Introduction

There are indications that Libyan Universities still face management challenges (4) which in turn affect their reputation locally and internationally, and significant challenges in terms of effective use of e-business in their daily administrative processes; these include a lack of e-business infrastructure, lack of qualified personnel and operational delivery of new e-business systems in the Libyan universities, linked to the Libyan government initiative to develop e-business infrastructure across the university’s campuses. SCALE model will be further applied at other Libyan universities and will act as a yardstick for comparing and progressing the operational implementation of e-business in these organisations.

Developed (SCALE MODEL)

The developed SCALE model has five stages.

Stage Description
Start
Indicators of a clear organisational structure, vision, mission and procedure, and a general awareness of the availability of business tools for easy-to-use to the running of an organisation, with possibility one or two individuals using decision-making technologies (e.g., a laptop computer, laptop or mobile phone).

Conflict
An electricity network availability and email internet connectivity allows access to websites and other organisational email exchange, a portal or various data communication network building multi-point access, and a new standardisation of basic office systems (e.g., a word processor or spreadsheet).

Access
A wider take-up of office systems and use of some information systems for recording, processing and reporting in key process functions. These systems are often built inside by external or in third-party providers. These systems are usually expensive but often provide the tools required to ensure a common level of business system development. A visible e-business department normally is put in place to manage the infrastructure and systems. The organisation will normally have a website at this stage, which includes information products and services, although there is probably no ability to take business transactions via the website.

Leverage
Indicators of an established level of businesses systems development in main process areas, with some basic critical organisational standards being introduced for key products and services, and procedures for things like backup and recovery, a new standards of data management is usually an improvement. Website content becomes more advanced, being used by internal staff as an invoice and intranet and transactions are taken via the website where appropriate to the type of organisation.

Enterprise
Systems are in place in main process areas, either using a range of integrated packages or in-house developments, or possibly as CIP integrated package. At this stage the external community includes information specialists, processes that are improved and demand and are reliant on a range of infrastructure systems or multiple existing services held interactively and are available through the internet. These: e-business packages are accessible via the internet or web portal, for both internal and external users, customers and business partners.

Methodology

Up to six Libyan universities will be the subject of detailed case study investigation (6). To gather and analyse the data and information, at each university a range of investigative activities are being undertaken. These activities include mapping of organisational processes, overall review of e-business functions and capabilities at process and sub-process level, assessing information requirements, and systems architecture assessment.

The research adopts
• qualitative methodology use (Case study) multiple cases
• an inductive approach
• uses multiple-sources of evidence structured questionnaire, open qualitative semi-structured interviews with multiple organisational actors, document analysis, workshops, and observation (6),
• philosophical perspective ontology of subjectivism, and the epistemological position is interpretivism. (Yin, 2009).  

FINDINGS

There are some encouraging signs of change at Misrata University. Development of web portal services is in progress in the student records management as well as teaching and learning processes, which will widen access to existing systems as the basic network infrastructure is upgraded and extended. It is increasingly recognised by staff that new e-business systems are needed. This supports the university opportunity to move forward. There is evidence of awareness at senior management level of the importance of e-business systems, but the University still faces a range of barriers to e-business deployment. (1)

(1) Lack of a clear university business plan that encompasses e-business strategy, objectives and investment; (2) lack of reliable and standard administrative processes and procedures; (3) lack of networks and internet connectivity; (4) lack of e-business skills and knowledge; (5) lack of training and development regards to e-business systems and technologies programs; (6) cultural resistance to change management attitude, and (7) lack of a dedicated budget for plans of e-business systems development strategy in the University. In line with Heeks’ model, these barriers are strongly linked to all four of his key elements, but particularly, (process, technology and people) issues.

CONCLUSION

A clear e-business strategy is needed now for Libyan Universities, aligned with the overall university business plan. The use of the SCALE model has helped identify where progress has been made and where opportunities exist at individual process level. The results of this research will be fed into the future business processes, these include a lack of e-business infrastructure, lack of qualified personnel and operational delivery of new e-business systems in the Libyan universities, linked to the Libyan government initiative to develop e-business infrastructure across the university’s campuses. SCALE model will be further applied at other Libyan universities and will act as a yardstick for comparing and progressing the operational implementation of e-business in these organisations.

REFERENCES