

A holistic measure of the reputation index of the National Archives of South Africa: implications on access to archives

Dr Mpho Ngoepe
Dept of Information Science, UNISA

Prof. Patrick Ngulube
College of Graduate Studies, UNISA

Roadmap

- Concepts elucidation
- Framework: King III report: Chapter 8
- The problem
- Value of corporate reputation in national archival institutions
- Research methodology
- Empirical findings
- Conclusion and recommendations

Words of inspiration

"Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears. I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him. The evil that men do lives after them. The good is oft interred with their bones. So let it be with Caesar."

William Shakespeare (*Julius Caesar* Act III Scene ii)

Concepts unpacking

- Reputation = the opinion that people have about someone or something because of what has happened in the past
- Reputation index = the collective opinion of stakeholders about the organisation (Gabbioneta 2007)
 - An assessment of reputation is based on experiences, as well as on perceptions relying on communicated messages
- In measuring reputation, the most important KPIs are customers, employees, media, investors, leaders and public

The problem

Authors such as Harris (2000:1), Ngoepe and Ngulube (2011), Venson, Ngoepe and Ngulube (2014) and Archival Platform point the following:

- Archives suffer from image problem, i.e. profile of archives is insignificant and warped by a resilient caricature.
- Social invisibility of the archival institutions.
- Misunderstanding of the purpose of archives.

Framework for the study: King III report

- King I report = 1994
- King II report = 2002 (Enron and Regal Bank)
- King III report = 1 March 2010
 - Nine chapters
- Chapter 1: Ethical leadership
- Chapter 2: Boards and directors
- Chapter 3: Audit committees
- Chapter 4: The governance of risk
- Chapter 5: The governance of information technology
- Chapter 6: Compliance with laws, codes, rules and standards
- Chapter 7: Internal audit
- Chapter 8: Governing stakeholder relationship
- Chapter 9: Integrated reporting and disclosures

Chapter 8

- Stakeholders' perceptions affect an organisation's reputation
- Provision of complete, timely, relevant, accurate and accessible information
- Communication with stakeholders is essential to build and maintain trust
- Corporate citizen

Value of reputation in archival institutions

...to attract,	because it affects their decisions...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- the best employees- top leaders- loyal customers (researchers)- investors (Parliament)- media/journalists- public goodwill- good suppliers- friendly associates/allies (SASA, OHASA, ESARBICA, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- to engage, commit & stay- to join, commit & motivate- to purchase & recommend- to continue to invest- to cover, position more favourably- to support, demand on the NARS' behalf- to supply, align with the NARS' brand- to partner, support the NARS in public sector

Scope and limitations

- The following stakeholders were covered: users, government departments (records management practitioners), media.
- Employees of NARS were excluded
- Politicians and suppliers were not accessible
- Newspaper coverage of NARS from 2004 – 2014
- Other stakeholders such as previously disadvantaged, students and school learners were already covered by Ngoepe and Ngulube (2011), Ngoepe and Khanye (unpublished) – school learners

Research Methodology

- Quantitative approach
- Survey of users and records management practitioners
 - 50 questionnaire were left in the reading room of NARS
 - 37 send via e-mails to records management practitioners in government department
 - Data analysed through an open source tool survey
- Content analysis of newspaper data (2004-2014) was extracted from the SA Media database, which is one of the databases hosted by SABINET.
 - Adopting an advanced search strategy of combining the following search terms: 'state or national archive and South Africa', resulted in a total of 81 articles.
 - Data was analyzed using different analytical tools and computer software such as UCINET for Windows and Pajek

