

**MAKERERE**



**UNIVERSITY**

**DESIGNING AN ELECTRONIC STORAGE SYSTEM TO ENHANCE THE  
RETRIEVAL OF RECORDS AT KASANGATI MAGISTRATE COURT**

**BY**

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**A PROJECT REPORT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
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### DECLARATION

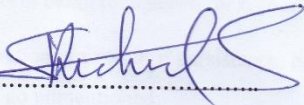
We hereby declare that this project report is our original work, and has not been submitted for any academic award or published at any higher institution of learning.

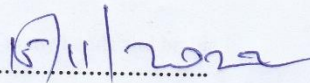
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**APPROVAL**

This is to certify that this research project designing an electronic storage system to enhance the retrieval of records at Kasangati Magistrate Court.

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## **DEDICATION**

It is our pleasure to be recognised for a positive impact on society and the lives of people. But it's more worth being recognised for recognizing those who shape our paths.

This dissertation is a result of persistence, patience and hard work of many hands and brains that cannot go unmentioned.

We, therefore, wish to dedicate this report to our families and friend who have taken the time to help us.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Glory and praise to God Almighty for continued life, breath, strength and wisdom. Your grace and mercy have seen me sail through. We are glad that God is the author of our strength and wisdom. Thank you very much our father.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DECLARATION</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>APPROVAL</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>ix</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	<b>x</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>xi</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Introduction to The Study .....	1
1.2 Background of the Study.....	2
1.3 Problem statement .....	3
1.4 Aim of the study .....	4
1.5 Objectives of the study.....	4
1.6 Research questions .....	4
1.7 Scope of the study .....	4
1.8 Significance of the study .....	5
1.9 Definition of Key Terms .....	5
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b> .....	<b>7</b>

<b>LITERATURE REVIEW.....</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	7
2.2 Records Management in Courts.....	7
2.3 Types of Court Records Managed in Magistrate Courts.....	9
2.4 Records Storage Systems and Equipment Used in Magistrate Courts.....	12
2.5 Challenges Affecting Records Storage in Magistrate Courts .....	16
2.6 Requirements for Designing Electronic Storage Systems for Courts .....	18
2.7 Research Gap .....	19
<b>CHAPTER THREE .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>20</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	20
3.2 Area of the Study .....	20
3.3 Research Design.....	20
3.4 Research Approach .....	20
3.5 Population of Study.....	20
3.6 Sample Size.....	21
3.7 Data Collection Methods and Instruments.....	21
3.8 Data Quality Control issues .....	22
3.9 Data Collection Procedures.....	22
3.10 Data Analysis and Presentation.....	22
3.11 Ethical Issues.....	23

3.12 Limitations and Delimitations of The Study .....	23
<b>CHAPTER FOUR.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDING .....</b>	<b>25</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	25
4.2 Response Rate .....	25
4.3 Demographic Characteristics of The Sample.....	26
4.4 Discussion of Findings.....	26
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>32</b>
5.1 Introduction .....	32
5.2 Summary of The Findings.....	32
5.3 Conclusion .....	33
5.4 Recommendations .....	34
5.5 Areas of Further Study .....	34
<b>CHAPTER SIX .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>A PROPOSED ELECTRONIC STORAGE SYSTEM TO ENHANCE THE RETRIEVAL OF RECORDS AT KASANGATI MAGISTRATE COURT .....</b>	<b>35</b>
6.1 Introduction.....	35
6.2 System Requirements.....	35
6.3 System Design and Development .....	36
6.4 Development of Interfaces .....	38

6.5 Conclusion .....	41
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>48</b>
APPENDIX ONE: Interview Guide .....	48
APPENDIX TWO: Document Review Guide .....	49
APPENDIX THREE: Introductory Letter .....	50

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 2: Categorisation of Population of Study.....	21
Table 3: Showing the Response Rate.....	25
Table 4: Software Specifications .....	38
Table 5: Hardware Specifications .....	39

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Respondents by The Level of Education.....	26
Figure 2: Flowchart.....	37
Figure 3: Level 0 Data flow diagram .....	37
Figure 4: Level 1 Data flow diagram .....	38
Figure 5: Login Interface for the ERS .....	39
Figure 6: Records Entry Interface .....	40
Figure 7: Searching and Printing Function .....	40
Figure 8: Searching and Printing Function .....	41
Figure 9: Report Generation for Entered Records .....	41

## **ABSTRACT**

This project aimed at designing an electronic storage system to enhance the retrieval of records at Kasangati Magistrate Court. The study was based on these objectives: to identify different types of records managed by Kasangati Magistrate Court; to analyse the different storage systems and equipment used at kasangati magistrate court; to identify the challenges affecting records storage and retrieval at Kasangati Magistrate Court and to design an electronic storage system to enhance the retrieval of records at kasangati magistrate court. This study employed a qualitative research methodology, interview and document review instruments were used to collect data from the Kasangati Magistrate Court staff members. The findings of this study revealed the registry maintains voluminous records such as criminal records, capital offences, and family and administrative records, secondly, it was revealed that the registry uses a manual storage system with an alphanumeric filing arrangement, challenges affecting storage including limited funds; lack of a specific system for storing or maintaining records; absence of automation; lack of legislation or policy and inadequate technology infrastructures, lastly, system requirements were elicited, thus resulting into a developed records storage and retrieval system to enhance retrieval of information. The findings of this study and the designed system may act as a prototype for system designers and records practitioners to pick a leaf from it and come up with a robust system while putting electronic records management at first hand or as a priority in judicial systems.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 Introduction to the Study**

The successful administration of justice by courts depends on records. Records assist with judicial decision-making, the preservation of historical data, the documentation of legal rights, public access to court proceedings and decisions, the enforcement of court orders and judgments, and the preservation of records for appellate review (Khunjulwa & Festus, 2021). Court records are not simply one particular type of legal record. They are not simply the public legal record as opposed to the private legal record. The International Records Management Trust (1999) stated that court records also represent the official legal records of a judicial system.

The debut of e-governances, the adoption of information communication technology and freedom of information initiatives by governments is a welcome relief to the managing of court records (Khunjulwa & Festus, 2021). Electronic records storage systems keep records and other information safe for accuracy and reference. A records storage system be it manual or electronic is its main function to file, track, store and retrieve records of any format. Without a comprehensive electronic records storage system in courts to capture and store timely records, evidence is likely to be lost hence the denial of a right to the people seeking justice

As a result of the rapid influx of electronic data and the steadily increasing volume of records, magistrate courts need to enhance existing records management programmes and systems for justice delivery to improve storage as well to enhance seamless retrieval of court records to remain compliant with the legislative and statutory requirements for efficient and effective records management for justice delivery.

It was, therefore, imperative to conduct this study and design an electronic records storage and retrieval system to enhance the retrieval of records at Kasangati Magistrate Court. This chapter covers the background to the study, problem statement, aims and objectives of the study, research questions, scope and significance of the study.

## **1.2 Background of the Study**

The need to improve service delivery, manage court records and derive meaningful information in the judiciary, has brought up the need for ethical records management practices. To divulge one of these practices, courts need to manage records to stem insightful information.

Managing records encompasses adequate storage practices, and retrieval tools (Abdulrahman, 2015). Without storage of records, access to records may delay court cases hence inhibiting justice. Hunie & Dewah (2019) opine that absence of proper records storage systems and practises results in setting criminals free while denying justice to victims which damages the general public relations of the judiciary. William (2021) describes storage systems as systems that provide the coherent organisation of records associated with business processes, operations or activities. He adds that a storage system embodies concepts, methods, equipment and supplies for managing both paper-based and electronic records. Storage involves storing records for future reference and use whilst retrieving is a process of locating a specific record or file and then delivering it for its purpose or use.

Paper records are often organised and arranged based on filing system components (Franks, 2018; William, 2021). Franks (2018) stresses that paper records are still stored in offices which have rendered hardship for records professionals to design suitable filing or storage systems. While paper records have been pivotal to decision-making in courts of law in Uganda, the emergent use of information technology and communication in Justice has resulted in the birth of electronic records and systems which can be used as evidence in courts of law as well as for reference.

Electronic records and systems are easy and effective in the management of court records, this is a result of having one primary goal to enable fast retrieval and storage of evidential documents. Consequently, with this explosion of digital information and the proliferation of electronic information and communication systems that seek need resilient electronic records storage systems to enhance the seamless retrieval of cases and administration of justice in the legal fraternity. Therefore, this study aims to design an electronic records storage system to enhance the retrieval of records at Kasangati magistrate court.

### **1.2.1 Background of Kasangati Magistrate Court**

The judicial system in Uganda operates under the Constitution of Uganda which provisions three courts the Supreme court, which is the highest Court of Appeal in the country, it's the final court where the decisions of the Court of Appeal/ Constitutional Court are heard by the

Supreme Court (Judicial Service Commission, 2007). The Court of Appeal/ Constitutional Court is the second on the hierarchy having the powers to hear decisions of the High Court, the Court has not less than seven justices that are required to rule a case before this court. The third court the, High court has overall powers to hear any case.

According to Tuyisenge (2018), the High Court has various specialised divisions such as the anti-corruption and international crimes divisions, the court also decides appeals against decisions made in the Magistrates Courts. The last on the structure is, the Magistrates Courts, which are the most accessible and used in the country and all districts have these courts composed of Chief Magistrates, Grade I, and Grade II (Judicial Service Commission, 2007).

Kasangati Magistrate Court is part of the Magistrates courts in Uganda, where its new premises are located at Mirembe stage, Namavundu road, Gayaza. The court building accommodates two courtrooms, two Magistrates chambers with space for the Clerks, the registry, mediation room, archives, cash office, holding cells, proper restrooms and a special room for the physically disabled (Judiciary, 2022).

### **1.3 Problem statement**

According to Hunie & Dewah (2019), a court record is regarded as “an integral component in a court of law as it serves to facilitate for prosecution, conviction and acquittal processes”. Records of any format and justice are inextricable because they serve as critical proof that a particular action or transaction took place. Hence, how to record/ evidence is captured, stored, preserved, retrieved and handled is of particular significance before the evidence can be declared admissible in court.

Electronic records play a focal role in administering and quickening justice as they store and preserve information as evidence as it occurs. However, electronic records are prone to manipulation which renders them inadmissible in instigating decisions in court proceedings, similarly, paper-based records are also prone to vandalism and forgery, the inadequacy of storage in regards to equipment and space, disasters such as rodents, fire and insect infestation, delays in retrieval. Such inhibitors impede registries, and records stores in courts such as Kasangati Magistrate Court which has all those facilities in its infrastructure. It’s for these reasons the study seeks to design an electronic records storage for enhancing records retrieval at Kasangati Magistrate Court.

