

## ICT ENHANCED COURTROOMS IN NIGERIA: ARE THE CODITIONS FOR EFFECTIVENESS MET?

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### 1. Introduction

According to the World Bank, the most significant revolution of the twenty first century so far is the Information Communication Technology Revolution, and its transformative effects are everywhere. Through ICT, Communication has been made fast and efficient and our world is now, more than ever before, being brought closer together.<sup>3</sup> ICT is a key weapon in the war against world poverty<sup>4</sup>, and when used properly, it offers a tremendous potential to empower people in developing countries to overcome development obstacles; to address the most important social problems they face; and to strengthen communities, democratic institutions, a free press, and local economies. ICT thus offers solutions to economic and social problems, and their popularity seems to affirm that a willingness to introduce ICTs into developing countries results in an increased awareness of the advantages that such technologies offer for development<sup>5</sup>. Consequently, Governments and other institutions in developing countries are capitalizing on the spread of mobile technologies to improve service delivery through strategies driven by ICT.

The legal sector is not known as a cutting edge industry. Indeed, the very nature of the profession itself is conservative where decisions are made through reference to past cases and legislation; some of which are centuries old. Thus, it is not surprising that initially, legal practitioners and judges were reluctant to move from the traditional text based approach and embrace new technologies, to support their work<sup>6</sup>. However, as time passed, the population of old-school litigators dwindled, and in recent years, the use of high-technology in law schools, law offices, and courtrooms has increased. Today, most people in the legal sector applaud ICT for revolutionising the “third pillar of the state”<sup>7</sup>, and it is now a generally accepted view that ICT can improve efficiency, increase accessibility, and have the more general effect of promoting confidence in the justice system.<sup>8</sup> Over the last several years, interest in high-technology courtrooms has grown. Traditional litigators and judges whose skills were honed

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<sup>3</sup> Today, there are over 2.2 billion Internet users, 800 million subscribers to Facebook, 3.5 billion email accounts, more than 5 billion subscribers to mobile phones, and, every two days. According to Google’s Eric Schmidt, “We create as much information as we did from the dawn of civilization up until 2003”.

<sup>4</sup> World Bank <<http://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/57493/sadc.pdf>> accessed 12/8/16.

<sup>5</sup> This awareness follows from decisions taken by international/political leaders, foreign donors, and funding agencies. Within the World Bank itself exists the World Bank Group’s Global Information and Communication Technologies Department (GICT) which plays an important role in the development and promotion of ICT access in developing countries.

<sup>6</sup> Fabri. M and Contini, F(2001) “Justice and Technology in Europe: How ICT is Changing the Judicial Business” Kluwer Law International.

<sup>7</sup> B. Loveday, ‘Address to EGPA Conference, Cape Sounion, Greece’, in M. Fabriet *al.* (eds.), *The Challenge of Change for Judicial Systems*, 2000 p. 23.

<sup>8</sup> Velicogna. M (2007) “Justice Systems and ICT: What can be learnt from Europe” *Utretch Law Review* p.130

without these modern gadgets were not the fastest to embrace new technologies. However, with time, the population of old-school litigators dwindled and interest in litigating in high-technology courtrooms increased.

There has been much coverage on the evolving use of ICT in general, and also how technology can enhance the justice system in a developing country like Nigeria where illiteracy, insecurity, corruption, lack of training and lack of access to justice are all severe problems<sup>9</sup>. But then, is the justice sector really prepared for this transformation? How do lawyers, employees, and users of the system perceive the changes that have been made? Has the system performance improved? What lessons can we take from the experiences of other countries?

It is against the background of these nagging questions that we investigate the level of preparedness of the courts and court users to embrace modern revolutionary technologies in carrying out basic tasks in the courts (bearing in mind that the use of ICT is essentially an emerging concept in Nigeria). Specifically, the paper examines the benefits of using ICT in courts for the effective administration of justice. It identifies the factors militating against the effective use of ICT in courts; and using experiences from other jurisdictions, it further proffers viable measures needed for the smooth operation of the institution through ICTs.

