proceedings are conducted remotely using the video conferencing facility, which is available on the IECMS. Instead of appearing physically in a courtroom, participants who include judges/magistrates, litigants, and lawyers connect from separate locations to argue their cases in real time, online. The participants must have computers or some other smart gadget that is adaptable to virtual hearings. The gadget must have a working microphone, a video camera, and speakers, to enable the participant to speak and to hear as well as be seen by others during the interaction (Mabhodha & Choga, 2021). Only the assigned court staff and the parties to the case can access the virtual sessions scheduled in a particular case. Court staff are responsible for creating the sessions.

When creating a session, court staff usually indicate whether the session will be physical or online. Once a session is scheduled to be online, all parties, including the assigned court staff, will receive a notification with a link to join the online session. Figure 4 provides an illustrative screenshot of an online session notification generated by the system. It illustrates how parties are notified of an online session and provided with access details, which supports timely participation in virtual hearings.

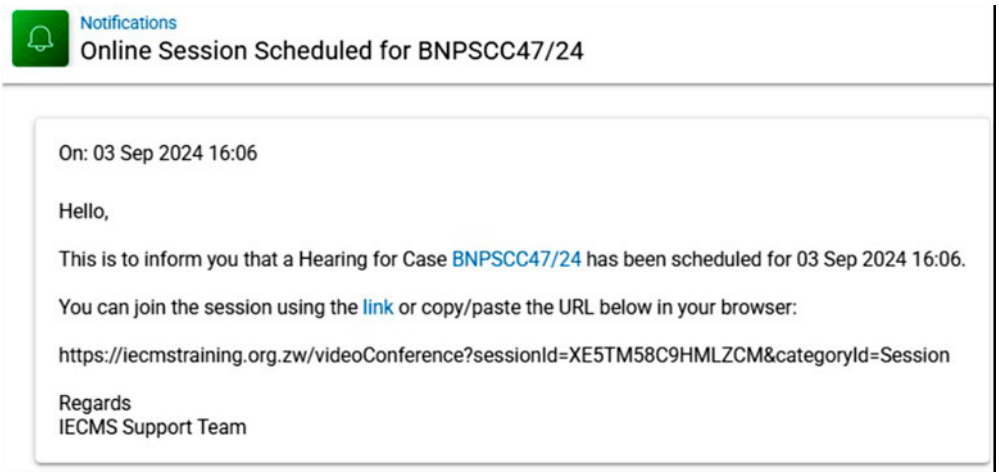

Fig. 4. Screenshot of an online session scheduled

Source: IECMS platform screenshot.

5. E-Calendar.

As stated above, prior to conducting a hearing, a session for the hearing must be created indicating whether the hearing will be physical or virtual. When creating a session, court staff specify (i) the date and time of the hearing, (ii) the session participants, and (iii) whether the session will be held physically or virtually. After the session is created, a session number is allocated. The number will for instance appear like SE00000001. It identifies sessions within a particular case. The scheduled sessions are automatically diarised. Those sessions serve to notify and remind court staff and litigants of when cases are being heard by the court. It is an electronic diary that is available in the account of every IECMS user. The calendar shows the sessions that the user is supposed to join.

Further, the e-calendar functionality adds convenience to litigants because they can access court rolls from the comfort of their homes or offices. It is equally convenient to judicial officers because they can electronically diarise cases.

6. E-signing and e-stamping.

The process of litigation involves the submission of court processes, pleadings, letters, and other documents by litigants to the court. The acceptance of these documents into the court system is commonly referred to as filing. The documents are deemed to have been successfully filed when the registry officers have stamped and signed them. Thereafter, they become official court documents. Before the advent of IECMS, the process was all manual. The stamps were physical. The same applied to signing of documents, which was done by the officer appending his or her signature using a pen on the documents.

In contrast, the IECMS has a feature that allows for the electronic stamping and electronic signing of documents. Each registry staffer and judicial officer has their own unique signature which cannot be accessed by another. The function is tamper proof.

7. Merging of documents.

Litigation involves the submission of numerous documents at different intervals. In addition, a single case may involve several litigants each filing their own documents separately. A judicial officer may not be able to make sense out of all those separate pleadings unless they are consolidated to form a single continuous document arranged in accordance with the pleadings' chronological order of submission and paginated. The consolidated document is prefaced by an index displaying the table of contents. In the paper era, the process used to be tedious to say the least. Under IECMS, it has been automated. PDF documents within the system can easily be merged to generate a consolidated record with automatic pagination. The generated table of contents is interactive. Merging documents can be done when filing a new case or uploading subsequent pleadings. With this feature, there is no need for the litigant to print the different documents within the case and then create an index.

8. Communication and notifications.

Before the introduction of IECMS, litigants could only enquire about the status of their cases through writing letters, which would take ages before being responded to, or by physically attending at the relevant station. In addition, all process was required to be served physically. All these cumbersome procedures have been supplanted by the notification functionality on the IECMS. Through it, litigants are notified of every change in the status of their cases. There is no longer any need to go to court to check the updates of the case. Service of all subsequent processes is equally performed through the system. The notifications sent out to litigants are varied. They can be system notifications, email notifications, and in some instances, SMS notifications. The notifications are generated whenever there is an activity in a case, such as when the case workflow is moved or a pleading is submitted or accepted. The SMS notifications are only sent when the case is registered or when a hearing is scheduled and when the case is finalised. To keep the litigant or user alerted, the IECMS has a system notification counter which shows the total number of unread notifications on a notification bell which appears on the face of a portal once it is opened. If a system notification is read, the counter automatically subtracts it from the total number of unread notifications.

9. Order verification through QR code.

The acronym 'QR' stands for Quick Response. When scanned, the QR code allows the user to access information instantly – hence the name Quick Response code. That code is attached to every document generated by the system. It is used to verify the authenticity of court orders. Any person with a printed court order can verify whether it was generated by the court without even logging into the system. The feature went a long way in addressing the previously rampant challenge of fake court orders and other documents generated by unscrupulous elements for illicit gain.

10. Audit trail.

Any activity on a case is tracked and recorded. Every activity leaves digital footprints in the system. The tracked activities include logging in, viewing anything, updating, and creating any document within the system. Every user of the system is tracked, including the system administrators. This feature ensures transparency and accountability on the part of the system users.

11. General document handling.

The IECMS has the capability to upload and download documents in various formats which include PDF, Word, Excel, video, audio and picture. For proper storage management, the system accepts a maximum document size of 75MB.

12. Reports and dashboards.

The system also has a dashboard reports functionality. The dashboard provides an interface for the creation and display of reports on case performance, finances and trends. That includes the ad hoc reports feature, which will enable every court staff or litigant to generate, interact with, and share their own personalised reports in various formats such as tables, graphs, and charts.

13. Collaboration.

When judgments are still in draft state, a judge is able to share his/her judgment with other judges for their input. The system allows those other judges to input their suggestions and share them with the author of the judgment. In instances such as appeals, where a case is heard by a panel of two or more judges, the collaboration functionality is indispensable. When one of the judges creates an order or drafts a judgment he/she is able to send it to the other members of the bench for additional input, proofreading and signing. When all the judges sign, the order or judgment becomes finalised.

As is clear, the function enables court staff working on the same case to interact using comments and tasks. Several court staff can work on the same case simultaneously without challenges. For example, a judge may be creating an order whilst the registrar is creating a task, and a clerk is creating a session on the same case simultaneously. The system, however prohibits different users from editing the same case at the same time.

14. System Extensibility and Flexibility.

The IECMS is extensible in that it allows for further functionalities and changes to existing functionalities without the need to be completely rewritten. Put differently, the system is flexible enough to accommodate related technological changes without significant alterations to its architecture. The IECMS allows integration with other systems, for example, currently, it is integrated with a payments software called PayNow[36].

15. System Security.

The IECMS has segregated role-based access levels of different users. Access is strictly through the use of a User ID and a User Password which are unique for each

[36] In Zimbabwe PayNow is a comprehensive online payment gateway for business and individuals to process and receive payments.

application user. In addition, every user is assigned to a particular group/role, where that group has its own access level in using the system. For example, litigants do not have access to cases that they are not part of but the registrar has access to all cases at his/her court station. In addition, the system supports data encryption, ensuring that data access is restricted to only authorised users. It maintains data consistency, accuracy, and integrity in addition to using Secure Socket Layer security to protect all IECMS transactions against unauthorised access. The JSC has procured its own Data Centre equipment, which has been deployed at two different sites to avoid system downtime and to ensure that the system runs continuously without disruption. The Data Centre is manned by engineers employed by the Commission who maintain and monitor it around the clock[37].

2.3. IECMS Technical Support

Courts' digitisation is a highly technical area that can only be implemented with reliance on qualified Information and Communication Technology personnel. The development of the system, its deployment into the courts, and the post deployment support required the JSC to employ suitable ICT personnel who would attend to various technical issues connected to and related to the use of the system. A full-fledged ICT department which never used to be in place in the history of the organisation was introduced with various job categories and areas of speciality. As the digital evolution took place from the first desktop application to the current system, the IT department grew exponentially to meet the increased demand for technical support. In 2012, the Judiciary ICT needs were attended to by one ICT officer with the help of two individuals on secondment from the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services. With the advent of IECMS, the need for ICT officers with a variety of skills became evident. Thereafter, the department, which is the technical backbone of the entire system rapidly expanded. It now has over two hundred members of staff providing various forms of technical support and deployed to all court stations across the country. It is headed by a Head of ICT supported by two deputies. One of the deputies is in charge of Digital Courts, whose mandate is to look after the IECMS software and its functionalities, whilst the other is in charge of networking and maintenance. The three managers and five other technical persons went for six weeks of training in Armenia[38] where they acquired specialised knowledge on the use, management and maintenance of the IECMS. They have now been deployed around the country in the courts as E-Courts Experts. Some of the key specialised areas are as illustrated below[39];

---

37 The report by the Secretary of the Judicial Service Commission to the JSC, November 2023, at p. 10.

38 This is where Synergy International, the system designer and developer is domiciled.

39 Report by Secretary of JSC to Judicial Service Commission, July 2022 at p 9, where it is indicated that Treasury had given the JSC concurrence to recruit 121 ICT specialists who will maintain and man the IECMS.

