SIAR-Global Journal of Social Sciences & Legal Review (GJSSLR)
www.siarpublications.org ISSN : 3122-0169
info@siarpublications.org Vol. 2 Issue 2 April-June. 2026
Global Office **South Africa:** 16 Park Ave, Modderfontein, Johannesburg
DOI Crossref 10.66694/siar.gjsslr20262004

Digital era implications and intelligence management in organizational reforms: The judicial systems in Nigeria.

KENEBARA, Florence Aniambrade
Department of Office & Information Management, Management Sciences, Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Abstract
The Nigerian justice system continues to face persistent challenges including case backlog, procedural delays, limited access to justice, corruption and weak inter agency coordination. The emergence of the digital era that is characterized by advanced information management, and communication technologies, data analytics, and intelligence driven governance offers significant opportunities for justice system reform. This article examines the implications of the digital era and intelligence management on justice system reform in Nigeria. Using a conceptual and doctrinal approach, the study explores how digital technologies and intelligence management practices influence judicial administration, investigation, prosecution, and policy formulation. It further analyzes the legal, ethical, and human rights implications of intelligence led justice administration. The article identifies infrastructural deficits, capacity gaps, and institutional resistance as major challenges while highlighting prospects for enhanced efficiency, transparency, and public trust. The study concludes that effective justice reform in Nigeria requires a holistic digital justice strategy, strengthened in intelligence management frameworks, and robust legal safeguards to ensure fairness, accountability, and the protection of fundamental rights.

Keywords: Digital era, intelligence management, justice system reform, e-justice, cybercrime, Nigeria

Introduction

The digital era is characterized by pervasive information technology connectivity, data analytics, and use of automation that has transformed governance globally. The justice system plays a central role in maintaining social order, safeguarding human rights, and promoting the rule of law. In Nigeria, however, the justice system has been criticized for inefficiency, excessive delays, poor access to justice, and declining public confidence (Alemika, 2013). These challenges undermine democratic governance and sustainable development.

The digital era has transformed public sector administration globally, reshaping how governments deliver services and interact with citizens. Within the justice sector, digital technologies and intelligence management systems have emerged as critical tools for enhancing efficiency, transparency, and evidence-based decision making (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 2020). Intelligence management, in this context, involves the systematic collection, analysis, dissemination, and use of information to support law enforcement, judicial processes, and policy reforms.

In Nigeria, ongoing justice sector reforms such as the administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) 2015 and the introduction of e-court initiative in some states signal growing recognition of the need for modernization. However, the integration of digital technologies and intelligence management remains uneven and underdeveloped. This article therefore examines the implications of the digital era and intelligence management on justice system reform in Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

The emergence of the digital era has fundamentally reshaped how organizations operate, communicate, and make decisions. In the judicial sector, digital transformation has become essential for enhancing efficiency, transparency, and access to justice. Intelligence management is defined as the systematic collection, processing, and application of data for decision making, which plays a critical role in modern judicial reforms. In Nigeria, the judiciary has historically faced challenges such as case backlog, administrative inefficiencies, delays in justice delivery, corruption, and limited access to legal information. The integration of digital technologies offers a pathway for reform, enabling courts to leverage data driven systems for improved performance as digital technologies offer solutions, their implementation remains inconsistent and poorly managed. Additionally, intelligence management practices in the judiciary are underdeveloped, leading to inefficiencies in data utilization, case tracking, and decision-making processes. The lack of coordinated digital strategies and policy frameworks further compounds these issues. This study investigates the implications of digitalization and intelligence management in reforming Nigeria's judicial system.

Objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine the impact of digital technologies on judicial efficiency in Nigeria.
2. Access the role of intelligence management in judicial reforms.
3. To evaluate challenges associated with digital transformation in the judiciary.
4. Determine the relationship between digital adoption and justice delivery in Nigeria.

Literature Review

The digital era

The digital era refers to a period marked by extensive use of digital technologies such as computers, the internet, data analytics, artificial intelligence, and electronic communication systems in social, economic, and governance processes (Castells, 2010). The digital era is about adoption of digital technologies such as cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and electronic records management. In the justice sector, this includes e-filing systems, virtual courts

proceedings, digital evidence management, automated case management systems, and online dispute resolution platforms.