## 2. Meaning of ICT

The word “Technology” has been defined as referring to applications of scientific knowledge<sup>10</sup>, and Information Communication Technology (ICT) is an umbrella term that includes all technologies for the manipulation and communication of information. ICT is therefore taken to encompass a wide range of computer and telecommunications technologies, including data processing (electronic retrieval, storage and management of data, document imaging); data management and communications services (telecommunications generally, wireless, video conferencing, electronic mail, the Internet); workflow systems; and artificial intelligence.<sup>11</sup> ICT is concerned with the storage, retrieval, manipulation, transmission or receipt of digital data. Thus, the scope of ICT covers any product that will store, retrieve, manipulate, transmit or receive information electronically in a digital form such as personal computers, digital television, email, and robots<sup>12</sup>. Today, courtesy of cloud computing<sup>13</sup>, information and processing power are increasingly being made available as

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<sup>9</sup> Halima Doma, *Enhancing Justice Administration in Nigeria Through Information and Communications Technology*, 32 *J. Marshall J. Info. Tech. & Privacy L.* 89 (2016).

<sup>10</sup> Australian Law Reform Commission, 1998, (1.8).

<sup>11</sup> Anne Wallace, *E-Justice: An Australian Perspective*, in Fabri, M and Contini, F (2001) *“Justice and Technology in Europe: How ICT is changing the judicial business”* Kluwer Law International. p.205.

<sup>12</sup> [http://tutor2u.net/business/ict/intro\\_what\\_is\\_ict.htm](http://tutor2u.net/business/ict/intro_what_is_ict.htm).

<sup>13</sup> a form of Internet-based computing that provides shared computer processing resources and data to computers and other devices on demand. It is a model for enabling ubiquitous, on-demand access to a shared pool of configurable computing resources (e.g., computer networks, servers, storage, applications and services), which can be rapidly provisioned and released with minimal management effort. Basically, Cloud computing allows the users and enterprises with various capabilities to store and process their data in either privately owned cloud, or on a third-party server in order to make data accessing mechanisms much more easy and reliable.

services, in the manner of water and electricity<sup>14</sup>. Furthermore, the advent of widespread mobile phone ownership has allowed some of the world's poorest citizens to create their own networks of ownership and exchange. In Nigeria for instance, phone based banking systems have been put in place to allow money transfers without the physical exchange of cash thereby enabling rural dwellers to do business outside their local communities. Likewise, installations are widely distributed in universities, government departments and agencies, banks, commercial establishments, and industries.

ICT and in particular the Internet has led to globalization by blurring national boundaries and creating an international channel of communication.<sup>15</sup> This global access is invaluable for development seeing that the need for sharing knowledge has long been known as one of the most valuable tools for aiding the developing world. Much international aid is ploughed into education in the Third World and the "self-help" scheme, which begins with the sharing of knowledge, has been lauded by many as the most effective tool for sustainable development. It is this model that is being followed within the judicial sector of developing countries, as technology offers a tremendous potential to empower people in developing countries to overcome development obstacle. Indeed, it has been noted by the General Counsel of the World Bank that;

Harnessing global knowledge is essential to devise strategies and programs of legal and judicial development and interconnected societies provide opportunities to learn and build partnerships to achieve these goals.<sup>16</sup>

Accordingly, it is now widely accepted that ICT has a crucial role to play in justice dispensation, and judicial institutions around the world now rely on technology for effective justice delivery that is accessible, timely and transparent. Thus, the capabilities of information and communication technologies, together with a rising consciousness among people all over the world that they are entitled to participate in government and society, offer enormous potential for advances that can be of great and lasting benefit to all people of the world and particularly to the poorest people of the world.<sup>17</sup> Nowhere does this sentiment ring more true than in Nigeria, being a country, which, in the last few years has experienced much unrest and turmoil reflecting the social, political and economic problems facing the nation. Again, it is widely reported that despite the relative economic success in Nigeria, the main struggle "is still for justice"<sup>18</sup>. Obviously this is of concern not only to the justice sector that offers this service but citizens alike, and it is perhaps in this area that ICT stands to make the greatest impact.

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<sup>14</sup> Susskind, R. "Tomorrow's Lawyers" Oxford: Oxford University Press (2013).

<sup>15</sup> Rustda and Koenig (2006) "Power of ICT" p.3

<sup>16</sup> Ko-Yung Tung, General Counsel, the World Bank quoted in Malik, M (2002) "E-Justice: Towards a Strategic Use of ICT in Judicial Reform" Marrakesh World Bank Conference March 2002, p.1.

<sup>17</sup> James D. Wolfensohn, President, The World Bank.

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16800822>.

