RESENTATION ON THE STATUS OF AUTOMATION AND FUTURE PLANS OF NIGERIA IPO ON THE USAGE OF IPAS IN CONDUCTING SEARCH AND EXAMINATION OF TRADEMARKS

One cannot talk about the usage of IPAS in the Nigerian industrial office (IPO) without first defining the meaning of IPAS.
What is IPAS?, IPAS simply means industrial property administration system. Before IPAS was deployed to the Nigerian industrial property office(NIPO), operations was largely manual, it took close to 2months to get an acknowledgement letter for filled application, another 3 months for search to be conducted, another 2 months for examination of the said mark and another 2 months for issuance of acceptance letter making it a total of 9 months for applicants to get their marks either accepted or refused. Publication of marks in journal is highly difficult and not all the marks are published according to their registration period.
Documents were lost in the process, some were defaced and important data were lost. Searches were slow and sometimes were never concluded, backlog of applications became order of the day. This problem stirred the office to seek for solution and as an answer to the many problems occasioned by the manual system, the world intellectual property organization IPAS system was introduced into the Nigerian industrial office. The system brought efficiency to the operations of the office. The timeline for processing application became largely reduced and applicants were able to get acceptance letter of their trademarks within a short period. The reception of the system has played an important role in conducting search within the office for trademarks that has been captured in the IPAS system. With the IPAS, it is now easy to search and extract important information regarding a mark without wasting time or even physically calling for the file.
Examination of trademark has become more efficient and qualitative, examiners can easily detect conflicting marks and generate report.

Nevertheless as efficient as the IPAS system has been, it still has its own ups and down some of which are:
1) applicants cannot file their trademark from outside the office
2) there is no synergy between the payment platform and the IPAS system, sometimes it is difficult to verify payment and as such revenue can be lost3) the IPAS system does not include digitalization of files as such it is prune to human errors as regards to captured data.
4) inability to generate trademark certificate via the IPAS system .
5) in generating search report there is no provision for uploading scanned document for eg uploading logo if a similar logo was cited.

Suggestions for improvement, it is common knowledge that the world in a

global village and as such doing business with ease gives credit to any system. Thus the following can make the IPAS system more efficient :

1) the IPAS system can be upgraded to have an interface between the public and the Nigeria industrial office to enable applicants file their trademark from anywhere and if possible generate acknowledgement letter at once

2) there should be a synergy between the payment platform and the IPAS system to aid reduce loss of government revenue.

3) digitalization should be a priority in this system so that when officers are in doubt of the data captured, they can view the actual document that was filed.

4) there is need for training and retraining of staff on the usage of the IPAS process and administration

5) the system can be configured in such a way that one can generate trademark certificate via the IPAS system without generating the said certificate manually.

This presentation would not be complete if strategy for quality data management is not mentioned. A data quality strategy describes a framework and a roadmap to address the challenges and achieve the benefits of improved information quality because most applications and business operations are dependent on data quality, yet while data quality cannot necessarily be mandated across administrative boundaries, the expected benefit of improved information value can only be achieved when all participants willingly contribute to successful data quality management.

To encourage coordination with the efforts to ensure data quality, there is value in educating participants in ways to integrate data quality as an integral component of the system development life cycle. The development of a component for data quality services will expose the appropriate will expose the appropriate topics to be the subject of training material to facilitate data quality integration.

In summary, data quality strategy should encompass the following:
1) provide a framework of data quality concept
2) formalize approaches to identifying, documenting and validating data quality expectations.
3) provide practices to evaluate the business impacts of poor data quality and to develop performance models for issue management and prioritization.
4) integrate methods and processes for data quality event tracking, data monitoring and measurement and reporting of conformance with applicants expectations.

At present, in the Nigerian industrial property office we have over 200,000 captured IPAS files, over 80,000 certificates have been generated via the IPAS system, over 120000 files has been processed, about 2000 unprocessed files, approximately 3000 backlog, approximately 100000 uncaptured data, 18846 unpublished marks.

In conclusion, despite the challenges enumerated above, the IPAS system did make work easier and more efficient in the Nigeria industrial property office, backlog application has been greatly reduced and work has become less burdensome on the staff.