

Multimedia Data in Land Records Systems: Field Trials In Nigeria

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- Need for alternatives to conventional registration
 - First tests done in land reform cases and informal settlements in South Africa
 - Examined usefulness with 5 First Nations in Western Canada
 - First Peoples of the Kalahari
- Possible contribution of multi-media in land records
- Facts about Nigeria
- Narrative about using multimedia



Need for Multimedia

- Registration appropriate in situations where social, political and economic systems are stable and demand for land as collateral for loans
- If it is inappropriate, can cause instability and loss of land
- Customary systems: traditionally communal rights ranging from hunter-gatherer, pastoralists and agriculturalists
 - Modernisation – much abuse of power

Need for Multimedia

- First Peoples in Canada - rights are sui generis and oral tradition (hearsay) evidence is to be placed on an equal footing with documentary evidence
- One billion people, a third of the world city population, live in slums and many in informal settlements.
 - Tenure system may draw on customary and western practices
- Post-conflict situations – refugees and Internally displaced persons

Multimedia Data

- Video has both oral and visual evidence
- More suitable for oral tradition
- Can be played back and no possibility of being misquoted.
 - In theory only a fool would commit perjury on video
- Can be recorded and played back in local language.
- May allow vulnerable groups to be heard.
- Under the right circumstances it may reduce the level of conflict and opportunities for land grabbing.
- Cheap and simple process and local residents can collect data – provided they are not at physical risk.
- Videos and other multimedia forms are ubiquitous nowadays
- Not a replacement for surveys and titles/deeds – can augment them as additional data or be used in situations where they would not be used – at least not right now.





Nigeria - Facts

- Independent in 1960
- 1965 – military regime and Biafra secession
- Fourth Republic 1999 appears to be lasting!
- Population of more than 130 million
- Vastly different tenure systems; family land in the south and hierarchical emir systems in the north
- Rural areas are customary and urban areas individualised
- All land nationalised in 1978 with landholding families allowed to keep a small portion
- 3% of land is registered
- Major problems with racketeering – same piece of land sold to 10 different people
- Need to record customary land, provide regularisation evidence and hopefully ensure that ownership of registered land is not challenged.



- Access to land is difficult for the average person.
- It may take years acquire land; requires the state Governor's consent, with many government institutions involved and officials may extort money to get the process moving;
- Costly procedures to acquire land –can cost 50% of land value
- Insecurity of title. There have been grants of the same piece of land to more than one person. The courts are very busy with land disputes.
- Sharp practices in land dealings resulting in nebulous title. The same piece of land might be “sold” to more than one person. Racketeering and the “pernicious role of middlemen” in land speculation. Descendents of land owners sell to several buyers and at times manipulate the price and the unsuspecting buyer's title may be defeated by a member of the same family.
- Disputes over Inheritance
- Fragmentation of Holdings – customary law allows partition by an individual, but the Land Use Act does not;
- Unsatisfactory compensation arrangements – the Land Use Act pays for improvements, but unimproved land can be taken without any compensation.