– Hardware and network specialists were hired to manage, monitor, and repair computer systems and evaluate the network's performance, increase network capacity, and oversee network security.

– Data centre engineers were hired to establish, monitor and support the JSC Data Centre and system servers.

– A System analyst was hired to analyse current and upcoming systems to find any flaws or inefficiencies, and plan solutions to resolve all issues and ensure long-term effectiveness.

– Backend developers, Front-end developers, and Business Intelligence developers, were hired to automate JSC internal systems as well as support the development and improvements of IECMS.

– Cyber security specialists were hired to planning, implementing, managing, monitoring and upgrading security measures for the protection of the organisation's data, systems, and networks.

– Help desk administrators were hired to respond to queries over the phone, via email, and in person, and implement effective solutions.

– Each Province has a principal ICT officer deployed to attend to all ICT and system-related issues, and in addition, each station has an office with e-filing officers to provide first-hand support to litigants who are computer illiterate, who may not have the necessary gadgets or internet. They also attend to Internet Hub centres[40].

– Call centre agents have been deployed at the JSC call centre, which is operational daily and whose role is to receive and attend to queries, questions, and assist users who may be having challenges in using the system.

The deployment of these ICT specialists effectively addressed some of the criticisms which had been identified by some writers as a significant challenge to the digitisation of court processes in Zimbabwe[41], particularly that of technological illiteracy and deficiency in competent ICT skills among court officials (see the comments by Muparadzi & Mukonza, 2024)).

2.4. Registration as a system user

For one to access the IECMS, there is need to create a personal account. The process of creating a personal account involves registration. Upon accessing the IECMS login page, an option to register is provided wherein a user registration form opens and the user provides their details as required. What is required to access ZimIECMS is the following: -

– A desktop computer, laptop, smartphone, iPad, or tablet, with a web browser installed

– Internet connectivity

– A valid email address.

[40] Internet Hub is the bigger version of the E-Filing office. It is constituted of not less than five desktop computers.

[41] See comments by Muparadzi and Mukonza (2024).

The following steps are a guide on how to register on IECMS

Step 1: Connect your device to the internet

Step 2: Open the browser on your device

Step 3: Type in the URL- www.zimiecms.org.zw

Step 4: Click 'Register' to enter all the registration information

Step 5: Fill in the required information (first name, surname, country code, cell phone number, username, password, security question, answer).

Step 6: Sign in to the email account you provided in the registration page

Step 7: Open the email from 'ZimIECMS' and click on 'Activate'

Step 8: Login to the IECMS using the email and password that you have provided on the registration page[42].

The system allows the user to manage their profile and are able to change any details that they would have provided upon registration. The changes are accessible when the user logs onto IECMS and access the system header on the user's username and in turn access the user's profile option.

2.5. Court requests

Court requests are a feature in the system that one uses to access a case for the first time by being linked to it. There are different types of court requests serving different functions.

I. Party Related User Assignment Requests. This is a request made by a user who had a pending or active case already in the court at the time IECMS was deployed to that court. To have access to that case whose contents would have been converted from hard copy to soft copy and imported onto the system, the user must first register into the system, and then request to be linked to that case through the court request functionality. There may also be litigants or legal representatives who are served with court processes and would want to be linked to the case to enable them to respond or litigate. They must request to be linked by making the court request. The above court request is what is termed a request to be linked to a case. Once the request has been completed, the user would be linked and the case will appear in their portal. They will have access to the documents and updates relating to that respective case.

II. Document Request. This type of court request is available for requests of court documents, particularly court orders, rulings, judgments or transcripts of proceedings wherein a payment is required before the document may be accessed.

III. Document Stamping and Other Requests. There may be documents brought to court for stamping that do not form part of any record already in existence. For example, a warrant of search and seizure, a subpoena or a summons. Such documents can be uploaded onto the system under document stamping court request and are stamped for issuance.

[42] The full process of registration is clearly laid out with visuals in the 'IECMS Getting Started Guide for Public Users', that can be accessed once a user logs into IECMS.

IV. Case Reactivation Request. The IECMS has an electronic archive deposit feature, where after the lapse of three months, completed cases are automatically deactivated. There are however instances where such cases are reinstated by an order of court or where the parties, may for example, seek variation of the existing order. Such cases are brought back into the live environment of the system through the court request feature. The case would then be reactivated and the user will thereafter have access to it and be able to file any subsequent documents.

V. Interpleader Request. The interpleader request is a function exclusively used in the office of the sheriff. Where one wants to file an interpleader with the sheriff of the High Court, it is done using that functionality.

2.5.1. IECMS User Support Features

The IECMS is supported by two fundamental functionalities which allow users to be assisted whenever they face challenges in using the system. The functionalities serve as the first level support in cases of any inquiries, problems, change requests and any other system related issues. These features are as follows:

a) Call Centre Agents. The JSC established a 24-hour call centre with a dedicated number +2638688007422. The centre is equipped with well trained professional call centre agents who are proficient in English, Shona and Ndebele, the three commonly used languages in Zimbabwe. The agents work day and night shifts. System users facing challenges on the IECMS or queries, can call the centre number and be assisted over the telephone. All calls made to the call centre number are recorded for purposes of quality control. There are always technical personnel on duty to support the call centre agents on deeper technical issues such as configurations within the system.

b) Online Help Desk. The system is also supported through an online help desk platform with a dedicated email address called zimiecms@jsc.org.zw. That platform allows users to send their queries via email to the JSC. It is manned by Help Desk Administrators who are required to respond to all emails immediately. The help desk administrators can provide both first and second level support meaning that they can deal with any system challenge without limitation. All communications to the help desk email address are also recorded for quality control and statistical purposes. Table 1 summarises the volume of IECMS user queries received through the call centre and the help desk email platform from 2022 to 30 November 2025.

Table 1. Progressive report on IECMS user queries as at 30 November 2025

Year	Call centre a dedicated number 002638688007422	Support service with an e-mail zimiecms@jsc.org.zw
2022	803	1195
2023	1251	1728
2024	1217	1452
2025	1318	1657
TOTALS	4589	6032

The table shows that, over the period under review, queries submitted via the help desk email platform exceeded those received through the call centre, indicating sustained reliance on written support channels.

Figure 5 presents the distribution of user queries by channel over the period under review.

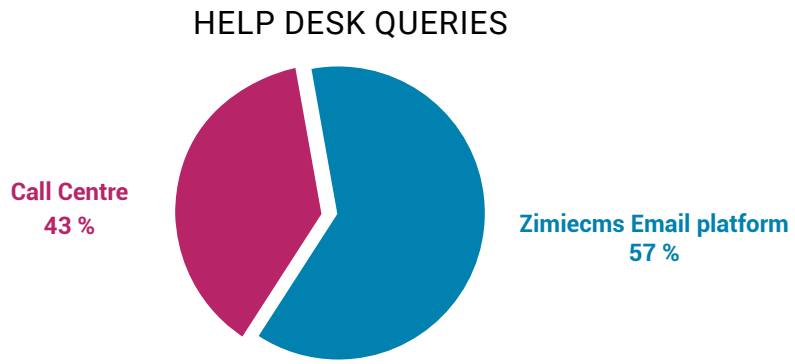

Fig. 5. Distribution of IECMS user queries by support channel, 2022 to 30 November 2025

Source: Judicial Service Commission help desk and call centre query logs, 2022 to 30 November 2025.

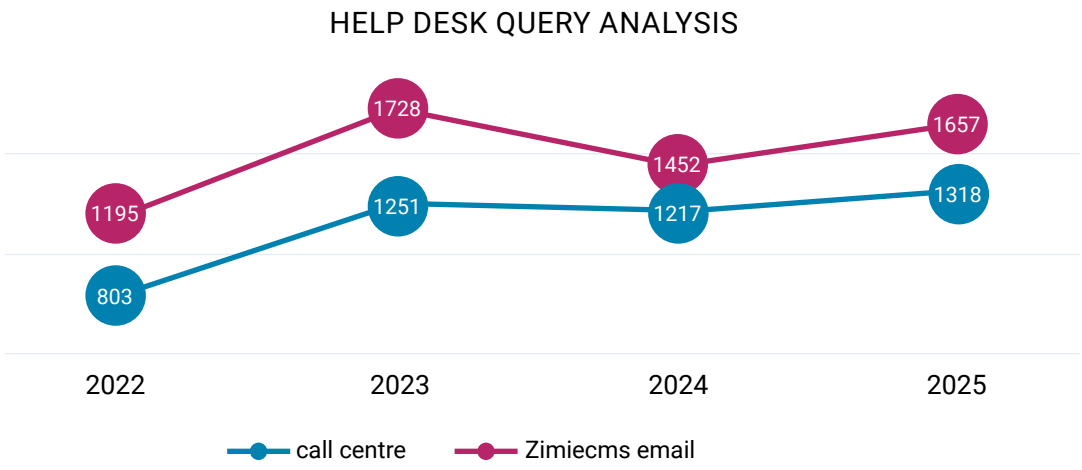

Fig. 6. Year-on-year trend in IECMS user queries by support channel, 2022 to 2025

Source: Judicial Service Commission help desk and call centre query logs, 2022 to 30 November 2025.