#### **1.4 Aim of the study**

This project aims at designing an electronic storage system to enhance the retrieval of records at Kasangati Magistrate Court.

#### **1.5 Objectives of the study**

The proposed objectives of the study are:

1. To identify different types of records managed by Kasangati Magistrate Court
2. To analyse the different storage systems and equipment used at Kasangati Magistrate Court
3. To identify the challenges affecting records storage and retrieval at Kasangati Magistrate Court
4. To design an electronic storage system to enhance the retrieval of records at Kasangati Magistrate Court.

#### **1.6 Research questions**

Based on the research objectives above, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the different types of court records managed at Kasangati Magistrate Court?
2. What are the current records filing/ storage systems used at Kasangati Magistrate Court?
3. What challenges are affecting the use of records storage systems at Kasangati Magistrate Court?
4. What are the requirements for designing an electronic records storage system for enhancing retrieval of records at Kasangati Magistrate Court?

#### **1.7 Scope of the study**

##### **1.7.1 Conceptual scope**

This project will be limited to the objectives of the research. The study will focus on court records, the storage systems, the challenges affecting the use of records storage or filing system and designing an electronic records storage system for enhancing the retrieval of records at Kasangati Magistrate Court.

### **1.7.2 Geographical scope**

This project will be conducted at Kasangati Magistrate Court, located at Mirembe Stage, Namavundu Road, Gayaza a town in the Wakiso district of Uganda.

### **1.8 Significance of the study**

The researchers anticipate these study findings shall benefit the following:

#### **The Magistrates Courts**

The research study would significantly enable Kasangati Magistrate Court to improve the existing storage or filing system to suit the required requisites for managing storage and fast retrieval of court, documented evidence records. Additionally, the designed electronic records storage system to enhance records retrieval would be used as a prototype or a benchmark to come up with a more advanced solution-based system that can reduce space requirements and decrease equipment and labour costs.

#### **The fraternity of records/ information management**

The findings of the study are documented with evidence backed up by prior studies and findings of scholars and researchers, therefore the study contributes to the field of records management and can be used as a literature source for fellow scholars.

#### **To researchers and scholars**

To the students/ researchers, the study enabled the researchers to gain conceptual and practical knowledge in legal records management specifically in court settings hence contributing to our knowledge base regarding the field of study.

### **1.9 Definition of Key Terms**

**Records storage:** According to Read & Ginn (2011), records storing is the actual placement of records, according to a plan, on a shelf or in a file drawer. “Storage can be electronically saving a record to a medium readable by a computer. The term filing may be used to mean storage, but filing is usually associated with paper records only”.

**Filing:** “Filing is a process by which documents of the same transaction are assembled chronologically to form a file (Cheng, 2018)”.

**Records retrieval:** Retrieval is the process of locating and removing a record or file from storage. It is also the action of recovering information on a given subject from stored records (Read & Ginn, 2011).

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

A literature review is defined as "a systematic way of collecting and synthesising previous research" (Snyder, 2019). Snyder (2019) stated that a literature review is significant in research through evaluating the state of knowledge on a phenomenon, identifying research gaps as well as discussing a particular matter. In these cases, the literature review discusses various types of court records, storage/ maintenance and retrieval, records storage systems in courts, challenges encountered in storage or court records and electronic records storage and retrieval systems leveraged in courts.

#### 2.2 Records Management in Courts

Records management is the key success factor in the judicial system. "Systematic, efficient and organised records management system provides comprehensive information for courts to guarantee unbiased decisions" (Wan *et al.*, 2011). Record management is very crucial for the functioning of the court. Both nationally and internationally, judiciary systems have engaged in some reforms to make records management efficient and effective in their courts.

The available literature shows that magistrate courts are dealing with a huge number of case records. Magistrate courts are at the lowest level in the hierarchy of judiciary, The magistrates' courts have a responsibility to make sure that court documents are made, maintained, secured, and stored effectively so that they can be accessed at the appropriate location and time as needed (Hunie & Dewah, 2019).

Courts play a crucial role in society and occupy a central place in the lives of the people and good governance of a country (Kusber *et al.*, 2021). A legal system cannot function effectively and efficiently without records. More than any other duty of the public sector, they are also essential to the administration of the law (Brown *et al.*, 2017; Mukred & Yusof, 2015). Records are essential to judicial administration because they support the administration of justice. Complete information from correct records enables judges to make impartial decisions in court situations (Issa & Wamukoya, 2018). Without court records, cases cannot be determined and decisions are delayed.

Mosweu & Kenosi (2018) mentioned that good record-keeping in courts enables the concerned parties to enquire about the status of their case. Issa & Wamukoya (2018), revealed that court records helped to reduce case delays because judges and the parties were well informed about the case since evidence or proof was readily available online. Saman & Haider (2012) affirm that records management plays a very important role in ensuring that complete information is available to jurists to make decisions, avoid corruption, speed up case disposal and most importantly the protection of legal rights of individuals and society at large.

Motsaathebe & Mnjama (2009) postulated that the evaluation of lower court records has a significant role in the judge's judgment when an accused person appeals against a conviction, demonstrating the critical necessity of well-managed information in dispute resolution and adjudication. The authors opined that the accused person might not receive justice if the case file cannot be located because of bad record-keeping procedures. Issa & Wamukoya (2018) posited that the absence of record-keeping systems and controls within the judicial system leaves scope for corruption or collusion between court officials and lawyers hence impeding justice to the right people.

### **2.2.1 Position of storage and retrieval in the records life cycle**

According to William (2021), Records management is a specialised discipline that is concerned with the systematic analysis and control of information created, received, maintained, or used by an organisation according to its mission, operations, business processes, and activities. Effectively managing records keeps track of organisation transactions.

Read & Ginn (2015) and William (2021) concur with the International Organisation of Standardisation definition of a record as “information created, received, and maintained as evidence and as an asset by an organisation or person in pursuit of legal obligations or the transaction of business” (ISO 15489-2:200, 2016).

Records are assets that value or record or document information subjected to change over time. Franks (2018) posits that records value is observed in phases that include the active stage: which are records that are frequently accessed in a period of two to five months, semi-active: he noted are records that are created or captured and accessed frequently compared to active records, and archive phase, Franks (2018) agrees with other authors that records in this phase have historical value to the organisation and are permanently preserved (William, 2021; Cheng, 2018; Penn & Pennix, 2017). Its, therefore, worth noting that all evidential records go through these three phases within the records life cycle (Ssekitto, 2020).

The records life cycle concept provides a structure for effective and efficient records management (Penn & Pennix, 2017). The author noted that records in the life cycle have life is created or received. Bryson, (2017) and Matongo & Jacobs (2022) asserted that at this stage, their physical form and content are established and then maintained, referred to, revised, and refiled.

Penn & Pennix (2017) further indicated that as the age of the records increases, the need has to be stored or disposed of. Read & Ginn (2015, 2011) identified phases of the record life cycle that included creation, distribution, use, maintenance, and disposition. Read & Ginn (2015) expounded on the last two phases, maintenance involves storing, retrieving, and protecting records and disposition involves transferring, retaining/ archiving, or destroying records. All records have to be maintained both in active, semi-active and archive through different storage and retrieval considerations i.e., filing arrangements and supplies, equipment and electronic storage and retrieval systems, these practices are also done to obsolete records in order to create spaces for records without space (William, 2021).

## **2.3 Types of Court records managed in Magistrate Courts**

### **2.3.1 Subpoena**

A subpoena is a court order that mandates the presentation of evidence, the production of documents to the court, or both. Either the opposing party or a third party could receive a subpoena to provide case-related documents (Cross, 2022; International Records Management Trust, 1999).

### **2.3.2 Search Warrants**

According to Wszalek (2020), a search warrant is a written order signed by a judge or magistrate allowing a law enforcement officer to search a certain person, a predetermined location, or a vehicle for criminal evidence. To preserve people's legitimate expectation of privacy against arbitrary government physical trespass or another intrusion, a search warrant is typically a requirement. Search warrants could be issued or witnesses interrogated.

### **2.3.3 Discovery**

An order for discovery could be issued to one or both parties to produce documents; an order for discovery may also be made against a person or body who is not a party to the proceedings. Discovery: The process whereby parties to court proceedings identify and disclose to each other documents relevant to the issues in the proceedings (International Records Management Trust, 1999).

### **2.3.4 Case Papers**

Case papers/files: Documents or files about a particular project, person, location, activity, or another subject. Also known as project files, transactional files, special instance papers, dockets, and dossiers. Prosecutors, judges, or the police may all establish case files (T. Mosweu, 2021).

According to Tabar *et al.*, (2022), case files are among the most valuable of all court records since they typically contain original copies of all relevant documents, including evidence, writs, testimony, subpoenas, publications, etc. Details that are never noted in the minutes, orders, or judgments can be discovered in these files. For each term of court, court clerks in some jurisdictions gather all closed case files into a sizable bundle and name it with that term. Other court clerks, on the other hand, provide their documents with case numbers and make them accessible through plaintiff-defendant cross-indexes (International Records Management Trust, 1999; O. Mosweu, 2019; Swartz, 2018).

### **2.3.5 Court Minutes**

The clerk briefly records each court proceeding in the minutes. Minutes are valuable even if they are rarely indexed. In the absence of dockets and indexes, minutes will show which terms of court an ancestor's cases occur in (Swartz, 2018). Early courts frequently convened for a week or until the business was finished every three months. The minute books typically include information about the court's term, its meeting month and year, and its location. International Records Management Trust (1999) elucidated that magistrate courts create several categories of case records such as civil, criminal and miscellaneous case records.

### **2.3.6 Attorney Records**

The attorneys who appear in court on behalf of the plaintiff or defendant are not always lawyers. Several colonies in the early years banned the practice of law by attorneys-at-law-professional lawyers educated in techniques and procedures of law. Instead, this role was taken by attorneys-in-fact, proxies for the plaintiff or defendant who pleaded the case for someone else before the court (Stevenson *et al.*, 2020).

There are two main types of records concerning attorneys. The first is letters of attorney, or permission for an attorney-in-fact to appear before the court on behalf of a plaintiff or defendant. Such a letter is very similar to the letters testamentary or administrative in a probate case and contains the name of an attorney, the party granting the proxy, the case involved, and the date when permission is granted.