Results and discussion

Distribution of records according to newspaper/media

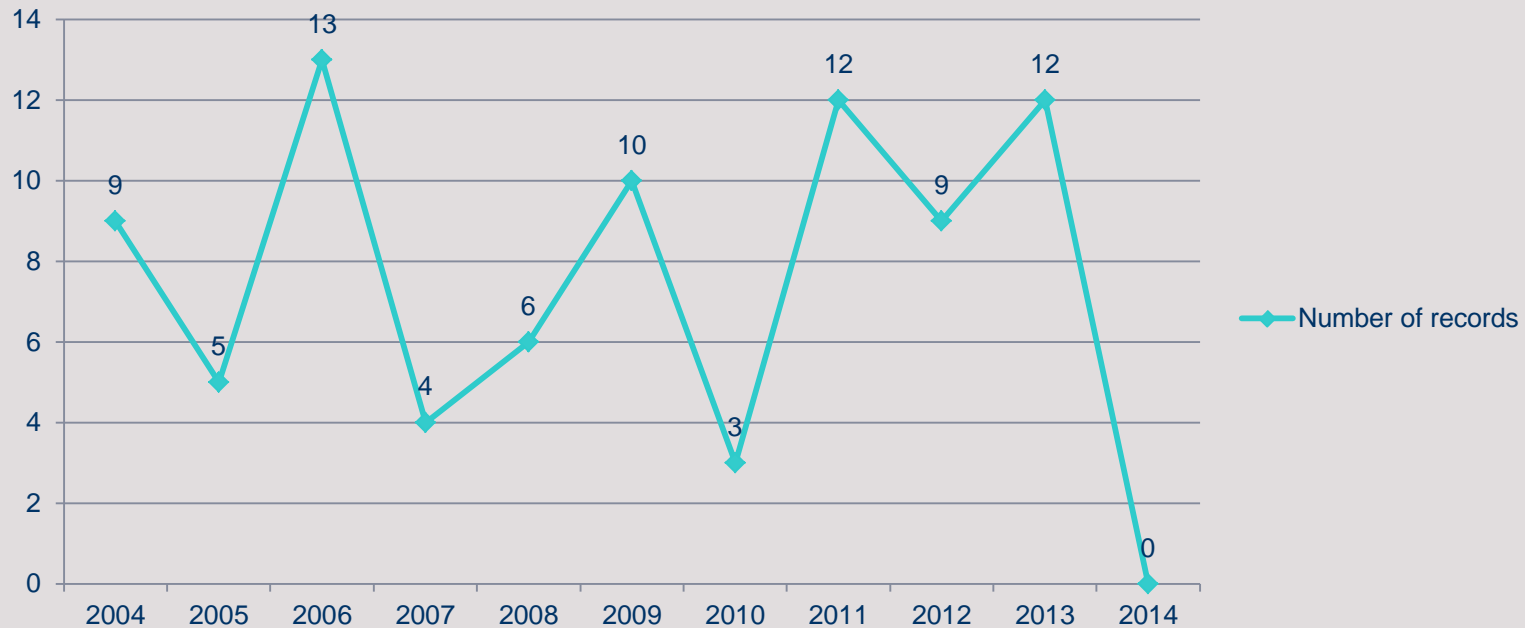
No.	Rank	Source	Records	%
1	1	Mail & Guardian	10	12.3
2	1	Star	10	12.3
3	2	Argus	6	7.4
4	2	City Press	6	7.4
5	3	Cape Times	5	6.1
6	3	Saturday Star	5	6.1
7	3	Sunday Independent	5	6.1
8	3	Sunday Times	5	6.1
9	4	Citizen	4	4.9
10	5	Daily Dispatch	3	3.7
11	5	Business Day	3	3.7
12	5	Sowetan	3	3.7
13	5	Witness	3	3.7
14	5	Times	3	3.7
15	5	This Day	3	3.7
16	6	Sunday Argus	2	3.7
17	7	Burger	1	1.2
18	7	New Age	1	1.2

Top eight newspapers contributed over half of the total number of records

The most productive newspapers are the ones with sections on cultural issues.

Trend in media coverage of national archives

Number of records



Empirical Findings: Results from the users

- 34 questionnaires were completed representing 68% response rate
- 22 were males, 12 females
- 4 were Blacks, 4 Indians and 26 Whites
- Research topics mainly: genealogical (28)
 - 2 on climate change
 - 1 court orders
 - 1 Anglo-Boer War ad concentration camps
 - 2 land claims
- Only three indicated that they were unable to access requested information at some stage due to security classification especially TRC records and Osewa Brandwag, missing file.
- Overall, researchers agree that NARS is doing a good job given limited resources.

Issues identified

- Only a small proportion of government offices effectively reached by NARS
- NARS is reactive as interaction regarding interaction with governmental bodies.
- The inspection function of NARS to be the auditor of government not done to the satisfaction of clients.
- NARS being a subordinate in the Dept of Arts and Culture is an issue to clients in governmental bodies.
- Inadequate resources to execute the mandate both in terms of level and capacity.
- Low coverage in the media compared to such subjects as politics, corruption and HIV/AIDS.
 - Probably not as life-threatening as HIV/AIDS which we believe continues to draw immense media attention

Conclusions and recommendations

- NARS should focus on improving and strengthening media liaison
 - Though the DAC media policy is an obstacle
- Formation of a partnership with the SABC radio to expand archival public programming
- **Keep the message alive, especially with records management professionals**
- Outsource services such as file plan approval
- NARS should utilise the social media space to reach the digital natives.
- Consider virtual exhibitions on its website
- The NARS can take an advantage of the SMS technology to market the archives
- Alumni group as ambassadors to spread the gospel.

Conclusions . . .

- Internal stakeholder survey (Employees)
- User study (how NARS can better serve users)
- The gap between stakeholder and performance of NARS should be managed to enhance or protect corporate reputation.
- Management should develop a strategy for the management of its relations with all stakeholder groupings.
- Failure to market the NARS effectively will result with whatever good the NARS has done *oft interred with the bones*, as William Shakespeare says in his play.