As can be seen, a hike was experienced in 2023 when the IECMS was launched in the High Court but since then the queries have been steady in terms of increase or decrease. When the system was launched in the Magistrates' Courts under phases 4.1 and 4.2, most of the queries are being answered at station level either through the station help desk or through the IT officers there present.

Table 2 summarises the nature of queries attended to by help desk administrators and call centre agents.

Table 2. Query categories handled through IECMS user support channels, as at 30 November 2025

Query category	Share, %
New IECMS account opening	25
Password reset	10
Lawyer changing law firm	8
Account details update	2
JSC related complaints	2
Account disabling	2
Other categories	1
New law firm creation	5
Workers' union registration	10
Request for email opening	18
Missing case entities	6
How to request document stamping	3
Failure to access case in portal	5
Failure to file	3

Source: Judicial Service Commission help desk and call centre query logs, as at 30 November 2025.

The table shows that the highest volumes relate to user onboarding and account support, including new account opening and requests for email opening, with additional demand linked to routine access and filing challenges.

2.6. Impact of courts digitisation in Zimbabwe

Having set out the background of the digitisation of the court system in Zimbabwe, through the adoption and implementation of the IECMS, the paper now turns to interrogate the impact of the IECMS generally and on judicial independence and judicial accountability specifically.

2.6.1. Digitisation and Judicial Independence

The principle of judicial independence is paramount to the functioning of a constitutional democracy. The Constitution of Zimbabwe recognises the centrality of judicial independence. The Constitution reposed in the JSC, the responsibility to promote and facilitate both the independence and accountability of the Judiciary[43]. Furthermore, in its provisions outlining the principles that guide the Judiciary, the Constitution requires members of the Judiciary to strive to enhance their independence in order to maintain public confidence in the judicial system[44]. Section 164(1) and (2) of the Constitution also contain provisions that require judicial officers to collectively guarantee and safeguard the independence, impartiality, and effectiveness of the judiciary. It reads:

[43] See section 190(2) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013.

[44] See section 165(2) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013.

"164 Independence of judiciary.

(1) The courts are independent and are subject only to this Constitution and the law, which they must apply impartially, expeditiously, and without fear, favour or prejudice.

(2) The independence, impartiality, and effectiveness of the courts are central to the rule of law and democratic governance, and therefore —

(a) neither the State nor any institution or agency of the government at any level, and no other person, may interfere with the functioning of the courts;

(b) The State, through legislative and other measures, must assist and protect the courts to ensure their independence, impartiality, dignity, accessibility, and effectiveness, and to ensure that they comply with the principles set out in section 165"[45].

Section 164 of the Constitution safeguards the independence and impartiality of the courts by prohibiting interference from any source, including the State. It imposes a constitutional obligation on the State to protect and support the judiciary in upholding justice and the rule of law[46]. Under section 164(1) of the Constitution, the independence of the judiciary is guaranteed with the affirmation that the courts are subject only to the Constitution and the law, which they must apply impartially and without bias[47]. Further, section 164, in effect, prohibits any improper influence on judicial officers, as a measure of ensuring that they can perform their duties without interference or bias throughout their tenure in office[48]. That safeguard maintains the integrity of judicial decisions and upholds the rule of law[49].

Reflecting the constitutional mandate, judicial independence can be understood simply as the ability of the judiciary to function without external pressures or influences, ensuring fair and impartial administration of justice[50]. The Australian jurist, Sir Ninian Stephen, propounded a similar idea on the meaning of judicial independence:

"What its precise meaning must always include is a state of affairs in which judges are free to do justice in their communities, protected from the power and influence of the state and also made as immune as humanly possible from all other influences that may affect their impartiality"[51].

45 See section 165(2) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013.

46 Section 164 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013

47 Adapted from the paper by the Hon. L. Malaba, Judicial Independence (Harare: Judicial Service Commission, 2020) at p.3.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

50 Laws Learned. (2024, July 13). Judicial Independence in the Digital Age: Challenges and Solutions. Laws Learned. https://clck.ru/3SL77C

51 Stephen, N. (1989). The Inaugural Oration in Judicial Administration: Judicial Independence (Victoria: The Australian Institute of Judicial Administration Incorporated, 1989) at p. 6. https://goo.su/7pJ0uFJ

Judicial independence is grounded in the principle of separation of powers, under which the courts operate independently from the executive and legislative branches of a state (Wallace, 2001). The International Commission of Jurists ("the ICJ") defined judicial independence as:

"That every judge is free to decide matters before him in accordance with his assessment of the facts and his understanding of the law without any improper influence, inducement or pressures, direct or indirect, from any quarter or for whatever reason"[52].

It has been previously observed that judicial independence is a concept that enjoys universal recognition in the modern era, where civilised states endeavour to promote justice as a central tenet of their legal systems, regardless of their affinity for common law or civil law systems[53].

The value of judicial independence lies in its role as a safeguard for impartial and independent judicial decision-making[54]. Judicial independence enables the judiciary to fulfil its constitutional mandate. The principle guarantees an impartial and fair resolution of disputes while protecting individual rights, thereby sustaining the rule of law and advancing justice (Reen & Verma, 2023). The absence of judicial independence erodes the judiciary's effectiveness, relegating it to a subordinate role where it merely validates partisan agendas, rather than upholding the law and dispensing justice.

Given this critical importance, safeguarding judicial independence requires robust institutional mechanisms. The IECMS's deterrent effect on corrupt behaviour positively impacts the judiciary's credibility and institutional independence. A system that inherently deters corruption fosters conditions in which judicial officers and court personnel can act without fear of coercion or manipulation. That helps to insulate the judiciary from political, financial, or personal pressures. Judicial officers are in turn, able to carry out their duties fairly, impartially, and in accordance with the law. In that way, the digitisation of court systems does not only promote integrity within the system but also reinforces the fundamental principle of judicial independence. An important factor in IECMS that promotes judicial independence is the minimisation, if not complete removal in some instances, of physical human contact between the judicial officer and support court officials on one hand and the litigant or any other interested party on the other. It is a requirement under the system, that any interaction and or communication that a court official undertakes with a litigant or user of the system or vice versa must be done on the system. That requirement extends to exchange of correspondences. Everything must

52 Brody, R. (Ed.). (1990). Special Issue on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers: A Compilation of International Standards. Centre for the Independence of Judges and Lawyers Bulletin, April – October. https://clck.ru/3SL7dF

53 The Honourable Mr Justice. L. Malaba. Judicial Independence (Harare: Judicial Service Commission, 2020) at p.2. www.jsc.org.zw

54 Murati, G. (2004). The Independence of the Judiciary and Its Role in the Protection of Human Rights under UN Administration Using the Case of Kosovo. European Society of International Law, Agora Paper.

be done in the full glare of the system and remains accessible to all parties with access rights to the case. As much as that feature mitigates corruption, it also frustrates any external parties who may wish to interfere with the decisional independence of judicial officers, which in its own right, is a form of corruption. Through the virtual hearings component, the IECMS not only promotes transparency but more fundamentally it enables the automatic recording of all the hearings and ensures that there is always a record of the proceedings. It dissuades manipulation of or interference with the court's record of proceedings. In addition, the possibility of interference with judgments handed down or court orders issued has completely been eliminated because such judgments and orders are not handed to parties individually or privately but must be uploaded onto the system where each party is able to view and access them. Further, another key benefit is that the system automatically tracks and logs any changes made to documents or case files. That creates transparency because of every user's knowledge that all actions are recorded and traceable.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that the IECMS, through its specific technological capabilities has greatly enhanced judicial independence in Zimbabwe. It fundamentally transformed court processes and reshaped how courts operate and how justice is administered. It is a platform that protects judges from outside influence. The transition to filing cases online therefore strengthens judicial independence.

2.6.2. Digitisation and Judicial Accountability

The paper advances the proposition that judicial accountability is an allied concept to judicial independence. Judicial accountability like independence, is a fundamental principle necessary for the continued legitimacy of the judiciary. It ensures that judges are held responsible for their actions, thus promoting fairness, transparency, and public trust in the legal system[55]. The Honourable Ernest L. Sakala, former Chief Justice of Zambia, defined judicial accountability as follows:

"The concept of judicial accountability can broadly be said to refer to the notion that Judges or those who sit in Judgment over others need to account for their judicious and injudicious conduct. The emerging right to democratic governance has come with a call for accountability of all public institutions"[56].

The concept of judicial accountability ensures that the judiciary remains answerable to the people while maintaining its independence from external influences in the performance of its duties.

---

[55] Sebitlo, T. (2024, August). Judicial accountability: An era for consciousness. Advocate. https://goo.su/gjgMFH

[56] The Honourable Mr Justice E L Sakala. The Accountability of the Judiciary – Accountable to Whom? Is There Such a Mechanism? (Paper presented at the Southern Africa Judges Commission Meeting, Windhoek, Namibia, 2005). https://clck.ru/3SL8AK

In Zimbabwe, the Constitution entrenches the concept of judicial accountability by requiring that all members of the judiciary must respect and honour their judicial office as a public trust and must strive to enhance their independence in order to maintain public confidence in the judicial system[57]. Section 190(2) provides that the JSC must promote and facilitate the independence and accountability of the judiciary. The provision places accountability at the centre of the JSC's role, given that judicial offices are a public trust. Section 190(2) charges the JSC with the responsibility to promote and facilitate accountability throughout the judiciary.

