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Developing Electronic Records Management Software Applications and Managing Institutional Differences: A Comparative Study^{*}

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Abstract

For companies to manage their records efficiently, safe, systematically and economically, the transition to electronic records management systems is supported by legal regulations in Turkey. TÜRKSAT A.Ş. developed the "Electronic Records Management System (ERMS)", which is capable of records management, sharing and archiving safely on the web for institutions. Setting up, operating and managing e-Government services in Turkey are assigned to TÜRKSAT A.Ş. via the coordination of the Ministry of Transportation. Within the scope of TÜRKSAT A.Ş. informatics services, many institutions put the ERMS project into practice. Conducted at 3 different institutions, the project is compared according to various effective parameters, and it is discussed that how these parameters affect the projects, and how alternative solutions and institutional differences are being managed. Effective parameters variant to institutions are determined according to the discriminant analysis on project phase. Between the institutions that TÜRKSAT A.Ş. has been conducting projects, Ankara University e-BEYAS Project differs for being an educational institution and having an academic structure. This differentiation required e-BEYAS project to be handled in two phases. In the first phase, administrative records processes similar to public institutions were addressed, whereas in the second phase, it is decided to manage the academic records processes that are special to universities. With the institutionalization work made on the practice according to the determined differences, the practice is being adjusted to the institution. Three different projects are being conducted at 3 different institutions and various effective parameters encountered are being analyzed. These differences pose the need of different ERMS software for different versions and flexible software architecture for different institutional requirements.

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1. Introduction

For institutions to manage their records efficiently, safe, systematically, fast and economically, the transition to electronic records management systems is supported by legal and administrative regulations in Turkey. The records produced in electronic media have been made to be acknowledged legally by means of “Electronic Signature Law” [1]. With this regulation, it is accepted that the records saved in the institutions’ own structure and the records saved in electronic media for the information and records management share with other institutions are in the same quality.

TÜRKSAT A.Ş. developed the “Electronic Records Management System (ERMS)”, which is capable of records management, sharing and archiving safely on the web for institutions. Implementing the records system automation in the institutions with the application, which is put into practice or experimental stage in most institutions, TÜRKSAT A.Ş. aims at undertaking an important role in process of sharing records management between the institutions. It follows T.R. Ministry of Development’s “e-Correspondence Project” [2] aiming at conducting the records share inter-institutions in electronic media in close. The task of setting up, operating and managing e-Government and informatics services in Turkey was assigned to TÜRKSAT A.Ş. via the coordination of the Ministry of Transportation in 2006 [3]. Therefore, ERMS applications are carried out in many institutions by TÜRKSAT A.Ş. in Turkey. The institutions, in which the ERMS Project is carried out, can be divided into groups according to many parameters such as their working fields, administrative structures, the upper organizations and their tasks. For this reason, the institutions showing difference in structural characteristics are taken into consideration in determining institutions for comparison study.

2. The Comparison Of The Relevant Literature and Projects

A few studies attract attention between the projects carried out on Records Management in the recent years. Some of these studies are orientated to comparison of process and methods about records procedure between the large scale institutions in different countries [4], [5]. In one part of the studies, some subjects such as authentication, privacy and metadata, which are most discussed subjects among the basic constituents of records management, are majored [6], [7]. In these studies, the importance of implementing production and access of the records in electronic media in institutions as a part of daily administrative works and legal procedure arise. It is seen in the comparisons in different countries that the problems in the records management and archiving actually stem from the lack of institutional strategy. Nevertheless, there is no comparative study on basic factors effecting the institutionalization of the software in transition period to electronic records management.

In this part, the projects carried out in three different institutions are compared according to various effective parameters, and it is mentioned that how these parameters affect the projects and how the differences between institutions are managed with alternative solutions.

The three projects chosen for comparison are the projects of TÜRKSAT A.Ş., Undersecretariat of Treasury and Ankara University. The reasons why these institutions are chosen are as below mentioned.

- **Ankara University:** Among the institutions in which TÜRKSAT A.Ş. has been conducting ERMS project; Ankara University differs for being an educational institution and having an academic structure. Ankara University e-BEYAS project differs with this characteristic from the projects in the other institutions. This differentiation shows that e-BEYAS project should be taken into consideration as 2 (two) phases. Whereas administrative records processes are dealt in the first phase, it is decided to manage academic records, which are peculiar to universities, in the second phase.

- **Türksat A.Ş.:** Since Türksat A.Ş. is an incorporated society, it differentiates with its hierarchy and records processes from other institutions. Furthermore, because Türksat A.Ş. is an institution working as attached to Ministry of Transportation, it has some similarities with some processes of public institutions.

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