NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

AWARENESS AND USE OF WEB 2.0 TOOLS IN LIBRARIES: A CASE STUDY OF THE
BRITISH COUNCIL LIBRARY IN HARARE

BY

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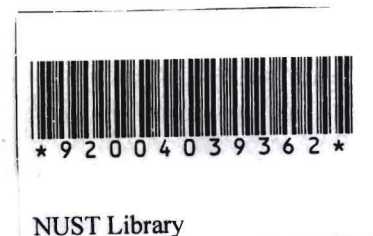LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

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ABSTRACT

The study was triggered by the little work that has been done to establish the extent of awareness and use of Web 2.0 tools at British Council Library and how their use can enhance service delivery. By trying to understand Web tools used at BC, their importance and factors that affect their use; the researcher realized a great need to study these issues in great detail. The exclusion of library products and services on corporate website and the new library operating hours have presented the library with some challenges. The study objectives intended to establish the extent of awareness and use of Web tools, their importance and factors that influence the use of such tools in libraries. The literature reviewed explored various types of technologies that can be used to promote and enhance information services. The literature also revealed that the application and use of Web 2.0 tools in libraries in Africa are indeed still very low and the BC library in Harare is no exception, owing to a number of challenges including funding and poor information infrastructure. A case study research design approach was used, specifically the cross-sectional survey, literally cutting across all the three library membership categories at the BC Library. The sample population was drawn from the staff and library users. Data was collected using the questionnaire from 92 respondents and interviews were conducted on 10 members of staff including senior management. The findings revealed that staff and users have started using various Web 2.0 tools in varying degrees and the most common used tools were Facebook and Instant Messaging. The findings also revealed that most librarians are motivated to use these tools because of improved connectivity and the availability of these tools on mobile technologies. News and information, personal communication and research were the main reasons why these tools were used. Challenges which were highlighted include lack of time to use the tools, discouraging corporate policy and unreliable power supply. Importance of Web 2.0 tools included, better library-user communication, keeping the library abreast with technology thereby enhancing their relevance and increasing resources awareness. Recommendations suggested that BC Library should develop a policy document that adopt the use of emerging technologies, the transmission of Management Forums in podcast or vodcast, an interactive live library catalogue (OPAC) on the corporate website and also introduce alternative and reliable power sources such as use of solar and generators.