To fulfil that constitutional mandate, the digitisation of court systems has emerged as a powerful mechanism for the enhancement of both transparency and accountability. One of the ways in which the IECMS promotes accountability is by recording the footprint of every user on the system. That way, the system becomes temper-proof. The paper has noted that as a result of the IECMS, the digitised courts in Zimbabwe have done away with manual and paper-based court processes. All court processes and case management processes are initiated and finalised electronically. In that regard, the IECMS has become a major tool for transparency and accountability in the court system in Zimbabwe.

The IECMS has also improved judicial accountability by enforcing clear timelines in terms of which court processes must be completed. Due to its automated nature, judicial officers are duty-bound to ensure compliance with case-disposal timelines. The system enables them to track pending cases and identify the specific stages at which they are delayed. Litigants have similarly benefited from an accessible online case-tracking feature. Complementing that, the IECMS's linkage to litigants' email accounts provides timely, automatic updates on every development in a case. These integrated mechanisms have enhanced transparency, resulting in greater public acceptance of the system and renewed confidence in the judiciary. Arguably, the introduction of IECMS has significantly diminished challenges, including case backlogs, corruption, physical and geographical barriers to court access, and the high costs of serving legal documents. The system also promotes judicial efficiency by filtering out non-compliant matters before they reach the hearing stage.

The effectiveness of these accountability mechanisms is reflected in measurable operational improvements since the IECMS's launch in 2022. The Constitutional Court's clearance rate rose sharply from 36 per cent in the 2022 pre-IECMS period to 56 per cent post-launch[58]. The upward trend continued in subsequent quarters, suggesting enhanced adjudicative efficiency. In 2023, the Superior Courts lowered their backlog from

[57] See section 165(2) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013.

[58] Muserere, S., & Watson, A. (2023). Best Practices and Approaches to Judicial Digital Transformation: Zimbabwe IECMS Case Study. The Court Administrator, 15, at p. 13.

2,127 to 1,381 cases and disposed of 30,560 matters compared to 29,433 new cases[59]. The gains were evident across the Supreme Court, the High Court, and the Labour Court[60]. The observation was also made in a government report, which noted that during the first half of the implementation of National Development Strategy 1(NDS 1), 87,3 per cent of court cases were cleared. The performance was due to the introduction of the IECMS, which assisted in clearing a backlog of cases that had built up in most courts across the country[61]. The comment, therefore that the introduction of IECMS in the courts in Zimbabwe has failed to deal with the paper-based challenges of delays and back-logs may not be merited[62], as the statistics provided above speak to the contrary.

The system has also modernised access and reduced congestion in courthouses. Online payment usage grew from 25 per cent to 39 per cent in the Constitutional Court and from 37 to 42 % in the Commercial Division of the High Court between 2022 and 2023[63]. Virtual hearings became widespread; nearly 100 per cent of surveyed court personnel and practitioners found them at least somewhat helpful, with 28 per cent describing them as very helpful[64]. The Supreme Court now hears all chamber applications virtually, with recordings providing an audit-ready record. Litigants saved time and transport costs. Justice delivery has been decentralised, allowing remote users to access courts without prohibitive travel.

Finally, routine matters such as document filing and queries are now handled online, greatly reducing congestion at court registries. Legal practitioners spend less time queuing and more time on substantive work, while courtrooms are reserved for essential in-person proceedings. Litigants can file pleadings, respond, track cases, raise queries, make payments, attend hearings, and retrieve orders and judgments electronically. These advances have strengthened public confidence in the system's efficiency and demonstrated a more accountable administration of justice in Zimbabwe.

The achievements stand in stark contrast to the pre-IECMS environment. At the outset of the paper, it was observed that the IECMS was not introduced in isolation but was strategically implemented, among other obligations, to facilitate the JSC's mandate to promote judicial accountability. It is positive to note that the lack of transparency and perception of corruption that had afflicted the judicial system prior to the launch of the

59 Magadu, C. (2024, January 14). Courts deliver stellar performance in 2023: Tackling backlogs and enhancing efficiency. Sunday News. https://goo.su/EzKQKt

60 Ibid.

61 The National Development Strategy 1(NDS 1) Mid-term review, January 2001 – June 2023, paragraph 607, page 102.

62 See comments by (Mukonza, 2024).

63 Muserere, S., & Watson, A. (2023). Best Practices and Approaches to Judicial Digital Transformation: Zimbabwe IECMS Case Study. The Court Administrator, 15, at p. 13.

64 Ibid.

IECMS has been markedly reduced since the adoption of the IECMS. Under the paper-based case management system, the movement of case files and documents was untracked, and unauthorised alterations could be made without notice. The environment contributed to the perception and occurrence of corruption and unethical practices within the court system. Needless to say, corruption challenges the idea of justice and the purpose of the establishment of the courts[65]. Once corruption is involved in a court system, there can be no fairness in the treatment of litigants[66]. The IECMS negates that idea of corruption because it enables all parties involved in a case to track and monitor its progress. Such transparency limits the ability of court staff to interfere with or alter filed processes[67].

From the foregoing, it is clear that judicial accountability is upheld as a vital principle in Zimbabwe's constitutional framework. As a twin concept to judicial independence, judicial accountability complements it rather than constrain or intrude upon it. As judges are entrusted with safeguarding the Constitution and the fundamental human rights and freedoms of citizens, they must be answerable to the public for their judicial conduct and performance. The public should take the liberty to reasonably critique judicial conduct when it appears to deviate from expected standards[68]. Through the digitisation of Zimbabwe's courts, the IECMS forges a natural connection between judicial independence and accountability, ensuring the court remains the adjudicator while the public engages it as users. Judges remain accountable to the public, who are now independently empowered to actively track the progress of their cases through the many tools available on the IECMS. At the same time, the system protects judicial officers from interference by other branches of the State by assigning secure, individual accounts accessible only to the presiding judge. In this way, the IECMS upholds judicial independence while also recognising the judiciary's responsibility to ensure accountability and transparency in the administration of justice.

2.7. Endorsement of ZIM IECMS

The successes by the Judiciary in Zimbabwe in its courts digitisation journey have not gone unnoticed within the country, in the region, and beyond. Since the advent of IECMS, the judiciary has experienced unprecedented visits, study tours, and benchmarking visits by various sister jurisdictions in the region. Such visits are clearly an endorsement by counterparts of the effectiveness of the system. Various judicial and non-judicial

65 U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, 'Basics of Corruption and the Justice Sector' (n.d.). https://clck.ru/3SL8T2

66 The Honourable Mr Justice L Malaba. Digitisation of the Courts and Access to Justice: The Zimbabwean Experience. Paper presented on the occasion of the Zambian Judicial Conference, December 2022.

67 See also comments by Muparadzi and Mukonza (2024), when they stated that the use of digital systems in Zimbabwean judicial systems enhances transparency and accountability. Digitization improves transparency by eliminating manipulation of manual systems and case tracking, reducing delays and corruption.

68 Hon. Ernest L. Sakala, note 58, at p. 5.

members of the JSC have been invited to diverse fora to deliver papers, presentations, and lectures on Zim IECMS.

The confidence and belief in the system by members of the JSC and system users grew gradually from the time the system was deployed in the first phase. In 2022, when the system was launched, it had a total of 4437 users, who included court staff, legal practitioners, prosecutors, and public users. This number has grown so phenomenally that, as at 30 November 2025, the total number of system users was 114216. Table 3 summarises the growth in IECMS users, which demonstrates the confidence that users now have in the system.

Table 3. Growth in IECMS users, 2022 to 30 November 2025

Year	Court staff	Legal practitioners	Prosecutors	Public users	Totals
2022	41	2908	23	1465	4437
2023	172	3981	41	13 093	17 287
2024	249	8541	5	30 194	38 989
2025	1251	9396	200	42 656	53 503
TOTALS	1713	24 826	269	87 408	114 216

Source: Judicial Service Commission IECMS user registration records, as at 30 November 2025[69].

Table 3 shows sustained growth across all user categories, with the most pronounced increase among public users, alongside notable expansion in registered court staff and legal practitioners as the rollout progressed.

The system has been given positive reviews on its impact on litigation, with one senior legal practitioner commenting as follows:

"The cases are now run on a non-paper basis; it's an electronic-based system, it's a virtual court system, it's paperless, so what that means is I can sit here and file the court papers, the registrar will receive them, process them, and they will be served on the platform on the defendant"[70].

The Secretary General of the Progressive Commercial Trades and Allied Workers Union, Tawanda Mupeti, also commended the digitisation programme, stating that it will address the corruption within the judicial system[71].

In 2022, the Deputy Chief Justice of the Judiciary of Namibia led a delegation of Judicial officers and administrators from the judiciary of Namibia on an IECMS benchmarking visit to Zimbabwe and a study tour of the Commercial division of the High

69 Parly issues adverse report on court electronic management system. https://clck.ru/3SxUdh

70 Addington Chinake, a Senior Legal Practitioner and Partner at Kantor and Immerman Legal Practitioners. https://clck.ru/3SLCKy. See also comments by advocate Arthur Marara, The Miranda Magazine, 33rd Edition, September 2023, at p 24. https://clck.ru/3SLCQU

71 https://clck.ru/3SxU8c

Court, which is the first paperless court in the history of the judiciary in Zimbabwe[72]. Speaking to the press after meeting the Chief Justice of Zimbabwe, Honourable L. Malaba, Deputy Chief Justice Petrus Tilenge Damaseb commented as follows:

"We came here to benchmark with our Zimbabwean colleagues in terms of renovations and reforms that have been introduced here in commercial dispute resolutions. So we are specifically focusing on the operations of the Commercial Court of Zimbabwe because we are also looking at introducing a similar court in Namibia. We are here to learn from our colleagues what they are doing in that respect, that is why we are here"[73].

