

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**THE IMPORTANCE OF METADATA IN IMPROVING INFORMATION ACCESS
TO DIGITAL COLLECTIONS AND IN THE PRESERVATION OF ELECTRONIC
RECORDS: A CASE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE (UZ) LAW
LIBRARY**

BY

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSAL SUBMITTED TO THE NATIONAL
UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE HONOURS DEGREE**

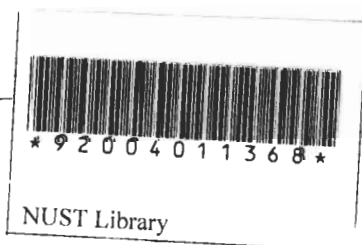
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ABSTRACT

The project sought to establish the importance of metadata when it comes to information retrieval or access, as well as the role played by metadata in the preservation of electronic records since metadata is the backbone of any information management system. The UZ law library was used as a case study because of its large usage of digital collections and the availability of a large pool of patrons.

Relevant material referred to in the project elaborated on metadata concepts as a whole. A case study method was used together with instruments such as questionnaires, interviews and observation techniques so that the research could be carried out successfully.

The research findings revealed that the fundamental nature of metadata, its importance, standards, creation and so on, in improving information access and preservation of digital collections was little understood at the UZ law library, as a result a large number of patrons tended to be on a particular digital resource type especially the Internet and online library gateways.

In a bid to improve the information illiteracy in metadata usage and importance, the researcher suggested that the UZ law librarians and the Information Technology (IT) department informing users on other digital resources that uses metadata concepts in the arrangement of electronic information carry out an awareness campaign. Other recommendations included that the law librarians should advocate for teacher librarians

in the Law department teaching freshman courses related to electronic resources or advocate for courses such as ‘law library digital collections’ to be included in the department curriculum.

The research project has been of benefit to both the researcher and the UZ law library. It increased the knowledge on metadata importance to digital collections on all parties concerned and the UZ law library appreciated and obtained a lot of benefits from the research findings and recommendations.