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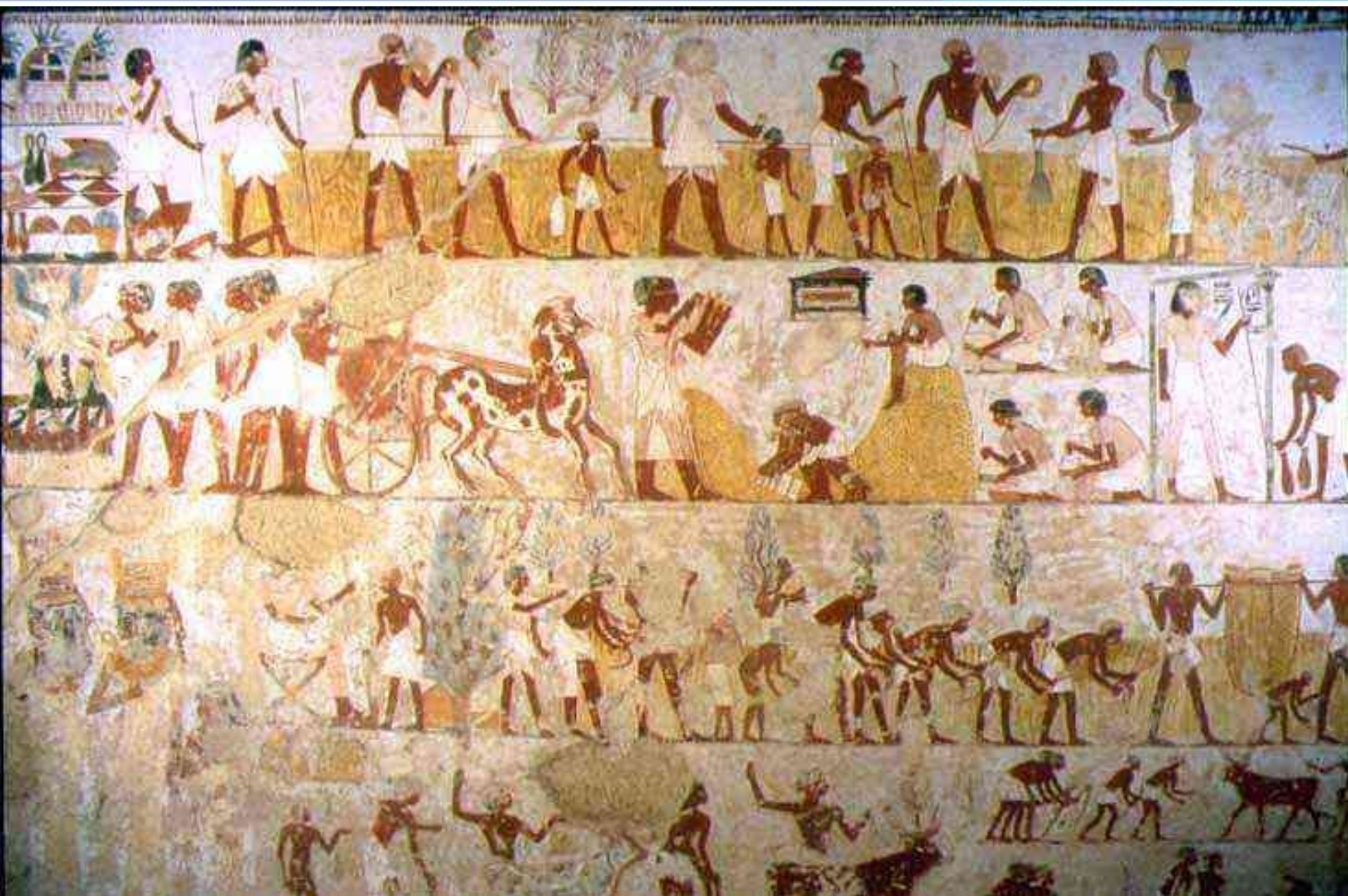


Position Yourself Ahead of the Crowd





















- Some resistance from surveyors
- Current concerns - technological capacity, institutional capacity, training, political commitment and governance
 - “If you gave a camera to a chief you would never see it again
- Useful in rural areas – many local customary authority conflicts
 - Different story told at land dispute resolution committee hearing in town and in situ hearing in the village
 - “People will still lie, even on video”
- Regularisation in Lagos
 - Experimented with 18 interviews
 - Useful at the start of the process
 - Is a legitimate person applying

- Be sensitive – do not stimulate a conflict
- Train interviewers properly – do not allow them to badger witnesses
- Video files are large; keep an audio recorder going too – editing a video may make it inadmissible; not filming important events has the same effect but video may be admissible as evidence.
- Useful in rural areas – many local customary authority conflicts
- Software design: design for chaos - allow anything to be related to anything else and queries to be two way; flexibility more important than computational and search efficiency;

- Rapid and easily understood method
- Technological capacity can be expected to improve – e.g. 30 million cell phones in Nigeria
- Concern over the admissibility of multi-media data in court, fraudulent manipulation of the data, commitment to implementing the system, institutional issues over who should own the data, and the security of data and equipment
 - These concerns apply to all land record systems.
- Expected starts ups, failures and further start ups
- Think of a nautical chart for stormy seas rather than a road map!