In 2023, the Zimbabwe Judiciary hosted the Judiciary of Malawi, which came to benchmark on the successful deployment of IECMS in the courts. Back in Malawi, the visit was described in the following terms:

"In August 2023, another delegation from the judiciary visited Zimbabwe on a study tour. The objective of the tour was to benchmark on the Integrated Electronic Case Management System, successfully implemented in the judiciary of Zimbabwe, and learn how a similar project can be implemented in Malawi"[74].

In 2024, the Zimbabwe judiciary hosted the Chief Justice of the Republic of Mozambique, who was accompanied by the Secretary General of the Judiciary on an IECMS benchmarking visit. The Secretary of JSC, Dr. W.T. Chikwana, had this to say about the visit:

"The IECMS has made us a regional powerhouse on the digitisation of the courts. We continue to receive inquiries and benchmark visits from other jurisdictions. We were, in this regard, honoured to receive and host the Chief Justice of Mozambique, Honourable Chief Justice Adelino Machanga, and his four-member delegation. Their visit was aimed at gaining insights on how we have implemented IECMS, including challenges encountered"[75].

During the same period, the JSC also hosted a ten-member delegation from the Judiciary of Zambia led by the Chief Administrator, Ms Nalishebo Imataa, who came to study and seek to replicate Zimbabwe's efficient systems to enhance their own Judiciary[76]. Interestingly, Zambia has since adopted the IECMS currently in use in Zimbabwe, developed by Synergy International, as the software for its digitisation process[77].

In 2025, a delegation from Liberia also carried out a ten-day benchmarking visit not only to assess the successes scored but also to learn from the mistakes made and challenges encountered by Zimbabwe Judiciary when it deployed the system into its courts[78].

---

72 The Secretary's Report to the Judicial Service Commission. (2022, 11 October), at p. 27.

73 The Herald Newspaper. https://goo.su/JDz0o9

74 Malawi Judiciary 2023 Annual Report, at p. 59. https://clck.ru/3SLDJS

75 The Miranda Magazine, 35th Edition, March 2024, at p. 3. https://clck.ru/3SLDKt

76 JSC's landmark year of justice, reform, international recognition. https://clck.ru/3SxU5s

77 See Transforming Justice in Zambia with Electronic Case Management System. https://clck.ru/3SLDQK

78 Liberian Judicial Delegation visits Zim. (2025, 3 June). The Herald. https://goo.su/tdcKKzB

The interest which the Zim IECMS has drawn from various jurisdictions can only be assessed as a vote of confidence in the system and the manner in which it has been implemented. It is a reflection on the good performance of the system and how the system has made the operations and efficiency of the courts a lot better than during the paper-based era. Having scored such successes, which have been confirmed by other jurisdictions, one may safely conclude that the implementation methodology adopted by JSC in deploying the IECMS in the courts is nothing short of a master class. The methodology also considered possible financial challenges by ensuring that resources are reserved and made available for the particular phase under implementation. The phased-out approach guaranteed that the funding of the system was equally phased out. In the end, Treasury was not unnecessarily overburdened by providing a huge financial outlay at one go. It then puts paid to the criticism levelled against the JSC that it was overzealous in pursuing courts digitisation without considering the financial constraints it faces[79].

The endorsements of the system made however, do not at all imply that the deployment of the IECMS into the courts by the JSC was without challenges. It equally does not mask the mistakes which were made along the way. The deployment of any system of such a magnitude always carries with it some challenges and difficulties. It is such challenges that shall be discussed hereto below.

3. Challenges, interventions adopted and lessons learnt

Embracing new technology can bring tremendous benefits, but it also comes with various challenges which at times, if not managed well, may affect, at the very least, the smooth implementation of a system or, at worst, may lead to a total failure and ultimate abandonment of the project. Whilst generally challenges may come about due to fear of the unknown and disruption of established routines associated with new tools and processes, they may also arise from cost and budgetary constraints, integration difficulties with existing systems, inadequate infrastructure, poor training and change management implementation, poor planning and execution, and data security fears amongst others. The challenges are not unique to Zimbabwe but affect any country that may seek such profound transitioning. What is important is not so much abandoning the project or postponing its implementation plan, but identifying the possibility of challenges and putting in place measures to ameliorate the difficulties.

A look at other jurisdictions that have implemented technology in their courts will confirm that challenges are at times unavoidable. African countries, especially, struggle to digitise due to systemic shortcomings rather than isolated issues. A primary failure lies in adopting systems designed for high-resource contexts without adapting them

[79] See comments by Muparadzi and Mukonza (2024).

to Africa's realities. For instance, Kenya's ECMS rollout neglected rural internet limitations, while Zimbabwe's power instability necessitated solar backups for IECMS continuity[80]. Investments often prioritise technology over enabling environments, such as user training or maintenance plans. Trust deficits, which signify a tangible erosion or absence of confidence within a given relationship, system[81], or within the organisation also play a pivotal role as stakeholders fear cybersecurity breaches and data misuse. Historical injustices within justice systems further erode confidence in digital alternatives, creating resistance among judicial officers, lawyers, and citizens (Rusakova & Frolova, 2022). Many African countries, particularly in rural or underdeveloped communities, lack sufficient digital infrastructure, such as data centres, to support digital court systems. The Philippines launched the E-justice System in 2013 as part of the country's broader initiative to modernise its judiciary, focusing mainly on digitising court records and introducing an online case management system (Djuraev et al., 2025). However, the Philippines faced infrastructural challenges, particularly in regions affected by natural disasters and in rural areas (Djuraev et al., 2025). In the end, the system was slow to reach all courts, leaving some areas reliant on traditional paper-based processes (Djuraev et al., 2025).

India made significant strides in digitising its legal system through the E-Courts Mission Mode Project, launched in 2007[82]. The project aimed to enhance judicial productivity and transparency through the digitisation of case records and the establishment of online court services[83]. However, despite these advancements, India's digitisation project faced challenges related to unequal access to technology. Many rural areas still lack adequate internet infrastructure, preventing equitable access to e-court services (Djuraev et al., 2025).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, countries like Kenya and Rwanda also reported significant disparities in digital infrastructure between urban and rural regions. The Irembo platform in Rwanda and Kenya's Huduma data centres have succeeded in expanding legal access in urban areas, yet rural populations face barriers that hinder full participation in digital legal services (Krupina et al., 2020). There are reports of poor network coverage as there are no data centres built in the rural areas, and there is a lack of access to digital devices as the cost of smartphones and mobile data is prohibitive for many citizens, limiting the reach of digital legal services (Djuraev et al., 2025). The result is therefore a digital divide that significantly reduces accessibility to legal services.

---

80 Address by the Hon Chief Justice, Mr Justice L. Malaba on the opening of the legal year 2022 "Use of Technology to enhance efficiency and the Rule of Law in the Judiciary". https://clck.ru/3STAem

81 Trust Deficit → Term. https://goo.su/MZeyvhU

82 India, D. A. K. S. H. (2020). Whitepaper Series on Next Generation Justice Platform, Paper 2: Transition and Implementation.

83 Ibid.

South Africa's Integrated Justice System (IJS) faced challenges of uneven implementation across regions due to a lack of digital infrastructure. The South African IJS enables law enforcement, courts, and correctional services to share information seamlessly, improving case management and transparency. However, reports show that urban areas have benefited from the IJS, and the rural courts still rely on manual processes, as there are no data centres established in the rural areas (Djuraev et al., 2025).

In Zimbabwe, the JSC experienced and continues to experience implementation and operational challenges. Those challenges are ordinarily more evident at the time of launching the system in a particular court. They extend from internet connectivity, where there may be a need to increase the internet bandwidth at a particular court, to a need for additional training where some members of staff may require more training time than others to understand the system, to slow buy-in from important stakeholders. What is however gratifying is that measures have been put in place from the onset to limit the negatives caused by some of the challenges.

In Harare, for example, when the system was deployed in the general division of the High Court, the JSC under-estimated the volume of litigants and legal practitioners who would require to be linked to their cases through making court requests[84]. Because of the large volumes of cases handled in that court, the corresponding large number of litigants, and the geographical spread of stations and divisions[85] which were to be catered for, members of the Judicial Service became overwhelmed by the large volumes of people and cases that needed to be attended to at the same time. It was therefore inevitable that there were delays in processes and service provision, which in turn frustrated users especially legal practitioners. The JSC responded to the challenges by increasing internet provision at the High Court, both in Harare and Bulawayo divisions[86], establishing internet hubs at the two divisions, deploying additional staff in the form of ICT technical personnel and registry departments, and carrying out a series of meetings in various provinces with legal practitioners, where training was also conducted[87].

The most common challenges that the JSC grappled with are stated hereunder.

