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## Why we need information technology standards

**T**he digital age, has brought with it an influx of computer systems, software, firmware and other related resources used in the acquisition, storage, manipulation and processing of data.

These systems have changed the way we live and work. Technology has improved the way we communicate, created jobs and has contributed to the economy.

The opportunities information technology (IT) has to offer are limitless and have naturally been exploited. Over the past decade, we have seen a proliferation of counterfeit IT products. These devices are sold alongside genuine ones and it is often difficult to differentiate. Now in downtown Kampala, almost every store has an information technology product and technician. Usually, these technicians are uncertified, therefore, the consumer is left without recourse, in the event of a misdiagnosis or botched repair job.

In spite of this, these businesses have flourished, seemingly unabated. This is exacerbated by inadequate consumer protection and counterfeit laws that have left consumers inevitably exposed.

That is until recently, when the National Information Technology Authority of Uganda (NITA-U) enacted the Certification of Providers of Information Technology Products and Services Regulations, 2016.

The regulations, under rule 3 (1) make it mandatory for every person providing/vending information technology related products or services to have certification, provided by NITA-U.

The regulations, apply to wholesalers and retailers of computer equipment, printers, scanners, software and telecommunications equipment, technicians and installers of IT installations, data centres, server rooms etc. The certification is also required for all computer programming and information technology related services. The regulations, are meant to standardise information technology services and to eliminate middlemen who peddle these services indiscriminatorily.

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