### **2.3.7 Judgement Books**

In some jurisdictions, the court clerk is required to enter a lengthy minute entry with a summary of the case and its conclusion in a unique book of judgments after the court renders judgment and the matter is closed (Abramova, 2018; Saman & Haider, 2012). These judgement books/volumes are popular legal sources for lawyers and members of the bench because of their brevity. Before the days of printed court opinions, these judgments formed the precedents for future legal decisions

### **2.3.8 Original wills**

Orders of the court are recorded by law in most jurisdictions for future reference. Executions are an important kind of order, often rating a separate volume for recording. They are directed to the sheriff, marshal, or constable to enforce (International Records Management Trust, 1999).

### **2.3.9 Dockets**

A case is added to the court docket and remains there until trial once a judicial body decides to hear it. For every change in the case's status or pending action for each term of court, a brief entry is put on the docket until the matter is closed, carried over, settled out of court, or until a decision is made (Njuguna, 2020). As a result, whenever a matter is still pending, its current status may be ascertained by looking through the docket. For at least three or four terms of court, the majority of cases were on the docket.

The majority of courts maintain several different dockets, including those for criminal, civil, equity (chancery), miscellaneous (condemnations, lunacy commitments, voter disqualification, adoptions, divorces, tax foreclosures, insolvency, estates, and so forth), stets (cases removed from the regular docket because they involve issues that are not criminal), and so on (Kalusopa & Ngulube, 2012).

### **2.3.10 Witnesses List**

Paterson *et al.*, (2018) opined that most courts paid witnesses back, which promoted involvement from individuals who had to travel a great distance or quit their jobs to appear. The authors further elucidated that the identities of the witnesses and the payments they received are listed in witness books and lists. Even the addresses and ages of the identified witnesses are included in some lists. Lonati (2018) stated that these lists might not be entirely accurate. They do, however, offer an additional method of locating ancestral families under those circumstances.

## **2.4 Records Storage Systems and Equipment Used in Magistrate Courts**

Since different numbers and types of court records will be filed and have different time requirements for retention, each form of record requires a different amount of space. Depending on the type of case and the level of technology and procedures used by the court, different amounts of space are required for records of both current and inactive cases (International Records Management Trust, 1999).

As court cases progress through four stages: case initiation; active status; case disposition or closing; and post-disposition activity (Kärner, 2022), These metamorphic phases resemble the records lifecycle in that active status and case resolution necessitate maintaining and using records, which necessitate robust storage medium or systems.

### **2.4.1 Electronic Court Records Storage Systems**

#### **2.4.1.1 Cloud-based Electronic Court Records Storage Systems**

Cloud computing involves web-based hosted services divided into the following three basic categories, these include Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS), Software as a Service (SaaS) and Platform as a Service (PaaS) (Franks, 2018; McLeod & Gormly, 2018).

Cloud storage is significant because it can improve access to and sharing of records and data, increase security, increase the potential for long-term preservation, take advantage of economies of scale and potentially save money. McLeod & Gormly (2018) note that the prevailing costs are the drivers to records personnel to increasingly use the cloud for the storage of court records. Cloud-based services save on the transmission time of the records hence expediting the decision-making process in public institutions.

This is a critical benefit given the records instigated challenges that most public institutions in Kenya face which result in delayed service delivery (Njuguna, 2020). Cloud-based services also enhance the integrity of records compared to physical records which can be lost, amended or mutilated easily. Electronic records stored in the cloud will stay usable for longer and around the clock thus supporting timely decision-making and service (Lucy, 2017).

#### **2.4.1.2 Block chain-Based Court Records Storage Systems**

According to Jain *et al.*, (2021), Blockchain can replace voluminous criminal records with network documents that are swiftly accessible and untampered or changed making them safe and Secure.

Block chain is a peer-to-peer network that helps in the decentralisation of data, the immutability characteristic of block chain ensures the integrity and security of data (Jain *et al.*, 2021). Block chain has extensive implications for data security and authentication at reduced cost and improved efficiency, therefore, records management experts must comprehend it (Purvi & Priyanka, 2019). Various scholars and researchers have enumerated the use of this court records storage technology in courts in Asia and Europe (Cai *et al.*, 2021; Corrales *et al.*, 2019).

#### **2.4.1.1 Electronic Records Storage Media**

##### **2.4.1.1.1 Microfilm and Microfiche**

There are several microforms and micrographics applications, including updatable microfiche for the storage of active case files and roll microfilm for the long-term storage of closed cases (Seniwoliba *et al.*, 2017).

According to United States National Archive (2019), in many cases, the microfilming of court records does not destroy hard-copy files, and some courts microfilm cases merely as a safety precaution in case the paper file cannot be located. If the introduction of microforms is followed by the deletion or destruction of hard-copy files, significant space can be saved.

##### **2.4.1.1.2 Optical Disk Technology**

According to Read & Ginn (2011), optical disk technology promised the ability to store vast amounts of information in very small spaces. They further expounded that while many institutions are moving toward the electronic storage of records, either in digital form or as imaged documents, this technology is still maturing, and standards have not yet been developed for the use of optical disks for records storage. Optical media include optical disks, Compact disks, computer-to-laser disk output, digital videodisks, optical cards, and digital versatile disks (Read & Ginn, 2015).

However, Abramova (2018) contends that microfilm remains the best medium for the long-term storage of inactive court records, and in planning a court facility it will be necessary to consider all of the possible records storage media and their potential for future installation.

#### **2.4.2 Manual Records Storage System**

According to Penn & Pennix (2017) and Read & Ginn (2015), manual records storage systems involve storing paper-based records using shelves, files and guides or any other storage equipment and supplies.

In the first half of the twentieth century, manual storage/ filing systems tamed the chaos that arose from the growth of records attributed to the typewriter (Franks, 2018). An often-cited

records management adage advises storage system planners to select an arrangement or component that correlates to how records will be requested, for example, a person might request a record by a person's name or organisation, the numeric identifier, date of birth or creation, geographic or subject identifier.

### **2.4.3 Records Storage/ Filing Arrangement**

William (2021) states that storage arrangement places logically related records in a predetermined sequence for retrieval when needed. Franks (2018) concurs that paper files were most often organised according to one of these filing methods: alphabetic, numeric, geographic, subject, and chronological.

#### **2.4.3.1 Alphabetic Storage System**

A system in which files and documents are arranged in alphabetic order from A to Z is known as an alphabetic storage system (Franks, 2018; William, 2021). The system is commonly used in small offices, where a simple folder structure based on employee or client names stored alphabetically is created on a shared drive or drawer (Franks, 2018).

Alphabetic file arrangements are compatible with both drawer- and shelf-type filing equipment, guides or other dividers, marked with single or double-letter alphabetic designations. Alphabetic file arrangements can also employ colour coding for misfile detection (Levitt, 2014). Commonly encountered examples of filing units for alphabetic arrangements include personal names; the names of companies, government agencies, or other organizations; geographic place names; and topical headings that represent the contents of folders, documents, index cards, microfiche, or other objects.

#### **2.4.3.2 Numeric Storage System**

Numeric records management is any classification system for arranging and storing records that are based on numbers (Read & Ginn, 2011). Read and Ginn state that numeric records storage system is often used in organisations that store and retrieve very large numbers of records and that have a need to preserve the confidentiality of their records and information. Franks (2018) points out Dewey Decimal Classification System (DDC) as the most commonly known numeric filing system in libraries.

William (2021) argues that a numeric storage system increases privacy, and decreases training requirements and filing labour for its advocates; numeric filing requires fewer rules to cover special situations; this system remains the simplest and most widely used (Levitt, 2014). On

contrary, sequential numeric storage systems usually require the time-consuming or back-shifting of folders from cabinet to cabinet to make room for newly created records as older records are purged from drawers or shelves (William, 2021).

#### **2.4.3.3 Subject Storage System**

A subject storage system is one in which each document relates to a specific subject matter and is arranged in alphabetical order by subject (Read & Ginn, 2011). The categories are arranged according to the types of activities taking place, and each category usually contains several subcategories (Franks, 2018). Read & Ginn (2011) assert that a subject storage system is recommended when the range of topics used within the organisation is broad. Subject files may include: correspondence and reports; budget and financial information; policies and procedures; planning documents and competitive intelligence (Read & Ginn, 2011; William, 2021)

Franks (2018) and Read & Ginn (2011) highlight that this system is easier to remember than names; related records are easier to find; its supports growth by adding a subdivision to main subject titles. However, Read & Ginn (2011) note that the inconsistent subject title coding on records can make the storage and retrieval of records difficult.

#### **2.4.3.4 Geographic Storage System**

Read & Ginn (2011) define a geographic storage system as a method of storing and retrieving records by location using a geographic storage system. Franks (2018) expounds that geographic locations are usually arranged by numeric code or in alphabetic order. A geographic storage system is the classification of records by geographic location usually arranged by numeric code or in alphabetic order. The geographic storage system classifies records according to geographic location. (Franks, 2018). The principal advantage of this system is that operations relating to a specific location are filed together as well as providing reference to information on specific geographical areas to enable decision-making about locations (Read & Ginn, 2011). The authors further posit that a geographic storage system is disadvantageous because the user must know the geographic location or an index must be created and maintained.

#### **2.4.3.5 Chronologic Storage System**

Chronological storage is a filing/ storage system that arranges records by date. (William, 2021) postulates that early storage systems used chronological logbooks that listed all records created or received by an organisation. A chronological storage system can be used in transaction files,

reminder notes, invoices and travel documents (Franks, 2018). The chronological system's principal limitation is that the chronological logs are not compatible with demanding retrieval requirements, in other words, to find requested records a huge log must be examined. Nonetheless, current organisations that maintain chronological logs for example those that use records management systems driven by block chain technology.

#### **2.4.4 Records Storage Equipment**

Storage or filing equipment can be categorised as fixed lateral shelving, hanging open-box files, movable lateral shelving, vertical drawer filing, mechanized filing, and other specialized filing equipment, such as card-filing equipment; top or open reference files; large document files; computer-product-filing equipment for printouts, tapes, disks, and the platter; and microfilm-filing equipment (Mohamed *et al.*, 2018; Read & Ginn, 2015).

