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**DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE**

THE USE OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGIES FOR ACCESSING INFORMATION ON  
EXPORT INITIATIVES: THE CASE OF SMALL SCALE HANDICRAFT VENDORS AT  
BULAWAYO CITY HALL

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## ABSTRACT

Access to Information has been transformed by the use of mobile technologies which have enabled rapid interaction and action to take place. The increase in the use of these technologies has had a profound impact on every business sector including the Handicraft Industry. This research sought to assess whether small scale handicraft vendors at Bulawayo City Hall have access to information on export initiatives through use of mobile technologies. Oltmann (2009)'s synthesis of Two Conceptualisation of Information Access formed the basis for the theoretical framework of this study. Literature revealed that physical, social and intellectual access play an integral part in ensuring that information access is effective. The study adopted the interpretivism approach as the research philosophy and consequently used the case study research strategy. In depth interviews, questionnaires and document analysis were used as data gathering techniques. The main findings indicate that the small scale handicraft vendors do use mobile technologies for accessing general information on their business. In addition, they also have physical, intellectual and social access to information. However, their access to information has a gap in that they lack knowledge on how to access information on export initiatives which is also available on various online platforms. It can be concluded that small scale handicraft vendors are challenged in that though they have some access to general information on their business, they lack knowledge on the existence of opportunities for export initiatives which are also available on these online platforms. It is therefore imperative, that these small scale handicraft vendors should know about these opportunities if their business is to prosper.