

**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF HELP AND INSTRUCTION OFFERED  
THROUGH THE ACADEMIC LIBRARY WEBSITE: A CASE  
OF SELECTED ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN ZIMBABWE**

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## ABSTRACT

This study reports the results of a content analysis conducted to determine how academic libraries use their websites to deliver help and instruction to their users.

Academic library websites, their content and design are the main focus of the study's chief motive of interrogating how websites are being used to provide help and instruction to users, by four academic libraries in Zimbabwe.

The researcher used conceptual analysis to determine the number and percent of links provided and relational analysis to examine the categorisation and placement of help and instruction links on the websites under study and also to compare them to descriptions and definitions of reference service, bibliographic instruction, online help and instruction provided in the literature review. The guiding questions which are in the study were related to good website and instructional design, information literacy and website usability issues. The researcher concluded that librarians, overall, categorised the links observed as help and organised the links on their website home pages in order for their users to quickly notice, identify and use them. The results indicate that while academic libraries show strengths in promoting information literacy standards through navigable instruction, there is need for them to constantly evaluate their websites and to carry out usability studies.

The motivation for this study is out of a number of developments in academic libraries in Zimbabwe. The increased use of the internet by academic libraries in Zimbabwe, entails

that this resource be evaluated to find out how libraries are using their website presence on the internet to offer online help and instruction to their users. This research study is therefore a product of curiosity to try and investigate how this development is shaping the provision of library services and products via Internet websites.