Alegbeleye & Chilaka (2019) asserted that the most important consideration when deciding how much file storage space is needed is arguably the filing system. Costs related to staff and space will be impacted by this choice for many years. Equipment should match the court application; files should not be forced into outdated filing equipment (KSL, 2022; Robertson, 2019)

#### **2.4.5 Records Storage Supplies**

Courts often have traditional recordkeeping procedures and practices that should be changed. If the court has accumulated large amounts of records, it may not have been complying with the authorised records retention and destruction schedules. Robertson (2019) opined that possessing adequate storage or filing supplies also makes the court records practises and teams work efficiently.

Read & Ginn (2015, 2011) enumerated various filing supplies such as file folders, file guides, file supports, out folders, general guides, labels and sorters.

### **2.5 Challenges Affecting Records Storage in Magistrate Courts**

#### **2.5.1 Inadequacy of Space**

Susan Taiwo *et al.*, (2013) revealed various challenges affecting records storage in Courts of the South-western region of Nigeria, for instance, the most notable was an accumulation of semi-current and inactive records leading to the inadequacy of space, because records are basic to legal systems large volumes of records tend to accumulate after a relatively short period (International Records Management Trust, 1999).

### **2.5.2 Change in Perception**

In the past, records are perceived as unwanted piles of papers. Yusof (2008) stated that there is no serious impact if records are lost or destroyed. Such a perception is misleading since records are not only related to inactive information but also active information needed for the evidence and continuity of court trials.

### **2.5.3 Delays in Records Retrieval**

Alegbeleye & Chilaka (2019) opines that easy retrieval guarantees the timely availability of records for decision-making. Delay in records retrieval processes is a manifestation of poor records management practices, which breeds inefficiency.

### **2.5.4 Misplacement of Court Records**

In a recent study conducted at Alice Magistrate's Court in Nigeria, Khunjulwa & Festus (2021) indicated misplaced files. Misplacement was mainly due to the misfiling of records, especially after use. Misplaced and lost files are the major causes of case delays or subversion of justice delivery by courts. If records are not available, a court cannot proceed with the justice delivery process.

### **2.5.5 Load shedding and unstable electric power supply**

load shedding and absence of backup electricity supply rendering it difficult to access the records on computers at such times and which eventually cause delays in justice delivery by the court (Khunjulwa & Festus, 2021). These challenges are among the most pressing concerning electronic records management in magistrate courts of Africa.

### **2.5.6 Poor implementation strategies and policies**

According to Yosef (2008), a systematic, effective and efficient records management needs policy. She defines a policy as "a statement that serves as a roadmap to guide the organisation in making a decision and appropriate action in records management initiative". Without a policy, the organisation does not know what is to be retained and destroyed. Dotto & Mwantimwa (2022) revealed that unprofessional records personnel employ irrelevant stratagem and poor implementation which impedes magistrate's courts in Tanzania and renders them inefficient.

### **2.6.7 E-Readiness**

Many scholars have put up an array of reasons for why Africa and other developing nations lag in the adoption of electronic records and the information age (Hunie & Dewah, 2019; Mohamed *et al.*, 2018). This is the same case with courts in African countries, they are not ready too and still slow to leverage and embrace the new technologies in managing electronic records storage (Matongo & Jacobs, 2022b).

### **2.6 Requirements for designing electronic storage systems for courts**

In a study to determine the importance of electronic records in implementing decisions in courts. Hunie & Dewah (2019) revealed that electronic records are susceptible to manipulation which renders them inadmissible in implementing decisions in court proceedings. However, the scholars noted that electronic records are significant in the administration of justice as they capture the activity as it occurs.

Franks (2018) defined an electronic record as a “record on electronic storage media, produced, communicated, maintained and or accessed using electronic equipment.” These records can be readily accessed and changed anytime on electronic storage media and systems (Read & Ginn, 2015). Electronic storage/ filing systems enable court practitioners to search and lookup for the required information, the nature of cases as well as the court hearing the case. In Qodiraliyev's (2021) study on the digitisation of court records in the United States of America and German, he revealed that all courts in the United States use the Electronic Court Filing System for filing and storage of court records.

The system possesses numerous non and functional requirements pointed out in MoReq2010 and the Department of Defence Records Management Program (Franks, 2018; Qodiraliyev, 2021).

The system's functional requirements include: downloading and printing documents in the system; reviewing audio recordings of court hearings; monitoring the status of the case; marking an electronic document as a read-only electronic record; protecting the record against modification or tampering; filing a record against an organisational file plan or taxonomy for categorisation; marking records as essential (vital) records; assigning disposal (archival or destruction rules) to records; freezing and unfreezing disposal rules; applying for access and security controls (security rules may differ from the source electronic document in an EDMS or ECMS, and providing a history/audit trail.

## **2.7 Research gap**

Various scholars and researchers have carried out multifarious studies on the management of records in legal settings, designing systems for court records. Interestingly, it's worth noting that none of the studies has been carried out at specifically Kasangati Magistrate Court, which resulted in a research gap where there is scant prior literature that has been written about the types of court records, records storage and equipment, challenges inhibiting and requirements for a robust storage system thus the need to conduct a study and design an electronic storage system to enhance retrieval at Kasangati Magistrate court.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the process and procedures that were followed in conducting the study. It covered the area of study, research design, study population, sample size and selection, sampling and sample techniques, data collection methods and instruments, data quality control issues, presentation and analysis of data, ethical issues, limitations and delimitations.

#### **3.2 Area of the Study**

This project was conducted at Kasangati magistrate court, located at Mirembe stage, Namavundu Road, Gayaza a town in the Wakiso district of Uganda. This case study was chosen because it is among the new magistrate courts attached in Kasangati and has believed to be progressing slowly concerning legal records management at the site.

#### **3.3 Research Design**

Surbhi (2019) revealed that research designs are procedures for collecting, analysing, interpreting and reporting data in research studies. To adequately address the research problem, the researcher adopted a case study research design for the study because it aided the researcher in conducting an in-depth investigation into the phenomenon. This helped to produce relevant data concerning the study and it allowed the researcher to carry out an intensive study by probing participants to get a deeper understanding of their feelings, perception and experiences regarding records storage and systems at the court.

Hegde (2015) noted that the appropriateness in addressing the research problem, which is typically driven by the research questions, rests on the choice of research design for a given study.

#### **3.4 Research approach**

According to Surbhi (2019), the three main approaches to research; are the qualitative method, quantitative method and mixed method. This study adopted the qualitative methodological research approach. A qualitative methodology is an in-depth approach to exploring and understanding the meaning people ascribe to a human or social (Shyama-Prasad, 2020).

#### **3.5 Population of study**

The population is a set of individuals, and objectives of cases with mutually observable characteristics from which the researchers conclude (Carole & Richard, 2022). This population

of the study was five in total and composed of management staff members, records clerks and a records officer. Below is the categorisation of the population of study:

**Table 1: Categorisation of Population of Study**

<b>Population</b>	<b>Total Number</b>
Management	2
Records Clerk	2
Records officer	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>

Source: (Field data, 2022)

### **3.6 Sample size**

Given that the study employed qualitative research methodology and the population of the study is too small to select samples, the researcher adopted the whole population of five participants as a sample for the study. Shyama-Prasad (2020) concurs that those participants ranging from 5-50 are adequate sample sizes for research. He supplements that it is to ensure that everyone is represented and to prevent or avoid biases that might arise from sampling.

### **3.7 Data collection methods and instruments**

The study considered the use of both primary data and secondary data. Primary data collection was used: i.e., unstructured interviews and secondary data from document reviews of judicial magazines, strategy documents etc.

#### **3.7.1 Unstructured interviews**

An interview is a person-to-person verbal communication where one person asks another person a question which is intended to get an opinion or information (Meier, 2018). Unstructured interviews were used to collect data from Kasangati Magistrate Court staff purposively selected to participate in the study.

This method helped the researcher to seek information from Kasangati Magistrate Court which enabled us to collect vital information. Face-to-face interviews were conducted for one day. The interview questions designed by the researchers were guided by the research objectives see (Appendix one). The researcher developed interviews from the variables under the study which were presented and administered.

### **3.7.3 Document review**

The researchers developed a documentary checklist which was used to review both manual and electronic reports of Kasangati Magistrate Court. This enabled the researchers to obtain accurate and reliable information (See Appendix two).

The researchers reviewed Kasangati Magistrate Court magazines, diaries, brochures and flyers, annual reports, records unit documents, records and archives Act 2001, and the organogram for the Kasangati Magistrate Court structure. This instrument enabled the researchers to acquire the necessary, accurate and reliable information about the topic.

### **3.8 Data quality control issues**

Data quality control techniques were used to ensure that the data collected was valid and reliable. The instruments were first tested to ensure validity and reliability. Hegde (2015) stated that quality control involves ensuring satisfactory levels of validity and reliability.

#### **3.8.1 Validity and reliability of data collection instruments**

The instruments were tested to ensure validity and reliability. An informal pilot study was conducted on two records personnel at Kasangati magistrate court. Conducting a pilot study allowed the researchers to ask participants for their views which helped to eliminate bias at Kasangati magistrate court.

In this study data quality control techniques were used to ensure that the data collected was valid and reliable. The instruments were first tested to ensure they were valid and reliable.

### **3.9 Data collection procedures**

An introductory letter was acquired from the Head of Department, East African School of Library and Information Sciences at Makerere University to introduce the researchers to Kasangati Magistrate Court members of staff to request them to participate in the study.

The researchers had to seek permission from the authorities of Kasangati Magistrate Court under High Court to be allowed access to the staff and premises which was granted.

### **3.10 Data analysis and presentation**

In analysing and presenting the data, the researchers adopted Mthuli *et al.*, (2021) model which entailed six steps: i) organised and prepared data for analysis, ii) read all the data, iii) code the data, iv) generated categories and themes, v) description of the themes, vi) interpretation. This model was preferred for the study because it explained the steps with easy-to-follow guidelines

for handling this qualitative data. After collecting the data, the researcher carefully edited, sorted and coded which ensured the accuracy, completeness and quality of information given by respondents.

The researchers further typed categorised data and information obtained as per responses which informed in-depth analysis of the information and interpretation. This provided meaning to the designed research questions. The data collected was carefully edited centrally for completeness, accuracy and comprehensibility; after then, it was compiled, typed and presented which was in agreement with (Mthuli *et al.*, 2021)

### **3.11 Ethical issues**

Van Klaveren & De Wolf (2019) considered ethical issues as explanations of how the study would plan, conduct and communicate according to the accepted norms and regulations of the discipline of research.