### **3. Information Communication Technologies Within the Courtroom**

The technologies used in the courtroom can be divided into four groups based upon their technological and also organisational characteristics and functions<sup>19</sup>. The first group consists of basic computer technologies. These are standard products that could easily be acquired on the market, and they constitute the “installed base” on which other technological innovations may be implemented. They contain hardware and software used to create, collect, store, manipulate, and relay digital information needed for accomplishing basic office tasks. Such technologies include desktop computers, word processing programs, and both internal and external e-mail for judges as well as administrative personnel. The second group consists of applications used to support the court’s administrative personnel, which include computers, the Internet, the intranet, automated registries and case management systems. The third group consists of technologies supporting the judges' activities. Several applications have been designed to support and to automate judges’ activities, and most of are individual tools. These include online legal information services such as laptops, soft copies of statutes and law reports, electronic libraries, forums and discussion groups, training, and sentencing support systems. Finally, the fourth group includes the technologies used in the courtroom such as e-filing, computer assisted transcriptions (CAT), documents display systems, video conferencing, digital evidencing, online dispute resolution, etc. The availability of web services, and the technologies discussed above can enhance many court functions and activities in the following ways:

- a. consulting online legislation and case law
- b. electronic filing and exchange of legal documents
- c. integration and automation of court procedures and practices
- d. opening the courts to the public, by providing both general and specific information on its activities, thereby also increasing legitimacy<sup>20</sup>.
- e. Online dispute resolution (ODR), e-courts,
- f. video conferencing
- g. digital evidencing
- h. sending bail orders and notices through e-mail
- i. online information about the status of cases,
- j. online delivery of certified copies of judgments, etc are some of the examples of use of ICT for effective justice delivery.

### **4. The Deployment of Courtroom Technology in Various Countries**

Around the world, several statutory reforms have been introduced to allow the adoption of technological measures (coupled with other initiatives) that promote the rule of law and strengthen democratic principles. South Korea boasts of a very successful integrated

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<sup>19</sup> Marco Velicogna, ICT Within The Court of Justice Era, <[http://effectius.com/yahoosite\\_admin/assets/docs/](http://effectius.com/yahoosite_admin/assets/docs/)> accessed 17/10/17.

<sup>20</sup> M. Velicogna, “Justice Systems and ICT: What can be learned from Europe? ,Utrecht Law Review, Vol3, Issue 1 (June) 2007.

court technology that took a painstaking 30 years to perfect. Brazil has successfully introduced technologies in the Supreme Court, electoral courts, small claim courts and many state courts to improve efficiency. Also efforts are in hand to leverage technology in “de-bureaucratizing tasks,” expanding the initial experiences and promoting activities at the federal and state levels. Venezuela’s highest court (Supreme Tribunal of Justice) has launched internal networks and web-based applications that provide integrated solutions for court governance, the operations of court chambers, systems that support the work of justices and decision preparation, the publication of court decisions, administrative management and perhaps most importantly applications for user information centers. At the lower court levels, based on a comprehensive ICT plan, pilot programs are being implemented in the cities to support the implementation of new court organizational structures for all courts and new criminal procedures and family codes. Guatemala recently started testing Internet based distance learning for judges and staff. Argentina and Mexico are adopting major programs to update legislation databases and information on reform initiatives and studies. In Mexico, a national conference was held in June 1999 for the purpose of sharing information on the use of ICT in the Judiciaries of each of the Mexican States. The results of a national survey on the current use of ICT applications were published at the conference, thus enabling judicial officials to assess the use of applications in other States, to benefit from lessons learned, and to plan for the future. Chile has built up criminal justice information systems for coordination and control, and is applying and upgrading systems in order to meet modern needs and to harness technological advances. El Salvador is developing a forward-looking master plan for introducing technologies in courthouses to take advantage of the telecommunication reform in the country. Argentina, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica and other countries are investing in building basic IT infrastructure and upgrading existing systems<sup>21</sup>.

Africa is often described as “The Last Frontier,”<sup>22</sup> because it remains greatly underdeveloped, its resources untapped and its industry in its infancy. Its judiciary, especially in Western and Eastern parts of the continent, is plagued by corruption, a lack of access to justice, lack of trained professionals and in some countries is all but non-existent. There is a great drive by Western aid agencies to invest in the judiciary and consequently western professionals are sent to Africa to help train and inform local experts so that they may then continue to develop their own legal systems from within in the comfort that they may turn to ICT at any time to communicate to their counterparts worldwide if further training or information is needed. The power of ICT in Africa should not be underestimated even though the Internet remains absent in most places because as access to it increases, more Africans are able to have access to justice and more professionals are able to polish their skills and improve their knowledge through worldwide communication. Kenya for instance is a success story as regards to the influence of the Internet and its uses in empowering the public. Nigeria is also not lagging behind in this E- Justice revolution, and her efforts are considered in ensuing parts of this paper.