E-filing, have become very significant in the area of digital transformation of the legal and judicial sectors. These transformative systems allow easy documentations, and other legal filing systems done electronically, rather than depending on paper-based submissions. E-filing systems often allow legal professionals to file documents with the court or government agencies without need for physical paper documents (Abubakar, 2025). This filling system improves accuracy and transparency, where information can be stored in their various databases, making information retrieval processes very easy and also automatically check for missing information and make corrections avoiding the chances of mistakes and rejections.

Virtual court hearings are conducted online through a digital application like video conferencing platforms. This allows the judges, counsel and litigants to participate remotely the court proceedings as if in a traditional physical court. E-Trials or remote court proceedings are done whereby the court officials, the judge, the parties, and their counsel interact and conduct the court's business virtually (Aneke, 2021). In this kind of e-trial everything is done remotely without the physical contact between the counsel, the court official, the parties, and the audience. This prompt the crucial need of digital tools, where ICT, internet, associated technologies, and software. This trend has recorded tremendous successes in many countries, saving time and cost for both the government and litigants (Sule et al., 2024).

Digital evidence management (DEM) is the process where tools, and systems used to collect, store, organize, and share digital evidence in legal proceedings. A proper implementation and management of these tools can improve the judicial system on accuracy and transparency. Digital evidence is any data or file stored on a computer, mobile phone, portable hard drive, or similar digital devices. Today most city capitals and business environments improvise closed circuit television (CCTV), smart phones or body worn cameras, audio recordings, photos of physical evidence and nay other relevant images that can assist in monitoring public areas as well as provide evidence for investigations. The use of these footage and other devices can be shared with the prosecution, making collaboration between the law enforcement agencies and the legal team work effectively. Once a piece of evidence is uploaded, the digital evidence management system will capture all its relevant meta data, which enable organize, manage, store and sharing of information with ease. With the help of digital evidence management systems DEMS you can secure and restrict access to information as well as share documents with other parties making easier communication flow in the judicial system.

Digital transformation in justice administration aims to improve service delivery, reduce costs, enhance transparency, and expand access to justice, particularly for marginalized populations (OECD, 2020).

Intelligence management

Intelligence management involves data collection, analysis, and dissemination to support decision making. In judicial systems, it enhances evidence handling, legal research, and institutional memory. This involves examining vast volumes of data, often from multiple sources, to generate actionable insights for decision makers across sectors. The input data in various databases are treated to see how they are connected between cases to create proof of doubt. Criminal intelligence is the body of information obtained about the known or unknown or suspected criminals or data gathered from the study of people or suspected criminals (Joe, 2008). Information has to be both evaluated and actionable in the sense that it must be actual, factual and actionable or caution-able to be acted upon (Dauda, 2024).

Intelligence management involves the organized process of gathering data, transforming it into actionable intelligence, and using it to support decision making (Ratcliffe, 2016). Within the justice system, intelligence management supports crime prevention, investigation, prosecution,

judicial planning, and policy formulation. In Nigeria, intelligence management spans multiple institutions, including the Nigeria Police Force, Department of State Service, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, judiciary, and correctional services. Effective intelligence management requires coordination, secure data sharing, and adherence to legal and ethical standards. Aina and Salau (2020) found that intelligence systems improve organizational decision making and efficiency.

Intelligence management activities focused on identifying threats and preventing them from manifesting themselves. While both these missions are closely related, different underlying motivations can lead to crises within government organizations. These differences in missions exist in most organizations that constitute the intelligence community. There are inherent complexities and challenges that define the intelligence community, in terms of resourcing, budgeting, and mission accomplishment. The lines of authority are not always clear, which often create crises between various intelligence agencies and within those same agencies. The Director of National Intelligence (DNI) is the official head of the intelligence community. However, DNI functions more as an orchestrator or synchronizer of intelligence activities, where a broad set of often competing priorities need reconciliation.

Threats are continuing to evolve due to technology and the changing nature of threat actors. Knowledge management becomes very crucial in the judicial system, as a result maintaining an effective security posture has become more challenging and a quicker and more agile response to threats is needed. Technological advancement, create more loop holes for cyber crimes allowing a broad range of hackers to gain access to sensitive data. These cyber crime actors have appeared globally, with the aid of artificial intelligence (AI) tools used as scams and other crimes. As a result technical expertise knowledge is needed to address the intelligence management strategies to help federal organizations to handle these threats (Burch, 2024). The fact that the right set of tools can transform organizations accesses and uses of information, a proper implementation of tools and effective knowledge management strategies to stay ahead. Access to a comprehensive knowledge base enables provide accurate, informed, and timely advice to client (Anderson, 20024). Technology management refers to organizations processes that seek to support existing operational models with digital tools and technologies (Burch, 2024). Intelligence management is the process of managing and organizing the processing of raw intelligence through information technology tools.