#### **3.11.1 Confidentiality**

Respect for the privacy of participants was strictly adhered to by the researchers, the study protected the anonymity of individuals and roles. The researchers disassociated names from responses during the coding and recording process which protected the identities of participants (George, 2021)

### **3.12 Limitations and Delimitations of The Study**

#### **Low response rate**

The researchers faced the problem of a low response rate because some respondents kept on postponing their schedules to be interviewed and others preferred their superiors to respond first or delegate them to participate in the study. Others even claimed that they are not familiar with the subject of the study which affected the researcher when collecting data. This was sorted by the researcher making appointments within the respondents' time and was able to get the required information and also brief the respondents about the topic in the study.

#### **Fear to provide information**

The research was also hampered by the problem of fear of providing information by some of the respondents because they feared being reported to their supervisors or fear job security.

This problem was sorted by convincing respondents that their identity shall not be known and this is purely for academic work only and secrecy would be maintained as much as possible.

### **Inadequate literature**

The study was conducted based on a small sample as opposed to the whole population and therefore generalising the results for larger groups becomes unrealistic. The researcher encountered the problem of inadequate literature because research in the field of management of libraries is still new and so few publications have been issued in Uganda.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretations of the study findings which were conducted about designing an electronic records storage system to enhance retrieval at Kasangati Magistrate Court. The first section presents the response rate and demographic characteristics followed by a presentation and discussion of the study findings about specific objectives.

#### 4.2 Response rate

Mthuli *et al.*, (2021) assert that a response rate has to be presented in research findings as they represent the validity of the study, and failure to do so puts the validity of the study findings into question. The study targeted a sample size of five respondents. A small sample size ranging from 5 - 25 for an in-depth qualitative study which describes how people experience certain phenomena can be utilised (Mthuli *et al.*, 2021). This was in agreement with Hegde (2015) who agreed that 5 - 50 participants were an adequate sample size for qualitative studies. The response rate for the interviews was 100 % of the whole respondents as shown in table 3.

**Table 2: Showing the Response rate**

<b>Response rate</b>	<b>Targeted respondents</b>	<b>Respondents that participated</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Interviews	5	5	100

**Source:** Field data (2022)

Table 3 shows a summary of the response rate for the study. This response rate indicates that data was collected from a reasonable number of respondents; hence the collected data and the findings from it can be relied on. According to Mthuli *et al.*, (2021), “a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting; a rate of 60% is good and a response rate of 70% and above is excellent”. The researcher, therefore, believes that the findings of the study were representative of the actual population and can be generalised to other respondents who did not participate in the study (Delahunty & Ní Ríordáin, 2022)

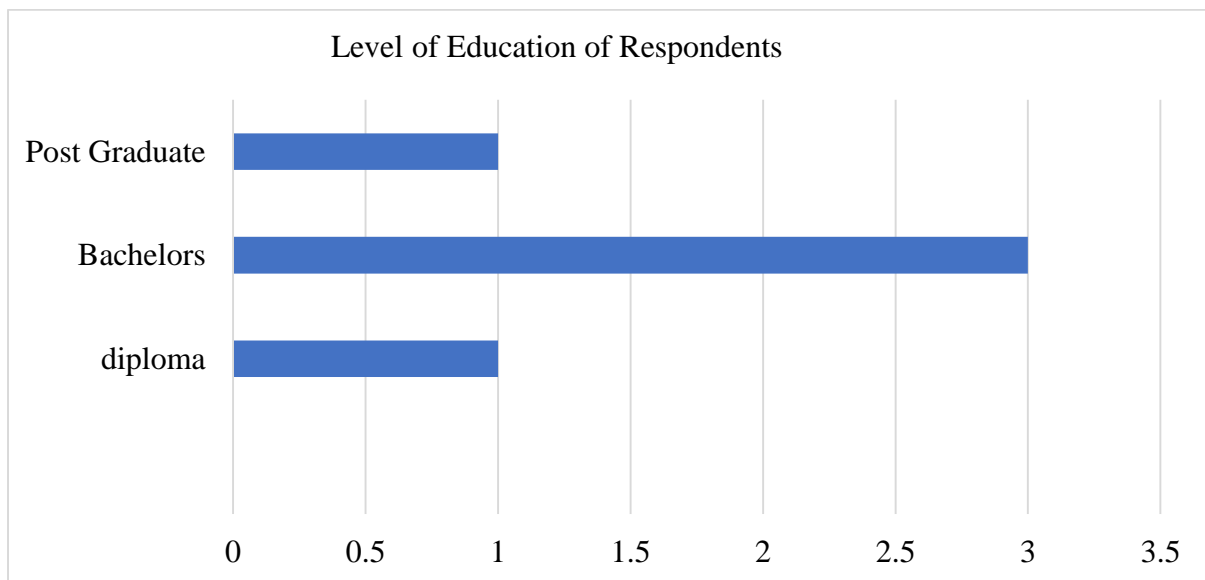
### 4.3 Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

The characteristics presented include the level of education. The implication of this study is to provide data regarding research participants and to be able to determine whether the study's participants are an accurate representation of the sample that will be used for generalisation (Mthuli,2021).

#### 4.3.1 Respondents by the level of education

The level of education of the respondents who participated in the study was captured and the findings are presented in figure 1 below;

**Figure 1: Respondents by The Level of Education**



**Source:** Field Data (2022)

The study findings in figure 1 indicate that one (20%) of the total respondents had a diploma, as well as respondents of a total of one (20%) had a postgraduate degree in any field in the field of library information science and services, and three (60%) of the respondents had a bachelor's degree in the field. Therefore, this implied that the respondents were competent and conscious about the questions and were able to answer every query with knowledge and comprehension of the field of legal and records and archives management.

### 4.4 Discussion of findings

#### 4.4.1 Types of records managed by Kasangati Magistrate Court

The first objective of the study was to find out different court records managed by Kasangati Magistrate Court. The researchers interviewed and carried out various document reviews of

the court. The findings of the study revealed various records created and maintained in the court records unit or registry. The records officer enumerated numerous court records created and maintained at Kasangati Magistrate court that include:

#### **4.4.1.1 Criminal Records**

According to Tabar *et al.*, (2022), criminal records are very similar to case files or completely the same based on varying judicial records taxonomy. The authors noted that these records contain evidence, writs, subpoenas and testimonies. The records officer at Kasangati Magistrate Court expounded on the criminal records that...

*“These criminal records are created immediately when the criminal is reported to the police authorities and files are generated, these same copies are similar to those that are attached to the criminal record copy of courts created during court proceedings or case hearing”.*

#### **4.4.1.2 Capital Offences**

The capital offence definition means that someone committed murder, depending on the jurisdiction, it can also include treason, bribery, espionage and rape. Therefore, such crimes are very many and record stored with these cases are voluminous. In the same category of criminal records, the records officer adds that...

*“These records belong to high offensive crimes such as manslaughter, burglary and treason, she further adds that these records are considered a priority and protected.”*

#### **4.4.1.3 Execution Records**

Execution records are certified copies of minutes of conviction and sentence, and sometimes copies of other trial documents relating to convicts sentenced to death, these usually include notations of the date set for execution and the date the execution warrant was issued.

#### **4.4.1.4 Family Records**

It is very clear that there are very many criminal records reported every day and night to law enforcers and these encompass family issues and affairs such as violence, abuse, juvenile crimes etc. Therefore, during the discussion, two informants (court records clerk) informed the researchers that;

*“We also create and maintain other categories of records specifically records related to family matters, wrangles, divorce, child abuse and protection and many more, and our main goal is to store and maintain all these records for evidence till the time of their use comes up.”*

The informants further enumerated other categories of family records maintained in the registry and these include, divorce, juvenile and adoption cause records, as they are elaborated below:

#### **4.4.1.5 Divorce Causes Records**

These records include the magistrate or judge's statement of the facts, the judge's conclusions of law, the order that a judgement is entered and the divorce decree itself. Thus, these provide evidence that a marriage has been legally ended.

#### **4.4.1.6 Adoption causes records**

These records contain information or records that the department, court or agency has accumulated about the termination of parental rights, the development of an adoption case plan and the supervision and monitoring of adoption placement, including the adoptive home study, birth parent and family records, foster homes placement records, planning card files and adoptive placement materials. (Law Insider, 2022)

According to the informant during the interview, who stated that these records and information should not be disclosed to an adopted adult only through meetings with authorised social workers of the adoption home or agencies.

#### **4.4.1.6 Juvenile Records**

Lemert (2019) elucidates that juvenile records are considered confidential and stored or maintained separately from other records, but they can still be viewed by the prosecutor, magistrates and law enforcement officers. These records usually have subfolders which contain all copies relating to each delinquency case, and undisciplined juvenile cases, and they are usually maintained by either court clerks or the magistrates.

In a further discussion with the informants in management, they expounded that:

*“A juvenile or a child below eighteen years of age can have on the court record, one file number regardless of the numbers and forms of cases that have been filed involving the juvenile”*

#### **4.4.1.7 Administration Causes Record**

Administrative records are considered judicial, meaning a public record created or maintained by a court or judicial agency that is related to the management, supervision, or administration of the court or a judicial agency.

#### **4.4.1.8 Taxation Records**

Taxation records encompass tax return work papers, documentation relating to any tax contests and any other books of accounts or records required to be maintained under applicable tax laws or any agreement with any tax authority.

#### **4.4.2 Storage Systems and Equipment Used at Kasangati Magistrate Court**

The second objective of the study was to analyse the storage systems and equipment used at Kasangati Magistrate Court. From this objective, the researchers aimed to analyse various storage and filing systems in place either manual or automated, equipment used to store and retrieve court records and supplies used in the practices of maintaining and use of records.

From the finding of the study, the researchers revealed that the court record unit or the registry uses a manual records storage system that is known as an alphanumeric storage system which is also known in filing arrangements. From the discussions, the informants said that: *“we leveraged this filing arrangement or system because it was the way to go, due to the absence of an advanced electronic court information management system at the court.”*

These findings are similar to those of Issa & Wamukoya (2018) in a study at Dar Es Salaam Magistrate Court. Their study revealed that even though there was a provision for an electronic court system there was still the presence of manual records storage and filing within the records unit.

##### **4.4.2.1 Equipment and Supplies**

It was revealed that the records personnel at Kasangati Magistrate Court use various records storage equipment which included lateral file cabinets, vertical file cabinets, shelves and acid-free boxes. Other equipment used included: photocopiers, scanners, computers, patching machines and staple wires were noted in an interview with the informants in the records unit. The informants further enumerated various supplies used. For instance, file folders, hanging file holders, labels, markers, box files, and pencils.