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<sup>21</sup> These initiatives are funded by national governments, bilateral donors such as USAID, World Bank, IDB, UNDP and other agencies.

<sup>22</sup> Owoso, V. et, al (2002) “Entering the Last Frontier: expansion by US multinational to Africa” International Business Review Volume 11 Issue 4. P. 421.

## 5. The Inevitability for The Use of ICT in Nigerian Courts

A Nigerian newspaper aptly captured the imperative of ICT enhanced courts thus:

Every federal and state judiciary must integrate ICT to create better efficiencies in the use of time, reduce costs, labour and other processual (sic) waste in the judicial system. Why do our judges use nineteenth century infrastructure and expect to meet the challenges of the 21st century?<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, experiences from other jurisdictions that have passed through similar challenges have shown that ICT can be used to tackle most of the problems faced by the courts in Nigeria as highlighted in 5.2 below.

### 5.1 Structure of the Courts in Nigeria

Sections 4 (8) and 6 (6)<sup>24</sup> of the Nigerian Constitution provides that the judicial powers of the Federation shall be vested in the courts being established for the Federation. These provisions do not only apply to constitutionally established courts, but also to all courts and tribunals established by law or to be so established.<sup>25</sup>

Thus the courts contemplated by the Constitution as the repository or judicial powers are those listed in S. 6(5) as follows:

- a. the Supreme Court of Nigeria
- b. the Court of Appeal
- c. the Federal High Court including that of FCT
- d. the High Court of the FCT, Abuja
- e. High Court of a State
- f. Sharia Court of Appeal of the Federal Capital Territory
- g. Sharia Court of Appeal of a State
- h. Customary Court of Appeal of FCT, Abuja
- i. Customary Court of Appeal of a State

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<sup>23</sup> Otteh, H (2010) "For Nigeria's tomorrow, our Judiciary needs a complete makeover" Vanguard Newspaper 08/10/10.

<sup>24</sup> 6(6)(a) provides that judicial powers vested in the constitution "shall extend, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this constitution to all inherent powers and sanctions of a court of law"; while Section 6(6)(b) further provides that such judicial powers "shall extend to all matters between persons or between governments or authority and any person in Nigeria, and to all actions and proceedings, relating thereto for the determination of any question as to the civil rights and obligations of that person and accordingly, the doctrine of state immunity in respect of liability in tort no longer applies".

<sup>25</sup> Uwadineke K. and Silvia I., Op Cit. pp.10-12.

- j. Such other Courts as may be authorized by law to exercise jurisdiction on matters with respect to which the National Assembly may make laws; and
- k. Such other Courts as may be authorized by law to exercise jurisdiction at first instance or on appeal on matters with respect to which a House of Assembly may make laws.

It is important to note that while the first nine courts (a-i) are identified as superior courts of record in accordance with the provision of S.6(3); the last two (j-k), if and when created will be of the same status. It must also be noted that the definition given by the National Judicial Institute is wider than the one provided under the Constitution by including Magistrates Courts in a State, Area Courts and Customary Courts.<sup>26</sup>

As consequences of Section 6, it has been held that judicial power is the power of a court to decide and pronounce judgement and carry it into effect between persons before it. The responsibilities captured here are enormous as it involves the resolution of disputes embracing social and moral questions of profound importance to society. The public therefore expects an effective judicial system that can meet the demands of modern democratic society; and the effectiveness of any judicial system is gauged by its capacity to provide a timely and apposite justice to parties in a dispute. Regrettably, the Nigerian Justice System cannot boast of such effectiveness.

## 5.2 Some Basic Problems With the Courts in Nigeria

The most severe indictment of our justice system is that it takes too long and costs too much, as evidenced by the nagging number of cases that are pending and undecided in our courts. In 2001, a study of the situation in Lagos State, the commercial centre of Nigeria, indicated that the average period within which a case was disposed of varied in respect of subject matter. Land matters topped the list of cases with the average period of 7.8 years, commercial cases 3.3 years, personal injury cases 3 years, and family disputes 2.5 years<sup>27</sup>. These average figures however are not the true reflection of numerous actual delays with regards to cases, which often range from 7 to 20 years. A typical example is the case of *Ekperokun v. University of Lagos*<sup>28</sup>, where it took the High Court 7 years to dispose of a case of wrongful termination of employment. At the appellate Courts, the period is even longer. In *Maja v. Samouris*<sup>29</sup>, it took 9 years from 1993-2002 to final judgment at the Supreme Court, *Obasohan v. Omorodion*<sup>30</sup> 16 years, *Ekpe v. Oke*<sup>31</sup>, 17 years, *Onagoruwa v. Akinyemi*<sup>32</sup> 21 years, and *Nwadiogbu v. Nnadozie*<sup>33</sup> 23 years.