3.1. Electricity outages

Zimbabwe experiences incessant power outages[88]. The disruptions in power supply negatively impact business and other institutions. The courts are not spared. Poshai and

84 This is the third phase of the implementation matrix, which was done on 1st September 2023.

85 The General Division of the High Court is currently located in Harare, Bulawayo, Masvingo, Mutare, and Chinhoyi.

86 These are the biggest and busiest divisions of the High Court.

87 See comments in the JSC 2023 Annual Report at page 35.

88 Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 952 by Asafika Mpako and Simangele Moyo-Nyede: https://goo.su/PYPYze

Vyas-Doorgapersad adverted to electricity challenges and load shedding in the country, noting that this could hinder the system's reliability (Poshai & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2023). Shortage of power is a challenge that is acknowledged and if not addressed appropriately will certainly frustrate the successful deployment of IECMS in the courts. Equally, load-shedding caused by electric power shortages is a challenge that afflicts many countries in Africa particularly those in Southern Africa[89]. It will however be folly for one to ignore and wish away the technological advancements that are taking place throughout the world, especially in information and communication technology, on the excuse that there is shortage of electricity. It is the reason why jurisdictions such as South Africa, have forged ahead and made progressive advances in the deployment of digital technology in the courts despite such electricity challenges[90].

The shortage of electricity in this context, should therefore be viewed more as an opportunity to explore other alternative sources of energy outside electricity, such as generators and solar systems, than as a challenge that should hinder the progress in courts digitisation. Before the advent of IECMS, power outages in the courts had always been an on-going challenge, because the courts ran on machines for recording and transcription purposes. Computers and court lighting equally required electrical power. For those reasons, the JSC had long set out to acquire alternative sources of power for the running of the courts when it turned to the use of generators and installation of solar systems. As at the time of writing, all court stations under IECMS have benefitted from alternative schemes of power generation[91]. Solar energy has been described as the most abundant, fastest, and cheapest energy source on earth, and it generates minimal greenhouse gas emissions[92]. The JSC may need to consider relying more on solar energy at the courts, as it is cheaper and more viable than generators.

3.2. Data and gadgets challenges

The challenges presented by the lack of data and compatible gadgets to use is constantly adverted to and cannot be ignored. As already indicated elsewhere in this paper, the IECMS is web-based system. One would need access to the internet and a compatible gadget to use for that purpose. A compatible gadget may be in the form of a smartphone, laptop, computer, or iPad/tablet. Zimbabwe's population is predominantly rural. Needless to point out, most of those areas have no access to internet let alone the adaptable gadgets. Even in the urban areas, including in some townships, access to reliable internet remains a pipe

89 Zambia struggle with electricity shortages driven by draught, Themba Hadebe, Africa News. https://clck.ru/3Supaj

90 OECD. (2025). OECD Economic Surveys: South Africa 2025, OECD Publishing, Paris. https://clck.ru/3SLDxK

91 See IECMS Implementation Progress Report by the Secretary of JSC. (2015, 10 November), at p. 24.

92 What Are the Advantages and Disadvantages of Solar Energy? (2023, May 1). Earth.org. https://clck.ru/3SLDza

dream. The unavailability of those prerequisites for accessing the IECMS can therefore be hardly overemphasised.

In responding to that gap, the JSC established e-filing offices and internet hubs at its court stations. Those are offices equipped with computers and laptops, with adequate internet provision and manned by qualified IT personnel. Members of the public, stakeholders, and even legal practitioners may visit the hubs and offices to use the equipment therein for free, for purposes of interacting with the courts using IECMS. The e-filing offices and internet hubs provide a number of critical services to the litigating public. First, there are gadgets that one can use. Second, there is internet for connectivity to the IECMS. Third, there is electricity. Fourth, there is a qualified person who assists litigants who wish to navigate the IECMS but do not know how to do so. In one fell swoop the four challenges that are predominantly touted as being the antithesis to the successful implementation of the IECMS, that is internet, electricity, gadgets and illiteracy, are all answered and attended to. The question that one would ask however, is whether the setting up of e-filing offices at every court station is enough to address and close that implementation gap.

One may argue that the intervention whilst noble and necessary, may not be enough. Much more will need to be done in that area in order to attend to the needs of the generality of the public. It is necessary to ensure that such e-filing facilities are located and found as close to the people's homes as possible. That is so because, for provinces already under IECMS, there are still some areas or districts that do not have courts. Areas, for example, such as Mushumbi Pools, Mahuwe, Mvurwi, and Centenary in Mashonaland Central Province, Brunaperk, and Guyu in Matabeleland South Province, Dete and Kamativi in Matabeleland North Province, to mention but a few, still do not have court stations[93] and are serviced on a periodic basis. For that reason, such periodic stations do not have e-filing offices close to the people living in those communities. Even in those that have court houses in the districts, some litigants will still need to travel long distances to access the nearest courthouse. In addition to setting up court houses close to the people, the JSC would need to consider going beyond court houses when setting up e-filing offices. It may be necessary to consider setting up e-filing offices at Police stations, community information centres and even at traditional leaders' homesteads. A trajectory of that nature will ensure that e-filing offices are as close to the people as possible. It is particularly important as the JSC commences deployment of the system in the Magistrates' Courts, where the poor, the underprivileged, and vulnerable would ordinarily be found litigating. This is an observation that has also been made by other writers, who commented that for sustained gains in courts digitisation, there should be targeted front-office staffing, cascaded ICT help-desk support, and connectivity upgrades especially for remote circuits as caseloads grow. Establishing e-filing kiosks and connectivity hubs

[93] These are places that are designated circuit courts that are visited periodically by the court.

at police stations in remote areas is viable[94]. The further decentralisation of the e-filing offices therefore, must be given serious consideration.

3.3. Computer and system illiteracy

Computer illiteracy, lack of knowledge and skill to navigate through the IECMS systems are challenges that also threaten the successful implementation of the system in the courts. At the preparatory stages of launching the system, the challenges were noted. It was realised that there was a lack of computer literacy even amongst members of the Judicial Service, including judicial officers, let alone knowledge of the system itself. The JSC therefore embarked on rigorous trainings of its personnel aimed at equipping them with the basic skills and knowledge on computer usage.

The first layer of training undertaken was on IECMS capacitation. It involved knowledge and skills transfer from the service provider to the JSC technical team. It was done with the realisation that, the success of the deployment of IECMS in the courts was dependent on the JSC developing its own small group of technical experts who would not only be able to transfer knowledge to the rest of the members of staff but would also have the capacity to superintend over the maintenance and management of the technical aspects of the system. As part of the contract with Synergy International, the parties included a mandatory provision, known as the knowledge transfer provision, that required some ICT technical personnel to be trained on how to service and look after the system. There would be no need, therefore, to go back to the contractor for system maintenance[95]. That JSC technical team has become the nucleus of the IECMS implementation. The second form of training was that of system users, that is, the court officials, including judicial officers and other system users like legal practitioners, officials from the National Prosecuting Authority and Attorney General's Office, the police and prisons, National Employment Councils and other justice sector organisations[96]. Thousands of system users have so far been trained throughout the country.

The trainings were done physically when trainees would visit the Judicial Training Institute of Zimbabwe, trainers from the JSC would also visit various institutions throughout the country and train stakeholders in situ at their premises. It was also done virtually through the JSC online training platform called the Electronic Learning Management System (ELMS)[97]. The courts themselves, as they adjudicated over matters at the advent

---

94 Situational Analysis and Stakeholder Feedback Report: Project SC No 300130609/Technical Assistance for Strategic Review and Development of Strategic Plan for the Judicial Service Commission, 2026-2030. IBF Impact Consortium and GGF Africa, at p. 10.

95 These were the Head of ICT Department, his two deputies and five experts now referred to as E-Courts Experts. They went for training in Armenia for six weeks at the headquarters of the service provider where the system was designed and developed. See p. 21 above.

96 See the Judicial Service Commission Annual Reports 2023 and 2024 at pp. 17–18 and 20, respectively.

97 This is a home grown JSC digital platform on which various educational courses and content is delivered to both judicial and non-judicial members.

of IECMS, were cognisant of the novelty of the system to the litigants and would at times, condone litigants where they were found on the wrong by the rules because of unfamiliarity with the system. In the case of Goromonzi Rural District Council v Nyakudya and Others[98], the Supreme Court remarked as follows:

"At the time of attempting to enter the cross-appeal, the IECMS. was relatively new. In this regard, I am of the considered view that a measure of leniency ought to be afforded to the new IECMS users who may blunder as they navigate their way through the system".

Training was also targeted at all interested persons by posting training lecture manuals, information flier and brochures, and videos, including IECMS instructional videos on JSC social media platforms such as its website, and YouTube[99]. According to a report by the secretary of JSC to the Commissioners of JSC, 51000 fliers were distributed in 2023, 57560 in 2024 and 55000 in 2025[100].

3.4. Scepticism to change

At the inception of the courts' digitisation program, there were misgivings about the system by some members of the Judicial Service who felt that this new system would unnecessarily disrupt their routine way of doing things. Others felt insecure. They believed that once the system was a success it would render them redundant and they would consequently lose their jobs[101]. Some stakeholders, like legal practitioners and civic organisations, equally did not have confidence in the system. It was felt that IECMS would affect the smooth operations of the courts and interfere with their cases. There was also the general apprehension among system users of cyber-attacks, that the system would be hacked and expose their cases and personal details to the predations of those with ill intentions.