#### **4.4.3 Challenges affecting records storage and retrieval at Kasangati Magistrate Court**

The third objective of the study was to identify challenges affecting records storage and retrieval at Kasangati magistrate court, from this objective, the researchers sought to find out various inhibitors to effective and efficient court records storage and retrieval at the court.

Hence, according to the informants, various challenges impede records storage and retrieval at the court, as described below:

**Limited funds:** In an interview with the records clerk, records capturing is faced with limited funds to facilitate the activity for example purchasing equipment and allowances for staff, and hiring professionals to perform capturing procedures.

**Lack of a specific system for storing or maintaining records:** From the interviews with the informants, they said that this absence of records and an Electronic Court information system at the court which is available in other courts, hence still inhibit the unit from advancing to the latest technology demands.

**Absence of automation:** This leads to difficulties in retrieving records because the system used is manual based.

**Lack of legislation or policy:** From the interviews conducted, respondents stated that the top management is neither aware of nor conversant with the requirements of records storage and for that reason; they either ignore or inadequately cover records maintenance issues.

**Inadequate technology infrastructures:** According to the system administrator, frequent power outage constitutes a serious bottleneck to records maintenance and the court at large which leads to the deterioration of existing electronic equipment

#### **4.4.3.1 Suggestions to the challenges encountered at Kasangati magistrate court**

To enhance records retrieval, the following suggestions will help to improve as said by the respondents at the Court;

- To enrol the electronic court information management system.
- Lobbying for more funds to enable the purchase of state-of-the-art equipment and computers and storage technology for these sensitive records.
- Hiring professionals to advise and streamline all records practises in magistrate courts all over the country.
- Training and capacity building of staff about digital records storage and retrieval it's in advent values in acquiring more knowledge and skills in these aspects.
- To develop and come up with comprehensive policies and guidelines for digitising and e-storage to enhance and make retrieval seamless for all magistrate courts in Uganda.

#### **4.4.4 Electronic Storage System to Enhance the Retrieval of Records at Kasangati Magistrate Court.**

The fourth objective of the study was to design an electronic storage system to enhance the retrieval of records at Kasangati Magistrate Court. In an interview with the informant, that was asked, based on the existing challenges we intend to design a system to enhance records retrieval, what some of the requirements would you need from the intended system:

The respondents noted that: Judiciary is yet to enrol an electronic court management information system, however, the system is tested in other courts, but it does not work for archives and digitised records, therefore, we would need the intended system for the following requirements:

- Allow uploading of digitising records not only born-digital records;
- Print and share the records within the unity;
- The system should be able to index records in an alphanumeric format;
- The system should authenticate and authorise users to log in;
- The system should have audit trails for every modification done on the record;
- The system should not allow editing of the uploaded records to maintain integrity.

## **CHAPTER FIVE:**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

#### **5.2 Summary of The Findings**

This study was conducted to design electronic records storage to enhance the retrieval of records Kasangati Magistrate Court guided by the following objectives to identify different types of records, to analyse the different storage systems and equipment, to identify the challenges affecting records storage and retrieval and to design an electronic storage system to enhance the retrieval of records at Kasangati Magistrate Court. This chapter summary is based on the objectives of the study as elucidated below;

##### **5.2.1 Types of Court Records Managed at Kasangati Magistrate Court**

The first objective of the study was to identify various court records at the court, it was, therefore, noted in the study that the court created, maintained and used voluminous court records such as criminal records, offensive records, administrative records, adoption records and other family-related records etc.

##### **5.2.2 Records Storage Systems and Equipment at Kasangati Magistrate Court**

The second objective of the study was to analyse the different storage systems, equipment and supplies used at the court registry, from the findings it was revealed that the registry had installed lateral and vertical cabinets, shelves as well as different supplies such as hanging file holders, file folders, indexers and labels and guides.

##### **5.2.3 Challenges Affecting Records Storage and Retrieval at Kasangati Magistrate Courts**

The third objective of the study aimed at identifying different challenges affecting records storage and retrieval at the court registry, therefore, it can be summarised that inhibitors are inevitable to records management which included limited funds; lack of a specific system for storing or maintaining records; absence of automation; lack of legislation or policy and inadequate technology infrastructures.

#### **5.2.4 To Design an Electronic Storage System to Enhance the Retrieval of Records at Kasangati Magistrate Court**

The last objective of the study aimed to point out different functional requirements for the proposed electronic storage system to enhance the retrieval of records at Kasangati Magistrate Court, it is noted that there is the absence of such a robust system to carry out that task, thus the records personnel at the registry pointed out various requirements they would need in the proposed system. These included: allowing the uploading of digitising records not only born-digital records; printing and sharing the records within the unity; the system should be able to index records in an alphanumeric format; the system should authenticate and authorise users to log in; the system should have audit trails for every modification done on the record and the system should not allow editing of the uploaded records to maintain integrity.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

#### **5.3.1 Types of Court Records Managed at Kasangati Magistrate Court**

It was concluded that similar to all other entities of governments, institutions and agencies, Kasangati Magistrate Court also creates and maintains court records encompassed around family affairs, criminal offence records and administrative records. Such voluminous records created a call for the need for storage systems and equipment to handle the continuous growth of these records.

#### **5.3.2 Records Storage Systems and Equipment at Kasangati Magistrate Court**

It was concluded that the court registry maintains its records through the use of an alphanumeric filing arrangement and storage system. Therefore, it was further concluded that through use of such as system resulted in the continuous increase of voluminous records that are expected to grow drastically over years hence, resulting in challenges that inhibit retrieval at the magistrate court.

#### **5.3.3 Challenges Affecting Records Storage and Retrieval at Kasangati Magistrate Court**

Without evidence, justice is nowhere to be achieved and this can be achieved effectively if there is an efficient and robust storage system to maintain and store thousands of records securely as well as enhanced retrieval at any time. However, it was worth noting that challenges also were not on the verge to stop inhibiting these practices. For instance, the notable challenges were inadequate funds to inject into the acquisition of state-of-the-art storage systems for the ever-growing records in the registry.

### **5.3.4 To Design an Electronic Storage System to Enhance the Retrieval of Records at Kasangati Magistrate Court**

The mission of Kasangati Magistrate Court is to provide timely, quality and accessible justice for all citizens through the use of information communication technologies to facilitate fast access and retrieval of records or information. Despite the existence of such a system in the judiciary and its enrolment in the various courts. The court registry lacked a comprehensive system to maintain records that are not born digital. Hence, calling for a need for a proposed electronic storage system to enhance the retrieval of information required to deliver justice for all.

### **5.4 Recommendations**

From the findings of the study, the researcher recommends:

- Records officers and management should come up with a unified records management policy that will ensure sound management of the records, promote access to records, and enhance security and electronic records storage, among others.
- There is a need for the high court or magistrate court to launch an electronic records management training programme for its staff. This will help equip registry staff with the requisite skills to have a firm grasp of electronic records management.
- The study recommends that the Kasangati Magistrate Court should organise awareness-raising workshops and seminars to sensitise magistrate court staff on the important role of electronic records management.

### **5.5 Areas of Further Study**

For researchers interested in a similar topic, this study suggests more research on the following areas

- Investigation of existing legal and policy frameworks in electronic records management: A case study of Commercial Court of Uganda.
- Assessment of electronic records storage and security aspects in the new Electronic Court Information Management System.
- Examining records management practises and aspects in the management of juvenile court records in Family and Children's court (Magistrate courts Grade I).

## CHAPTER SIX

### A PROPOSED ELECTRONIC STORAGE SYSTEM TO ENHANCE THE RETRIEVAL OF RECORDS AT KASANGATI MAGISTRATE COURT

#### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the requirements of the system designing and development procedure of the electronic storage system. The rest of the chapter includes the system planning and designing process.

#### 6.2 System Requirements

The researchers considered the informant's functional requirements gathered while conducting the interviews of objective four in which the informants enumerated several functional and non-functional requirements.

##### 6.2.1 Functional Requirements

The requirements below were suggested by the recording personnel working at the registry of kasangati Magistrate Court. These include:

- The system should authenticate and authorise users to log in;
- The system should have audit trails for every modification done on the record;
- Print and share the records within the unity;
- The system should be able to index records in an alphanumeric format;
- Allow uploading of digitise records not only born-digital records;
- The system should not allow editing of the uploaded records to maintain integrity.

##### 6.2.2 Non-functional requirements

Non-functional requirements are usually concerned with how effectively the system works, including response times, data quantities, and security issues. According to popular belief, non-functional requirements are more important to fulfil than functional needs since, if they are not, the system will be essentially useless. According to the MoReq2010, a records management standard for system requirements elicits the requirements (Franks, 2018). The requirements are as listed below:

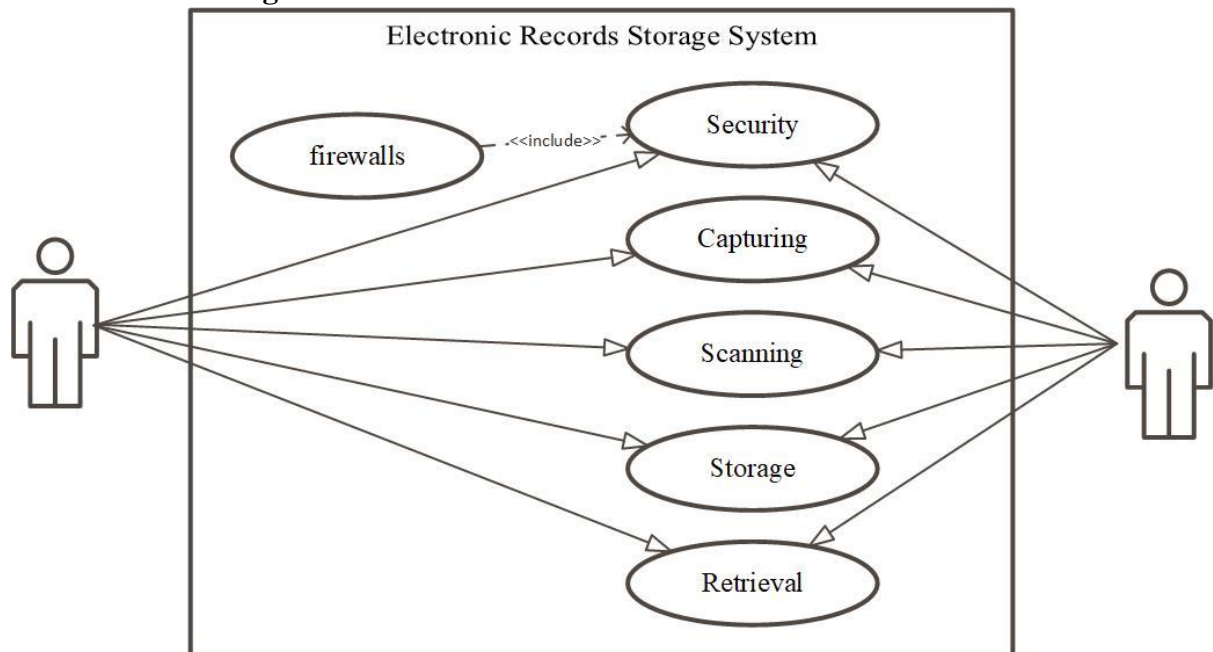
- Speed: determines how fast an application responds to commands;
- Security: To protect sensitive data, you may consider developing non-functional security features;

- Portability: means how effectively a system performs in one environment compared to another;
- Compatibility;
- Capacity;
- Reliability;
- Environment;
- Localisation.

