

Content Management Process in Selected m-Agriculture Initiatives in India

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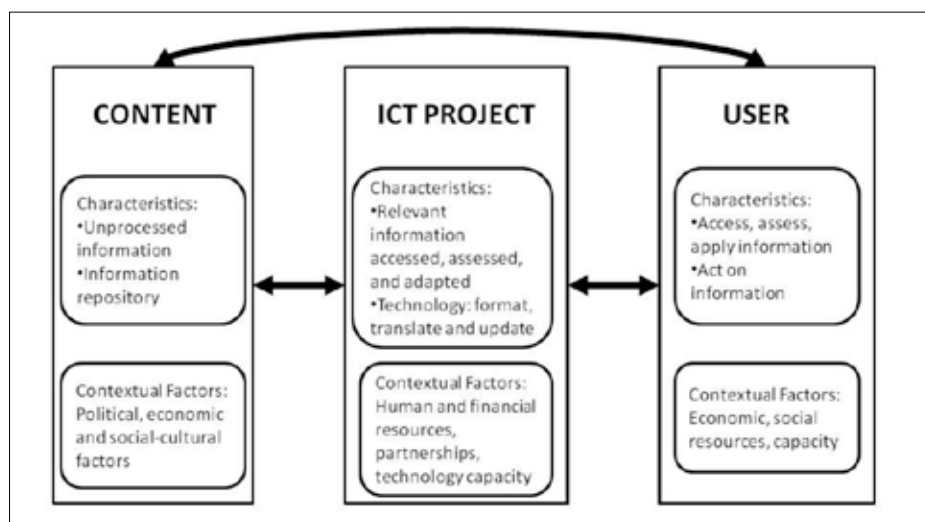


In the last decade, many ICT initiatives have started in Indian agriculture with varying degrees of success. Innovative content development and management processes that develop local-specific information can have important farming impacts, as they may reach large numbers of users with relevant information.

The presentation was based on a paper under publication by Information Development on the analysis of content management processes in six well-known ICT platforms in Indian agriculture,

in joint authorship with an IFPRI colleague, Dr. Claire Glendenning. The presentation gave an overview about issues of content management related to communication theory and information systems principles, applied to the context of agriculture for development.

Two developed conceptual frameworks for the analysis of content management processes for ICT based platforms in general were applied to selected concrete Indian m-Agriculture cases, such as RML, IKSL and Lifelines. Common to all the initiatives is the use of a network of experts in the relevant agricultural fields to provide information, whereas the scale, business models, approaches to content management and delivery do differ. All initiatives strive to localize and



Defining Content Management on ICT platforms based on the concepts of Info chain and Info systems (Glendenning & Ficarelli, 2011)

contextualize contents through different approaches. Like in the case of Lifelines and the IKSL farmer help line content is generated based on farmer demands. In all the three m-agriculture initiatives digital information repositories are exclusive and not of open access.

Key content management issues are related to

- a) Format – SMSs and short voice messages are not appropriate media for agro-advisory services involving complex agricultural practices and for facilitating farmer feedback.
- b) Sourcing of information – scattered and dispersed information across a wide range of public and private stakeholders is difficult to search and of different standards.
- c) Close access to digital repositories of information prevents free circulation of relevant agricultural information to delivery organizations.
- d) Localisation of information – mainly based on expert implicit knowledge, while failing to include local knowledge.
- e) Quality control – difficult to be put in place without content information validation mechanisms.
- f) Feedback from users – to a large extent anecdotal and based on

one-off sample surveys.

- g) Use of “infomediaries” as delivery mechanism – very important to ensure constant user feedback and at the same time leading to viability and scalability issues.

In order to ensure greater socio-economic impact of mobile-enabled agricultural content a bottom-up integration approach for ICTs is advocated.

The presentation emphasises the need for mainstreaming m-agriculture initiatives, proven to be as useful as agro-information service to smallholder farmers, into major public poverty alleviation programmes with an agricultural component to broaden social impact.

Public-private partnerships seem the most promising funding mechanism to ensure non-exclusivity of services by mobile VAS or MNOs, to foster convergence of the most successful applications on multipurpose mobile platforms to ensure continuity of services and affordability for users.

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