<sup>26</sup> Section 17, National Judicial Institute Act CAP. N55 L.F.N. 2004.

<sup>27</sup> I.A. Ayua, and D.A. Guabadia (ed) Technical Report on the Nigerian Court Procedures Project including proposals for the Reform of the High Court of Lagos State Civil Procedure Rules, Nigerian Institute of Advances Legal Studies, 2001

<sup>28</sup> (1986)4 NWLR 152

<sup>29</sup> (2000) 7 NWLR (pt. 765) 78

<sup>30</sup> (2001) 13 NWLR 9PT. 728) 298

<sup>31</sup> (2001) 19 NWLR (Pt. 721) 341

<sup>32</sup> (2001) 13 NWLR (Pt.729) 38

<sup>33</sup> (2002) 12 NWLR (Pt. 727) 315

Generally, the backlog of undecided cases becomes a bottleneck for the even flow and orderly disposition of cases because the cases keep piling up, and the time between filing of a lawsuit to ultimate disposition keeps increasing. A recent statistic given by the Chief Judge of the FCT<sup>34</sup>, indicated that in the close of 2009/2010 legal year, the FCT High Court had 6,109 undisposed cases while the 2010/2011 legal year had a total of 9 083 cases pending (an increase of 30%). In the same 2010/2011 legal year, the court had a total of 17,269 cases to deal with compared to 12,269 in the previous year (5000 cases more). Other commercial cities like Lagos, Kano, and Rivers have equally startling statistics.

The Supreme Court and Court of Appeal are faced with the same backlog. Apparently due to the volume of appeals inundating the two courts, especially on interlocutory matters, the dockets of these courts are overflowing.

Closely linked to the vicious circle of backlog and delays, another indicator of the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the administration of justice is limited access to justice. In Nigeria, like most developing countries, the law is often discriminatory<sup>35</sup> and legal processes are expensive, slow and complex. The result is that people, and particularly poor and disadvantaged people, have inadequate and unequal access to justice through the formal legal system. For these reasons they tend to rely much more on African Customary Justice Systems, but these can be discriminatory. There is therefore need to expand coverage<sup>36</sup>, and streamline traditional methods of justice to customary matters only.

In addition to delay and difficulty in accessing justice, other challenges faced include a lack of transparency and predictability in court decisions and shortage of resources. The consequential effect of these collective problems is a weak public confidence in the Nigerian judicial system.

## **6. Deploying ICT to Enhance Performance of the Courts in Nigeria**

Upon returning to civilian rule in May 1999, the Nigerian government committed to restoring the credibility of its institutions which had been seriously undermined under military rule. The judicial branch, along with the legislative branch of government, has asserted its right to independence through initiatives that could have a positive impact on justice sector performance. These include a proposed presidential panel on judicial and legal reform<sup>37</sup>, and several other activities planned under the ongoing Economic Management Capacity Building Programme (EMCAP).<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, Nigeria started implementing its ICT policy in April 2001 after the Federal Executive Council approved it by establishing the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), the implementing body. The policy empowers NITDA to enter into strategic alliances and joint ventures and to

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<sup>34</sup> L.H. Gumi, National Judicial Policy: An imperative for the sustenance of Judicial Ethics, being a paper delivered at the All Nigeria Judges Conference, NJI, Abuja, 22/11/11

<sup>35</sup> Ladan, M. (2006) "Access to Justice and the Justice Sector Reform in Nigeria" International Institute for Justice and development Conference on the State of Affairs of Africa, Boston USA, 2006.

<sup>36</sup> By taking more courts to the rural areas.

<sup>37</sup> Discussions were held in June 2000 at a meeting between the President and human rights NGOs.