### 6.3 System Design and Development

The Unified Modelling Languages diagrams were used for modelling the structures, behaviours and interactions of the application/software system.

#### 6.3.1 Use-cases diagrams



### 6.3.2 Flow chart diagrams

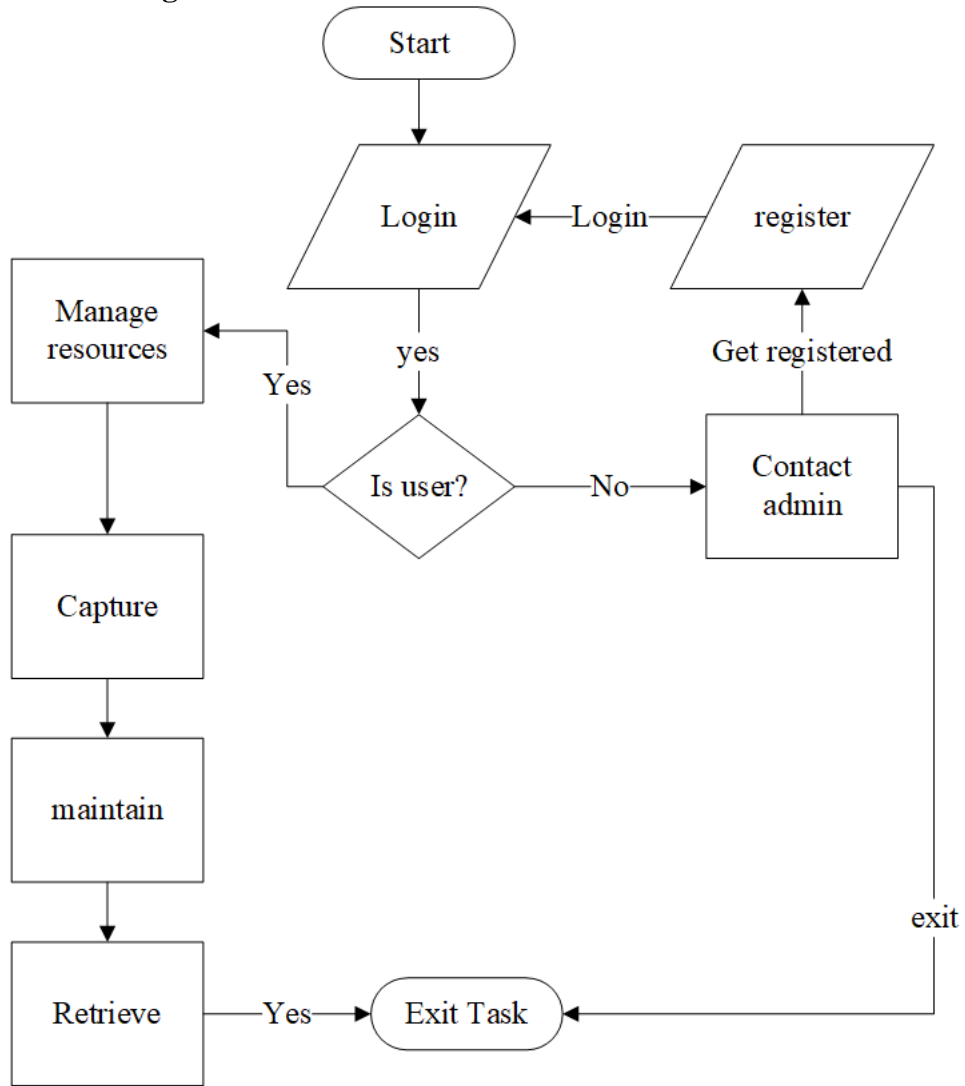


Figure 2: Flowchart

### 6.3.3 Data flow Diagrams

#### Level 0

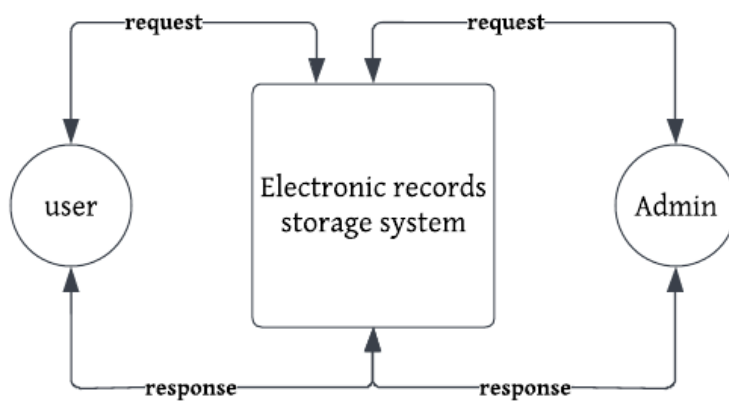
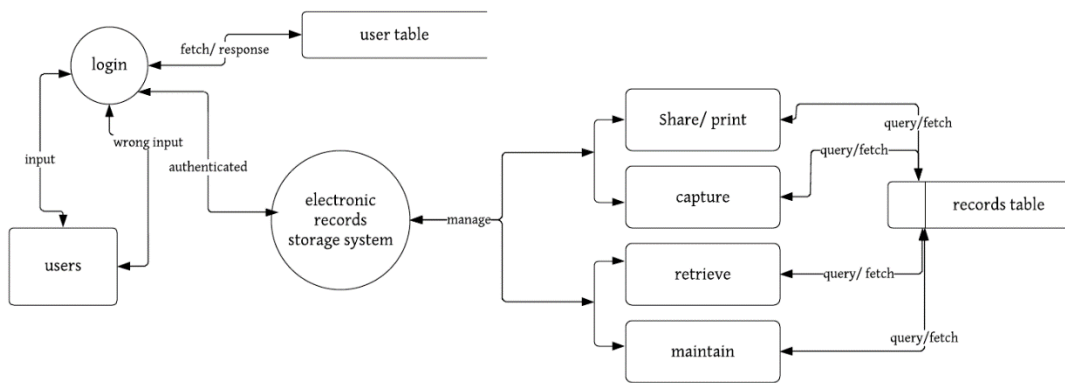


Figure 3: Level 0 Data flow diagram

## Level 1



**Figure 4: Level 1 Data flow diagram**

### 6.4 Development of Interfaces

The system is designed based on the elicited functional, non-functional and technical requirements expected from a full-fledged designed system.

The system is developed on top of the Microsoft office access database application, which comes with built functionalities such as user authentication and authorisation, expandable database storage of up to five terabytes and beyond of cloud storage, auto-update, simplicity in development and auto-scaling capabilities.

### The Software Specifications

Software	Specifications
Microsoft Office	2016 and above
Operating Systems	Microsoft Windows 2016 and beyond, Ubuntu and Mac Os for MacBooks

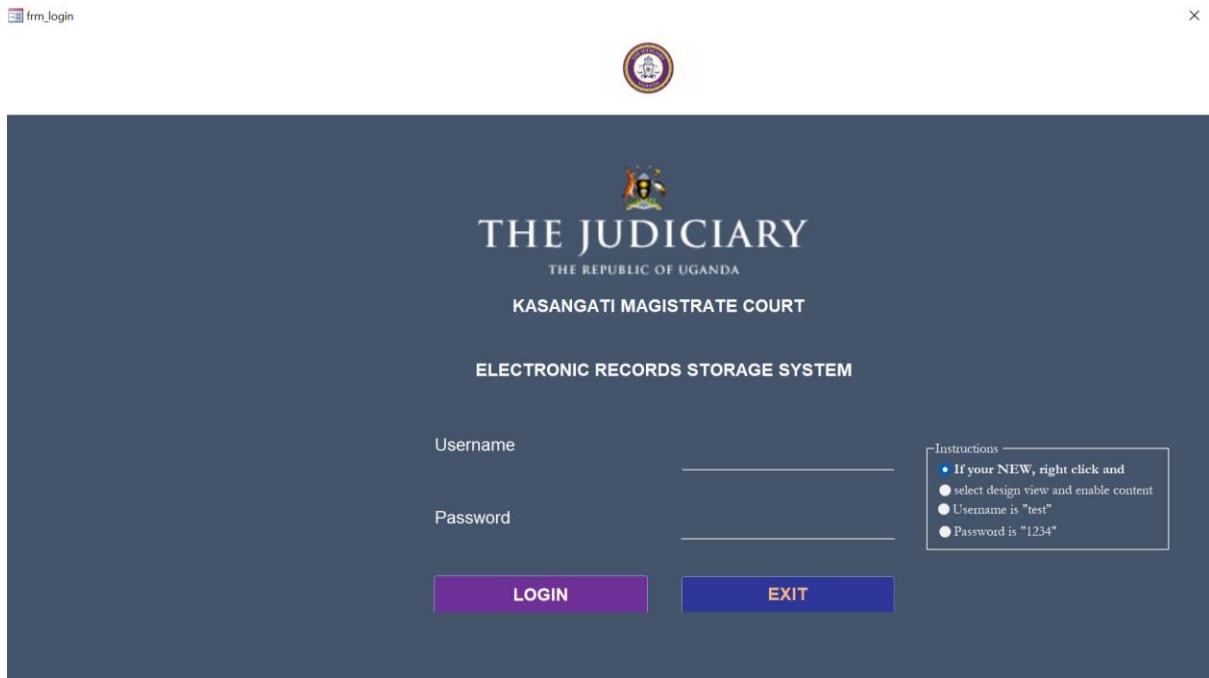
**Table 3: Software Specifications**

### Hardware Specification

Hardware	Specifications
Personal Computer (PC)	At least 4Gb RAM, 4Gb Hard disk
Scanners and Printers	Any format
Peripheral devices	Mouse, Keyboards and CPU

