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ACQUISITION AND USE OF INTERNET-BASED RESOURCES: THE CASE OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE LIBRARY

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ABSTRACT

The study was triggered by the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) library patron's complains and the researcher's observations to a pattern of vanishing titles of internet based resources, annually subscribed by the UZ library. By trying to understand the how and why these e-resources were vanishing from the UZ library database, or the effects of missing titles to the researchers, or other faculty librarian's views; the researcher realized a great need to study issues surrounding the acquisition and use of internet based resources subscribed to by the UZ library. Purchasing of information resources online has presented academic libraries with a variety of challenges different from print resources acquisitions. The study objectives intended investigate e-resources purchasing modes used in academic libraries, the e-resources purchasing mode in use at the UZ library and its effects to the library users and collection building capacity. The literature reviewed explored different levels of controversies surrounding the issue of e-resources access and ownership in academic libraries, including available options to e-resources purchasing modes.

A survey research design approach was used, specifically the cross-sectional survey, literally cutting across all 10 UZ faculties. The sample population was drawn from the UZ faculty librarians and the academic community. Data was collected using the questionnaire from 50 academic staff members and interviews were conducted on 10 faculty librarians, and the acquisition librarian. The research results indicated that the UZ library has been using the package subscription purchasing mode of access for e-resources purchases. The researcher concluded that UZ library has been accessing e-resources on leased terms, lacking in archival rights. The study recommends for the UZ library to consider the possibility of adopting propriety rights to e-resources, as a first step towards successful access and ownership of internet based resources subscribed to by the UZ library. Recommendations by the researcher included the adoption of an E-resources Content Ownership Policy, integration of an e-resources dedicated repository into the University of Zimbabwe Institution Repository (UZIR), evaluation of the current UZ library e-resources purchasing mode and de-duplication acquisition considerations.