Cognisant of those concerns, the JSC, at the inception of the implementation program, put together a change management program which was to be undertaken by a team of specially trained personnel called the change management team. The change management process was meant to manage the people's side of change from the current state of paper-based court processes to a new future state of a paperless court system and digital courts[102]. The program involved the communication of the correct message to the system users and the public on the benefits of the system and how it would enhance the administration of justice in the country, and secondly, carrying out an extensive training program that would ensure that there was a general appreciation and knowledge of the system. It was also necessary as part of the change management program to engage with

---

98 S-126-22 at p. 16.

99 The foreign person owning the YouTube informational resource violates the legislation of the Russian Federation.

100 Note 87 at pp. 31 and 32.

101 See Judicial Service Commission Annual Report 2023 at p. 35.

102 The change management program was informed and guided by a document called "Integrated Electronic Case Management System, Change Management Recommendations, RFP No. JSC/ICT01/2020, published by Synergy International, 11 May 2021.

members of the Judicial Service, firstly to demonstrate to them that the system would make their work a lot easier and more efficient, and secondly that none of them was going to lose his or her employment because of the introduction of the system[103]. It was crucial that the JSC secured the buy-in of its members of staff, if the system implementation was going to succeed. It is them who would bridge the gap between the system, its users, and the public. The successful implementation of the system was heavily dependent on the positive attitude of the membership of the Judicial Service.

As part of the change management program, it was also important to engage and reassure the citizenry of the security features embedded into the system and others put in place outside the system to ensure that it was protected from hacking and other possible cyber-attacks that would put its security and information contained therein in jeopardy. Change management, therefore became and still is a critical component of the implementation matrix in the deployment of IECMS in the Judiciary in Zimbabwe. The deployment of IECMS to the courts could only succeed if all the players accepted and believed in it. That in turn could only happen if the correct message was disseminated to all the important role players. The successful carrying out of the change management program was therefore the answer to deal with the challenge of scepticism about the system by members of the JSC and other system users. A lot of promotional material was put together for hundreds of publicity campaigns that were and are still being carried out throughout the country[104]. The JSC believes that change management should not be an event which is carried out once, but a long and drawn-out process that demands patience from the project implementers. It is a process which takes various forms, and involves a continuous engagement with all stakeholders with the same consistent message on the benefits of the system. It becomes even more fundamental in light of the phased-out methodology adopted by the organisation. Every time the implementation moves to a new province, it is important that the communication lines are open and fully utilised.

3.5. Stakeholder uptake

Whilst the judiciary is now in the process of finalising its full digitisation, the situation is different with other justice sector stakeholders. They are yet to be digitised. That obviously impacts on the integration process. The full potential of IECMS can only be realised if and when all the players in the justice delivery system have digitised. With the advantages of digitisation clearly laid out in this paper[105], one cannot overemphasise the importance

[103] The recommendations on change management were meant to support the JSC in the planning, execution, and roll-out of the IECMS.

[104] 4500 caps, and 3000 t-shirts were distributed in 2023, 5000 caps, and 2160 t-shirts in 2024, and 4518 caps and 5333 t-shirts in 2025. See (Djuraev et al., 2025).

[105] See also comments by Poshai and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2023), they stated that the IECMS in Zimbabwe encompasses increased efficiency, enhanced accessibility, and modernized judiciary operations. See also Malaba L. (2022). Digital Transformation of Judiciaries in Africa and Experiences in the Face of COVOD-19 Pandemic. Chief Justice of Zimbabwe. https://clck.ru/3Eufbq

of all the players in the justice sector digitising. Pleasantly, the process of digitisation of other players has however since commenced. The Government of Zimbabwe as part of its implementation of an economic blue print termed National Development Strategy (NDS 1 2021-2025), which is aimed at working towards a prosperous and empowered upper middle-class society by 2030, has targeted the improvement of the service delivery in the justice delivery sector through the implementation of an Integrated Electronic Case Management System for all the players in that sector[106]. It is imperative that the process be expedited to enable the citizenry that would seek to interact with the justice system, enjoy the benefits of efficiency and transparency brought about by the justice sector digitisation.

Conclusion

The digitisation of Zimbabwe's court system has redefined the administration of justice in the jurisdiction. The changes that the IECMS has brought to the administration of justice landscape will remain indelible in the history of Zimbabwean courts for generations to come if not for eternity. It has modernised the running of the courts and the adjudication of disputes. The biggest advantage is that it is a system which can continue to be fine-tuned in order to keep abreast of the rapidly changing technological advancements. The system has demonstrated that it can bring substantial benefits in operational efficiency, transparency, and access to justice across all levels of the court system. Although its successful deployment has required significant investment in infrastructure, equipment, human capital, training, and public awareness it has also shown that it can be sustainable going forward. The judiciary's commitment to comprehensive capacity building and stakeholder engagement has been instrumental in overcoming implementation challenges and achieving broad system adoption. Legislative alignment was and remains critical to providing an essential legal basis for electronic procedures. Clearly there is need to continue exploring technological innovations such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and virtual hearing capabilities which have positioned Zimbabwe's judiciary at the forefront of the digital justice space in the region. As implementation of Phase 4 progresses towards completion with the upcoming rollouts in the remaining provinces, the foundation has been firmly established for a fully digitized national court system. The experience gained from both the successes and challenges; and the best practices developed during this journey place the Judicial Service Commission in a prime position to continue its hegemony in judicial innovation and administration while ensuring that technological advancement serves the fundamental objective of delivering accessible, efficient, and transparent justice to all Zimbabweans.

[106] See Requirements Specification Document for the Design, Development, And Deployment of a Whole Government Integrated Electronic Case Management System, Version 1.0, issued by the Government of Zimbabwe, Office of the President and Cabinet.

References

Alekseevskaya, E. I. (2020). Terms of use of judicial acts for machine learning (analysis of some judicial decisions on the protection of property rights). *Law Enforcement Review*, *4*(4), 102–114. https://doi.org/10.24147/2542-1514.2020.4(4).102-114

Boldyrev, V. A., & Maksimov, V. A. (2025). Freedom of contract: The evolution of a legal principle in the era of information. Law Enforcement Review, *9*(2), 118–129. https://doi.org/10.52468/2542-1514.2025.9(2).118-129

Chynoweth, P. (2008). Legal research. In A. Knight & L. Ruddock, Eds., *Advanced Research Methods in the Built Environment* (pp. 28–38). Wiley-Blackwell.

Djuraev, I., Baratov, A., Khujayev, S., Yakubova, I., Rakhmonova, M., Mukumov, B., & Abdurakhmanova, N. (2025). The impact of digitization on legal systems in developing countries. *Qubahan Academic Journal*, *5*(1). https://doi.org/10.48161/qaj.v5n1a1246

Gaffar, H. (2024). Implications of Digitalization and AI in the Justice System: A Glance at the Socio-legal Angle. *Law and World*, *10*(31), 154-177. https://doi.org/10.36475/10.3.14

Gómez, M. A. (2024). The digitalization of litigation: International development perspectives. *Emory International Law Review*, *38*(4), 819.

Grudtsina, L. Yu. (2025). Digitalization of Justice in the United States: Case Management Electronic Case Files (CMECF) and Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER). *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Analysis*, *8*(4), 1551–1556. https://doi.org/10.47191/ijmra/v8-i04-10

Helberger, N., & Felzmann, H. (2025). The rise of technology courts, or the digitization of justice. *Computer Law & Security Review*, *55*, Article 100013.

Krupina, G., Safiullin, N., Faizrakhmanov, D., & Kurakova, C. (2020). Main directions of popularization of electronic state and municipal services among the rural population. *BIO Web of Conferences*, *27*, 00088. EDP Sciences.

Luo, Y. (2024). The Development of Online Courts in The Digital Age and The Prospect of Future Justice: Based on The Innovation of Judicial Methods in China and The United Kingdom. *Journal of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences*, *42*, 435-440. https://doi.org/10.54097/gzn7k140

Mabhodha, S., & Choga, F. (2021). The impact of information communication technology (ICT) on procurement processes: Case of Zimbabwean urban councils (2009 to 2018). *Open Journal for Information Technology*, *4*(1), 25–34. https://doi.org/10.32591/coas.ojit.0401.03025m

Maroz, R. (2023). *Digitizing court systems: Benefits and limitations*. World Bank Justice and Rule of Law Series.

Muparadzi, T., & Mukonza, R. M. (2024). Prospects for implementing digital technologies in the administration of justice in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Digital Technologies and Law*, *2*(4), 802–834. https://doi.org/10.21202/jdtl.2024.40

Poshai, L. & Vyas-Doorgapersad, S. (2023). Digital justice delivery in Zimbabwe: Integrated Electronic Case Management System adoption. *South African Journal of Information Management*, *25*(1). https://doi.org/10.4102/sajim.v25i1.1695

Reen, M. S., & Verma, A. (2023). The pillars of democracy: Unraveling the judiciary's contribution. *Indian Journal of Law and Legal Research, 5*(5).

Reiling, D., & Contini, F. (2022). E-Justice platforms: Challenges for judicial governance. *International Journal for Court Administration*, *13*(1), Article 6. https://doi.org/10.36745/ijca.445

Rusakova, E. P., & Frolova, E. E. (2022). Digital disputes in the new legal reality. *RUDN Journal of Law*, *26*(3), 695–704. https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-2337-2022-26-3-695-704

Sourdin, T., & Weller, K. (2025). *Digitalization and artificial intelligence in courts: Opportunities and challenges*. Oxford University Press.

Stepanov, O. A., Pechegin, D. A., & Diakonova, M. O. (2021). Towards the issue of digitalization of judicial activities Law. *Journal of the Higher School of Economics*, *5*, 4–23. (In Russ.). https://doi.org/10.17323/2072-8166.2021.5.4.23

Wallace, J. C. (2001). An essay on independence of the judiciary: Independence from what and why. *NYU Annual Survey of American Law*, *58*, 241.