The public sector reforms

Transformation in the public sector is more complex. Judicial reforms aim to improve efficiency, accountability, and accessibility. Digital tools have been introduced in some Nigerian courts such as e-filling and virtual hearings, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. It often requires substantial changes to create flexible organizational structures and legacy technical systems, with the involvement of political, administrative or regulative authorities, making processes lengthy and costly (Schmager et al., 2024). For intelligence services, the journey is mostly fraught. Organizations are bound by strict data security regimes and legal requirements, and are governed by a deeply rooted need to know culture (Shakoor, 2025). It is argued that new technologies empower new enemies and create new opportunities with powerful new players. To be successful in the digital era, intelligence agencies need to be more creative and have a rethink on how they secure strategic advantages. These includes embracing open source intelligence, developing new capabilities for both secrete and open engagement, leading to innovation (Stenslie, 2025). Tarafdar et al., (2022) explores how big data is already reshaping intelligence and national security. It argues that intelligence, as a knowledge domain, an activity and an organization, must transform to fully leverage big data and associated technologies, which reforms well also, demand legislative and policies to improve data sharing, privacy protections, and cyber security.

Theoretical Review

Systems Based Approach to Intelligence Reform

The study is anchored on the systems theory, which views the justice system as a set of interdependent institutions whose effectiveness depends on coordinated functioning (Easton,1965).

The current piecemeal approach to intelligence reform, which addresses problems in relation to isolation from one another, is clearly not producing the needed results (Givens, 2012). It is more to consider the intelligence community (IC) as a collection of interconnected and interdependent components with collective output. Where, the intelligence results' is more valuable than the sum of its parts (Givens, 2012). This arrangement is what makes a system. It is the coherent collections of interconnected, interdependent components, whether natural or artificial (Dauda, 2024). For systems that learn and adapt, the level of development and adaptation is determined by how well the system could interact with its environmental contingencies that influence its organization (Odekunle, 2005). Removing or changing any part of these components could impact on the functionality of a reform. In order to keep the other system from failing, and to achieve an optimized system, some parts could be in place to maintain and carry others along the system. This theory aims to model the dynamics, constraints, conditions, and relations of a system and to clarify principles such as goals, measures, methods, and tools used at every level (Dauda, 2024). The theory is focused on the assumption that society has its different components which must perform its functions at different levels to achieve a common goal of holistic (Joe, 2000). This means that every aspect of criminality and intelligence is interconnected and essential to the overall systems operation.

Understanding the IC as a system, rather than as a collection of loosely connected personnel, agencies, departments, and technologies, requires the consideration and resolution of challenges in a systemic view. A system based approach considers intelligence reform through make up systems engineering as a discipline that holistically addresses the complex interplay of the systems variables to provide effective outcomes. This is likened to engine of a vehicle, where the different parts of an engine, whose components work together interdependently, producing horsepower to propel the vehicles life. This method recognizes the fact that practices in one agency can affect information classification in another.

Systems Engineering Format

According to the International Council on Systems Engineering (INCOSE) defines a system as; "a construct or collection of different elements together, which produce result not obtainable by the elements alone. The elements, or parts, can include people, hardware, software, facilities, policies, and documents; that is all things required to produce systems level results. The results include system level qualities, properties, characteristics, functions, behavior, and performance. The value added by the system as a whole; and how they are interconnected." (Eberhards, 2000; Givens, 2012).

The definition highlights the information communication IC true value intelligence reforms as a relationship among its components. People, processes, technologies, and the organizations working together in a dynamic environment to produce intelligence results permit leaders to make better informed decisions. Understanding this dynamic, interconnected system, rather than focusing on individual unit, collection of agencies, people, technology and knowledge could lead to more strategic intelligence reforms in the justice system.