<sup>38</sup> A five-year strategic plan for reform of the Nigerian police, prisons decongestion, penal and prisons service reform, a national constitutional review process, and a number of innovative initiatives taken by legal and judicial officials at the state level.

collaborate with the private sector to realize the specifics of the country's vision of, "making Nigeria an IT capable country in Africa and a key player in the information society by the year 2005 through using IT as an engine for sustainable development and global competitiveness."<sup>39</sup>

A variety of International and local non-governmental organizations were also active in an informal process of developing a national justice sector agenda, particularly in the area of reform and improvement of the justice sector. In all of these reform initiatives, the introduction of technology into the justice administration was a key recommendation resonated by all the groups. The Judicial Information Technology Policy Committee, which was inaugurated on January 30th, 2012, established a foundation for an automated court system and complete computerization of the justice sector with the National Centre for State Courts of America serving as consultants to the project. The project was aimed at an integrated system for the Nigerian judiciary, such that cases would efficiently move from the trial court to the appellate court, and ultimately the Supreme Court. To this effect, the Case Management System of the Supreme Court and the National Judicial Council were recently launched. The system is expected to operate in such a way that all lawyers in the country will be required to register with the courts and will be assigned user identification and a secured email address. This is projected to facilitate communications between the courts and counsel because immediately a lawyer files a process, all the parties and the courts will be notified instantly. Under the project tagged the Nigeria Case Management System, lawyers will be able to file and serve their cases online through an authenticated email system. At present, the project, which is being implemented in phases, is operational in 16 pilot sites<sup>40</sup>.

In line with the overall justice reform agenda, the new Evidence Act, which came in force in 2011, allows for the admissibility of electronically generated documents in evidence<sup>41</sup>. More recently, the Court of Appeal (Fast Track) Practice Direction 2014 was made by the President of the Court to accommodate electronic service and signatures. Also the Administration of Criminal Justice Act 2015 encourages the use of technology in all areas of criminal justice

## **7. Challenges to the Effective Use of ICT in Courts**

Despite efforts made to key into the global ICT revolution, the Nigerian Courts are faced with numerous challenges; some of which are as follows:

1. Lack of top Judicial Administration enthusiasm to embrace ICT
2. Reluctance in supervision/ usage of the Information Systems and/or updating of information in the computer systems
3. Resistance to Change towards the use of ICT in the Judiciary

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<sup>39</sup> Damkor Matthew et al. "The Role of Information Communication Technology in Nigeria Educational System" International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies V2. I2, February 2015 66.

<sup>40</sup> Namely; the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal (Abuja and Lagos Divisions), the Federal High Court (Abuja and Lagos Divisions), the National Industrial Court (Abuja and Lagos Divisions), the High Court of the Federal Capital Territory as well as the high courts of Bayelsa, Borno, Ebonyi, Kaduna, Kogi and Lagos states, and the National Judicial Council.

<sup>41</sup> Section 84, Evidence Act 2011.

4. Inadequate awareness of the benefits of ICT
5. Untimely reporting of ICT problems
6. Insufficient funding for the maintenance of computer systems and equipment
7. Insufficient Staffing (ICT Technical, Dedicated Data Entry Clerks, Court Reporters and Transcribers)
8. Insufficient provision of facilitation for training [both for Technical staff & end Users]

## **8. Conclusion**

The availability of web services, the possibility of consulting online legislation and case law, the use of electronic filing, and the electronic exchange of legal documents, are only some examples that are spurring judicial administrations around the world to rethink their current functions and activities. However, many of the projections with ICT remain largely theoretical and are drawn from experiences elsewhere, as in the Nigerian context, we are still waiting for the establishment of the first e-court<sup>42</sup>.

Despite its speedy growth and popularity, ICT is still in its infancy in Nigeria (when compared to more developed countries). Yet, there is no doubt that it has very great prospects for the improvement of justice administration in the country by increasing productivity in the courts, and thereby making justice administration easier. However, to explore these great potentials, a change in attitude of policy makers, court administrators, judges, court staff, and court users; is of paramount importance because the existence of an enabling environment is the only way to make ICT thrive.

Based on this conclusion, the following recommendations are therefore warranted:

1. There should be training and retraining programmes organized for all stakeholders in the justice system, so as to acquaint them with up to date development relative to the utilization of ICT tools.
2. There should be adequate budgetary provision to support massive infrastructural development towards having “ICT- enhanced courtrooms in Nigeria”.
3. There should be a change in attitude of court administrators, lawyers, and judges at all levels; as to the utilization of ICT resources.

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<sup>42</sup> Although several media reports seem to have confused “computerisation” with e-courts, when all that has happened in Nigeria so far is the computerisation of some traditional aspects of litigation.