Wang, G., & Chen, Y. (2022). Enabling legal risk management model for international corporation with deep learning and self data mining [Retracted]. *Computational Intelligence and Neuroscience*, *2022*, Article 6385404. https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/6385404

Author information

Walter Tambudzai Chikwana – PhD, Secretary to the Judicial Service Commission of Zimbabwe;
Address: 161 Josiah Chinamano Avenue, JSC House, Harare, Zimbabwe
E-mail: secretary@jsc.org.zw
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0009-0009-7596-7826

Conflict of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Financial disclosure

The research had no sponsorship.

Thematic rubrics

OECD: 5.05 / Law
PASJC: 3308 / Law
WoS: OM / Law

Article history

Date of receipt – December 28, 2025
Date of approval – January 16, 2026
Date of acceptance – March 25, 2026
Date of online placement – April 10, 2026

Научная статья
УДК 34:004:347.962:004.8
EDN: https://elibrary.ru/FYYDHY
DOI: https://doi.org/10.21202/jdtl.2026.3

Цифровизация правосудия в Зимбабве: институциональные вызовы и практические решения

Уолтер Тамбудзаи Чиквана

Комиссия по судебной службе Зимбабве, Хараре, Зимбабве

Ключевые слова

виртуальные слушания,
доступ к правосудию,
кибербезопасность,
межведомственное взаимодействие,
право,
судопроизводство,
цифровая грамотность,
цифровые технологии,
электронная подача документов,
электронное правосудие

Аннотация

Цель: исследовать процесс внедрения интегрированной электронной системы ведения дел в судебной системе Зимбабве, выявить ключевые проблемы, достигнутые результаты и извлеченные уроки для укрепления доступа к правосудию и эффективности судопроизводства.

Методы: исследование выполнено в жанре прикладного доктринально-правового анализа с описательным подходом к поэтапной реализации интегрированной электронной системы ведения дел; использованы методы изучения законодательства, анализа технической архитектуры системы, интеграции заинтересованных сторон и операционных воздействий, а также системный обзор внутренних отчетов Комиссии по судебной службе Зимбабве, журналов запросов службы поддержки, статистики регистрации пользователей и эмпирических наблюдений за этапами внедрения и программой управления изменениями.

Результаты: внедрение интегрированной электронной системы ведения дел автоматизировало полный цикл судебного процесса – от электронной подачи документов до исполнения решений и апелляций – и обеспечило заметное повышение прозрачности и подотчетности посредством онлайн-отслеживания дел и журналов аудита; зафиксирован рост показателей рассмотрения дел в высших инстанциях и существенное сокращение накопленных дел; внедрены механизмы онлайн-регистрации, виртуальных слушаний, электронных подписей и онлайн-платежей; одновременно выявлены системные препятствия – нестабильность электроснабжения, ограниченный доступ к Интернету в отдаленных районах, дефицит устройств и уровень цифровой грамотности, языковые барьеры и опасения по поводу кибербезопасности.

Научная новизна: представлен всесторонний эмпирический анализ национальной цифровизации судопроизводства в Зимбабве, который

демонстрирует взаимосвязь между технологическими преобразованиями и институциональными параметрами независимости, подотчетности и доступа к правосудию; обоснована роль поэтапной стратегии и программ управления изменениями как условий устойчивой цифровой трансформации судебной системы.

Практическая значимость: результаты исследования дают прикладные рекомендации для администраторов судов и политиков: предпочтение поэтапного внедрения, усиление инфраструктурной поддержки и центров электронной регистрации, масштабные программы обучения, усиление кибербезопасности и законодательная гармонизация для обеспечения инклюзивного, надежного и устойчивого развития электронного правосудия.

Для цитирования

Чиквана, У. Т. (2026). Цифровизация правосудия в Зимбабве: институциональные вызовы и практические решения. *Journal of Digital Technologies and Law*, *4*(1), 26–72. https://doi.org/10.21202/jdtl.2026.3

Список литературы

Alekseevskaya, E. I. (2020). Terms of use of judicial acts for machine learning (analysis of some judicial decisions on the protection of property rights). *Law Enforcement Review*, *4*(4), 102–114. https://doi.org/10.24147/2542-1514.2020.4(4).102-114

Boldyrev, V. A., & Maksimov, V. A. (2025). Freedom of contract: The evolution of a legal principle in the era of information. Law Enforcement Review, *9*(2), 118–129. https://doi.org/10.52468/2542-1514.2025.9(2).118-129

Chynoweth, P. (2008). Legal research. In A. Knight & L. Ruddock, Eds., *Advanced Research Methods in the Built Environment* (pp. 28–38). Wiley-Blackwell.

Djuraev, I., Baratov, A., Khujayev, S., Yakubova, I., Rakhmonova, M., Mukumov, B., & Abdurakhmanova, N. (2025). The impact of digitization on legal systems in developing countries. *Qubahan Academic Journal*, *5*(1). https://doi.org/10.48161/qaj.v5n1a1246

Gaffar, H. (2024). Implications of Digitalization and AI in the Justice System: A Glance at the Socio-legal Angle. *Law and World*, *10*(31), 154-177. https://doi.org/10.36475/10.3.14

Gómez, M. A. (2024). The digitalization of litigation: International development perspectives. *Emory International Law Review*, *38*(4), 819.

Grudtsina, L. Yu. (2025). Digitalization of Justice in the United States: Case Management Electronic Case Files (CMECF) and Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER). *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Analysis*, *8*(4), 1551–1556. https://doi.org/10.47191/ijmra/v8-i04-10

Helberger, N., & Felzmann, H. (2025). The rise of technology courts, or the digitization of justice. *Computer Law & Security Review*, *55*, Article 100013.

Krupina, G., Safiullin, N., Faizrakhmanov, D., & Kurakova, C. (2020). Main directions of popularization of electronic state and municipal services among the rural population. *BIO Web of Conferences*, *27*, 00088. EDP Sciences.

Luo, Y. (2024). The Development of Online Courts in The Digital Age and The Prospect of Future Justice: Based on The Innovation of Judicial Methods in China and The United Kingdom. *Journal of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences*, *42*, 435-440. https://doi.org/10.54097/gzn7k140

Mabhodha, S., & Choga, F. (2021). The impact of information communication technology (ICT) on procurement processes: Case of Zimbabwean urban councils (2009 to 2018). *Open Journal for Information Technology*, *4*(1), 25–34. https://doi.org/10.32591/coas.ojit.0401.03025m

Maroz, R. (2023). *Digitizing court systems: Benefits and limitations*. World Bank Justice and Rule of Law Series.

Muparadzi, T., & Mukonza, R. M. (2024). Prospects for implementing digital technologies in the administration of justice in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Digital Technologies and Law*, *2*(4), 802–834. https://doi.org/10.21202/jdtl.2024.40

Poshai, L. & Vyas-Doorgapersad, S. (2023). Digital justice delivery in Zimbabwe: Integrated Electronic Case Management System adoption. *South African Journal of Information Management*, *25*(1). https://doi.org/10.4102/sajim.v25i1.1695

Reen, M. S., & Verma, A. (2023). The pillars of democracy: Unraveling the judiciary's contribution. *Indian Journal of Law and Legal Research, 5*(5).

Reiling, D., & Contini, F. (2022). E-Justice platforms: Challenges for judicial governance. *International Journal for Court Administration*, *13*(1), Article 6. https://doi.org/10.36745/ijca.445

Rusakova, E. P., & Frolova, E. E. (2022). Digital disputes in the new legal reality. *RUDN Journal of Law*, *26*(3), 695–704. https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-2337-2022-26-3-695-704

Sourdin, T., & Weller, K. (2025). *Digitalization and artificial intelligence in courts: Opportunities and challenges*. Oxford University Press.

Stepanov, O. A., Pechegin, D. A., & Diakonova, M. O. (2021). Towards the issue of digitalization of judicial activities Law. *Journal of the Higher School of Economics*, *5*, 4–23. (In Russ.). https://doi.org/10.17323/2072-8166.2021.5.4.23

Wallace, J. C. (2001). An essay on independence of the judiciary: Independence from what and why. *NYU Annual Survey of American Law*, *58*, 241.

Wang, G., & Chen, Y. (2022). Enabling legal risk management model for international corporation with deep learning and self data mining [Retracted]. *Computational Intelligence and Neuroscience*, *2022*, Article 6385404. https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/6385404

Сведения об авторе

Чиквана Уолтер Тамбудзаи – PhD, секретарь Комиссии по судебной службе Зимбабве
Адрес: Зимбабве, г. Хараре, Джосайя Чинамано авеню, 161, здание Комиссии по судебной службе
E-mail: secretary@jsc.org.zw
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0009-0009-7596-7826

Конфликт интересов

Автор сообщает об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

Финансирование

Исследование не имело спонсорской поддержки.

Тематические рубрики

Рубрика OECD: 5.05 / Law
Рубрика ASJC: 3308 / Law
Рубрика WoS: OM / Law
Рубрика ГРНТИ: 10.07.45 / Право и научно-технический прогресс
Специальность ВАК: 5.1.2 / Публично-правовые (государственно-правовые) науки

История статьи

Дата поступления – 28 декабря 2025 г.
Дата одобрения после рецензирования – 16 января 2026 г.
Дата принятия к опубликованию – 25 марта 2026 г.
Дата онлайн-размещения – 10 апреля 2026 г.