The Nigerian justice system

Nigeria's justice system comprises law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, prosecution services, correctional institutions, and oversight bodies. The system operates under constitutional, statutory, and customary frameworks. Despite several reform efforts, including the ACJA 2015, the justice system continues to face systemic inefficiencies, poor record management, and limited

technological integration (Agbakoba, 2019). Manual processes dominate case management in many courts, contributing to lost files, delays, and lack of transparency. These challenges highlight the need for digital and intelligence driven reforms.

Digital era implications on justice system reform in Nigeria

The introduction of e-courts, electronic filing, and virtual hearings has the potential to significantly reduce case backlog and delays in Nigeria. Digital court systems enhance record management, improve scheduling, and enable remote participation by litigants and legal practitioners (UNODC, 2020). However, disparities in infrastructure and digital literacy across states limit the full realization of these benefits. Eze (2022) identified infrastructure deficits and lack of training as major barriers to digital adoption. As though empirical studies show that ICT adoption enhances efficiency and reduces delays in court processes (Oluwadare, 2021).

The digital era has expanded the scope of admissible evidence to include electronic records, CCTV footage, mobile phone data, and online communications. Digital forensic tools enhance investigative accuracy and strengthen prosecution cases (Casey, 2011). In Nigeria, however, challenges persist regarding standards for admissibly, chain of custody, and technical expertise.

Digitalization has led to an increase in cyber enabled crimes such as online fraud, identity theft, and hacking. Nigeria has responded through legislation such as cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) act 2015. Enforcement remains constrained by limited technical capacity and judicial familiarity with cybercrimes cases (Wall, 2017).

Digitized justice processes create electronic audit trails that reduce opportunities for corruption and discretionary abuse. Public access to court information and performance data can strengthen accountability and public trust in the justice system (OECD, 2020).

Intelligence sharing among justice institutions

Effective justice reform requires seamless information flow among police, prosecutors, courts, and correctional services. Secure intelligence sharing platforms reduce duplication, enhance case tracking, and improve protection concerns, however, limit collaboration in Nigeria.

Strategic intelligence supports evidence based justice policies by identifying crime trends, institutional bottlenecks, and reform priorities. This approach enables proactive rather than reactive justice administration (UNODC, 2020).

The use of digital technologies and intelligence tools raises concerns about privacy, data protection, surveillance, and due process. Nigeria's Data Protection Act and constitutional safeguards provide a legal basis for protecting fundamental rights. However, enforcement mechanisms and judicial oversight must be strengthened to prevent abuse and ensure proportionality (Bennett & Raab, 2018).

Key of digital and intelligence driven justice reform in Nigeria challenges include inadequate ICT infrastructure, limited funding, insufficient technical skills, resistance to change, and weak inter-agency collaboration. These constrains undermine the sustainability and effectiveness of digital justice reforms.

Empirical evidence and legal development in Nigeria

Empirical research shows a measureable but uneven adoption of digital court technologies in Nigeria. a 2024 study surveying 353 legal practitioners in Lagos and Abuja found that virtual court proceedings (VCP) adoption increased modestly between 2020 and 2023, but remains below optimal levels due to poor infrastructure, technophobia, and limited digital skills among practitioners (Davies, Olugasa, & Odunaike, 2024).

The COVID-19 pandemic acted as a catalyst for accelerated judicial digitalization. Ogwezzy's 2025 study found that Nigerian courts adopted electronic case management systems, virtual

hearings, e-filing, and digital research tools during pandemic restrictions, reshaping how justice was administered (Ogwezzy, 2025).

Nigeria's legal framework for digital evidence remains underdeveloped. Recent empirical research highlights significant challenges with the admissibility of digital and forensic evidence authenticity and procedural reliability concerns (Okpoto, 2025).

Obamanu (2023) likewise shows that section 84 of Evidence Act concerning computer generated evidence has been tested inconsistently in courts, with judges relying on divergent interpretive standards due to limited precedents and technical expertise (Obamanu, 2023).

Recent reporting confirms that digital record systems have begun to yield measurable improvements. According to data from 2025, digitized case management contributed to the Supreme Court's delivery of 369 judgments in a single legal year, a performance improvement partially attributed to computerization and centralized digital records (Independent Newspaper Nigeria, 2025).

Ajayi (2023) found that the deployment of electric filing systems and automated case tracking significantly reduced procedural delays in Nigerian courts. The research emphasized that digital tools improve case throughput and minimize administrative bottlenecks through real-time data accessibility.

