

An Observational Study of Outdated Technology

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ABSTRACT The use of paper-based approaches is still alarmingly prevalent in corporate environments. The objective of this paper is to explore paper usage in corporate and higher education institutions by observing the use of traditional technology versus electronic technology mechanisms. A mixed-mode methodology was utilised for collecting data, via an observational (n = 13) and quantitative survey (n = 123) method. Permission was obtained to observe participants at work, regarding their use of the fax machine in the administrative department at one Higher Education Institution (hereafter HEI) in South Africa. This was followed up by a survey among several business organisations, randomly sampled from the local business directory. The findings showed that paper abuse was being perpetuated and the paperless office is not a reality. Therefore policymakers in the organisations will have to mount campaigns to facilitate the use of electronic media, to rein in paper usage via training and awareness campaigns.