## Table 4: Hardware Specifications

### 6.4.1 Login Interface



frm\_login

THE JUDICIARY  
THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA  
KASANGATI MAGISTRATE COURT  
ELECTRONIC RECORDS STORAGE SYSTEM

Username \_\_\_\_\_

Password \_\_\_\_\_

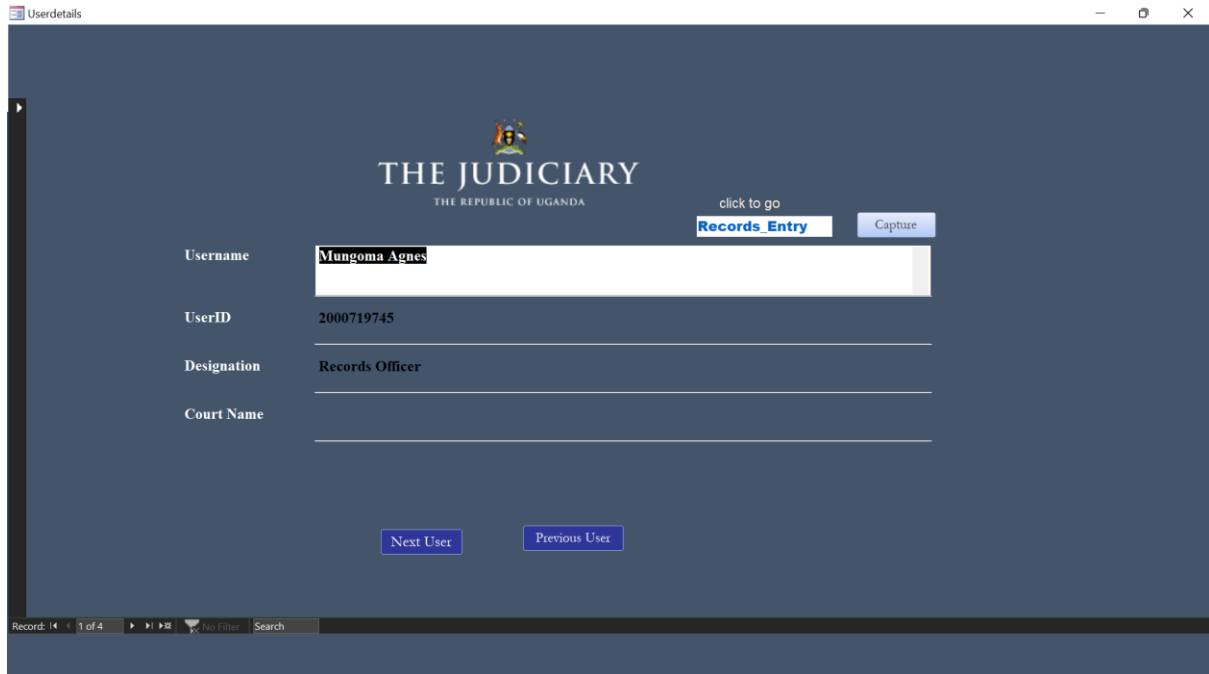
Instructions

- If your NEW, right click and
- select design view and enable content
- Username is "test"
- Password is "1234"

LOGIN EXIT

Figure 5: Login Interface for the ERS

### 6.4.2 Records Entry Interface



Userdetails

THE JUDICIARY  
THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

click to go

Records Entry Capture

Username Mungoma Agnes

UserID 2000719745

Designation Records Officer

Court Name \_\_\_\_\_

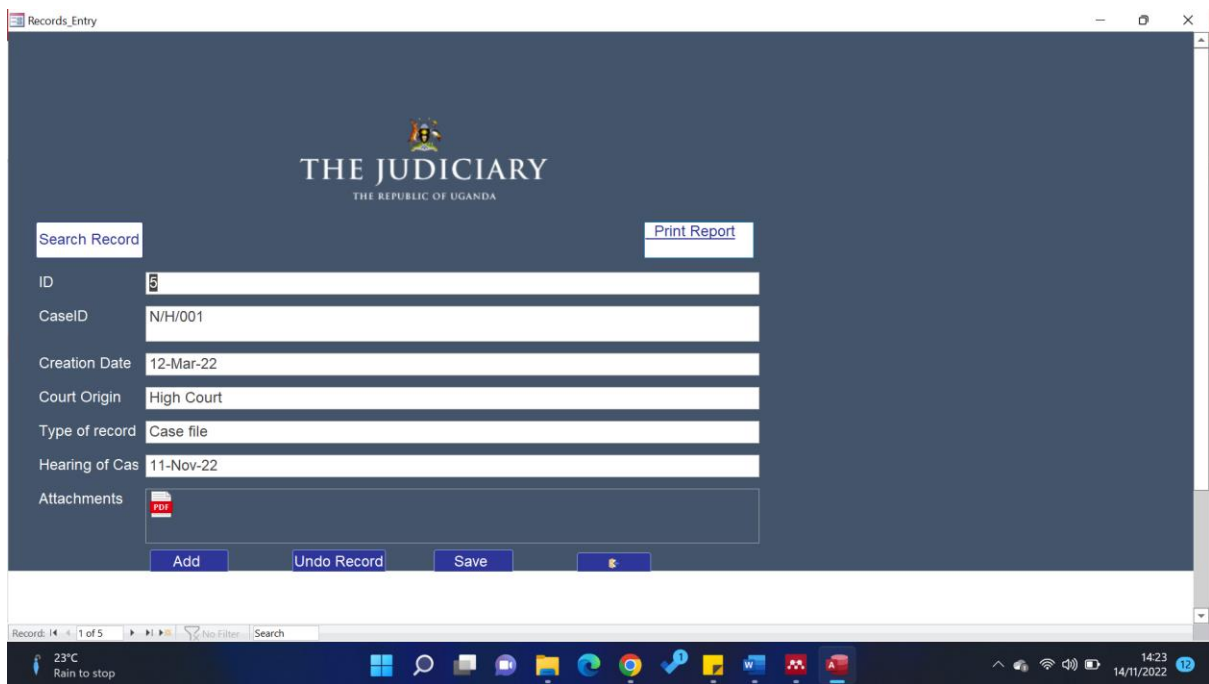
Next User Previous User

Record: 1 of 4 No Filter Search



**Figure 6: Records Entry Interface**

### 6.4.3 Records Retrieval Interface



**Figure 7: Searching and Printing Function**



**Figure 8: Searching and Printing Function**

### 6.4.4 Report Generation

E-RECORDS STORAGE SYSTEM							05 November 2022 20:13:18
ID	CaseID	Creation Date	Court Origin	Type of record	Hearing of Case	Field1	
5	N/H/001	12-Mar-22	High Court	Case file	27-Mar-22		
7	N/H002	01-Mar-22	Nabweru Magistrate Court	Case file	10-Apr-22		
8	N/W/0034	13-Mar-22	Kasangti Magistrate Court	Case file	02-Apr-22		
9	202932	15-Apr-22	Family and Children	Case file	30-Apr-22		
10	2345678	15-Apr-22		personal	30-Apr-22		

5

Page 1 of 1

**Figure 9: Report Generation for Entered Records**

### 6.5 Conclusion

This chapter describes the designing process for the project, the requirements considered, tools and processes utilised to come up with the final electronic records storage system designed from Microsoft Access application database 2019.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX ONE: Interview Guide**

#### **AN INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STAFF AT KASANGATI MAGISTRATE COURT**

1. what are the different types of court records managed at Kasangati Magistrate Court?
2. what are the current records filing/ storage systems used at Kasangati Magistrate Court?
3. what challenges are affecting the use of records storage systems at Kasangati Magistrate Court?
4. What are some of the suggestions or solutions you have employed for these inhibitors?
5. what are the requirements for designing an electronic records storage system for enhancing the retrieval of records at Kasangati Magistrate Court?

**Thank you for your precious time.**

## **APPENDIX TWO: Document Review Guide**

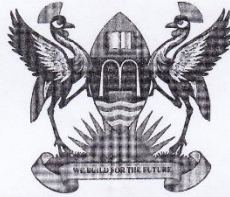
The researcher used the document review guide to review the following documents from the Kasangati Chief Magistrate Court are;

- The National Records and Archives Act, 2001
- Judiciary website information
- Textbooks
- Internet sources
- Records Management Policy of public service
- Court registers
- Reports and plans
- Computer records
- Letters/memos
- The Judiciary Strategic Plan (2020 – 2022)

## APPENDIX THREE: Introductory Letter

**MAKERERE**

P.O.Box 7062 Kampala Uganda  
Email: info@cis.mak.ac.ug  
URL: http://www.cis.mak.ac.ug



**UNIVERSITY**

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facebook: makcocs

**COLLEGE OF COMPUTING & INFORMATION SCIENCES  
EAST AFRICAN SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE (EASLIS)**

October 17, 2022

The Chief Magistrate  
Kasangati Chief Magistrate Court  
Kampala – Uganda

Dear Sir/Madam,



**RE: INTRODUCTION LETTER**

This is to introduce to you the following students pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Records and Archives Management (BRAM Year III) at the East African School of Library and Information Science under the College of Computing & Information Sciences, Makerere University.

- |                         |                |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Zahura Lalifa        | 19/U/2949/EVE  |
| 2. Namiiro Pamella Mary | 19/U/28693     |
| 3. Nimusiima Catherine  | 19/U/10772/PS  |
| 4. Mungoma Agnes        | 20/U/19745/EVE |

As part of their degree program, they are entitled to carry out research under the course BRM 3204. The title of their research is "*Designing an Electronic Records Storage System of Records at Kasangati Magistrate Court*".

The purpose of this communication is to request you to offer them the necessary assistance required.

Please note that all the information obtained shall be used for academic purposes only.

Sincerely,

Dr. David Luyombya  
**HEAD OF DEPARTMENT  
RECORDS AND ARCHIVES MANAGEMENT**