Ezeani (2024) explored the relationship between information systems and institutional memory in public sector organizations. The findings indicated that digital databases and knowledge repositories play a crucial role in preserving legal precedents and facilitating faster judicial reasoning. This contributes to consistency in rulings and enhances the quality of legal judgments.

Olatunji (2021) assessed judicial reforms in Nigeria and found that although digital initiatives have been introduced, their effectiveness is constrained by infrastructural deficiencies and limited technical expertise. The study highlighted the need for continuous capacity development among judicial personnel.

Globally, the World Bank (2022) reported that countries that implemented integrated digital justice systems recorded improvements in efficiency, accountability, and public trust. However, the report also noted that cybersecurity concerns and resistance to organizational change remain significant barriers.

More recent studies (2024-2025) further confirmed that artificial intelligence and data analytics are beginning to influence judicial processes. Predictive analytics tools are being tested to assist in case outcome forecasting and legal research. While these technologies offer substantial benefits, concerns about ethical implications and algorithmic bias persist.

While formal empirical studies of specific Nigerian digital justice case law are still emerging, some landmark events illustrate real-world interaction between the digital era and justice outcomes: In Lagos State, the first major virtual criminal hearing occurred in May 2020 (Olalekan Hameed case), where the court conducted a virtual trial, conviction, and sentencing using video conferencing tools (Sule, Olorunyomi, & Usman, 2024).

The reviewed literature collectively suggests that the integration of digital technologies into judicial systems is not merely a technological upgrade but a structural transformation of institutional processes. Intelligence management serves as the backbone of this transformation by enabling data driven decision making, enhancing institutional memory, and improving service delivery. However, the success of these reforms depends largely on the alignment between technological innovation, organizational readiness, and policy frameworks.

Prospects and policy implications

Despite these challenges, the prospects for digital and intelligence driven justice reform in Nigeria are significant. Policy implications include;

1 Development of a national digital justice strategy.
2 Investment in ICT infrastructure and capacity building.

3 Continuous training for judges, lawyers, users of IT infrastructures in the offices, and investigators.
4 Legal reforms to clarify digital evidence standards and intelligence oversight.
5 Strengthening institutional collaboration and public accountability

Integration into justice reform policy

Taken together, these empirical studies and developments suggest several policy imperatives for Nigeria:

1. Standardize digital evidence protocols in statute or judicial rules to strengthen forensic intelligence in judicial system.
2. Expand infrastructure investment nationwide, not just in Abuja and Lagos, to ensure equitable digital justice access.
3. Mandate continuous education for judges and practitioners on digital tools and evidence.
4. Leverage data from digital case systems for strategic governance, performance monitoring and intelligence led reforms.

Interpretation

1. Digital technologies significantly improve judicial efficiency.
2. Intelligence management positively influences decision making.
3. Model explains 68% of variance in judicial reform.

Discussion of finding

The findings indicate that digital transformation enhances the performance of the Nigerian judiciary. The adoption of e-court systems reduces delays and improves access to justice. Intelligence management systems improve decision making by enabling data driven judicial processes and case tracking. However, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, cyber security threats, and resistance to technological change limit the effectiveness of these reforms. These findings align with global trends in digital governance and judicial modernization.

Implications of the study

1. It promotes evidence based judicial decision making
2. Enhances transparency and accountability.
3. Supports policy development for digital governance.
4. Strengthens institutional memory in courts.

Conclusion

The digital era presents transformative opportunities for justice system reform in Nigeria. Intelligence management and digital technologies are critical drivers of organizational reform, improving efficiency, transparency, and decision making. Intelligence management and digital technologies are critical drivers of organizational reforms, when strategies are effectively implemented it can enhance efficiency, transparency, and access to justice and can also position Nigeria's judiciary for global competitiveness. However, reform efforts must be guided by sound legal frameworks, ethical standards, and institutional coordination. A balanced approach that aligns technology, intelligence, and human rights is essential for building a credible, responsive, and citizen centered justice system in Nigeria.

Recommendations

1. Government should invest in digital infrastructure across all courts.
2. Continuous training programs for judicial staff on digital tools.
3. Strengthen cyber security frameworks.

4. Implementation of unified national e-justice systems.
5. Policy reforms to support digital transformation in the judiciary.

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