

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE IMPACT OF INTERNET ON SPECIAL
LIBRARIES' REFERENCE SERVICES: A CASE STUDY OF THE RESERVE
BANK OF ZIMBABWE LIBRARY**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE HONOURS DEGREE**

IN

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

BULAWAYO, ZIMBABWE



NUST Library

YEAR: 2008

LIBRARY
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY
BULAWAYO

DATE
10/07/08

CLASS No.

ABSTRACT

The decrease in reference enquiries and the fear among librarians that they will become dormant led the researcher to investigate the impact that the Internet had on RBZ library reference services. The Case Study method was employed in carrying out the research with the aid of observation, interviews and questionnaires as instruments. Samples of 45 and 5 respondents were chosen from the population of users and staff respectively. The study found that there had been several changes in reference services as a result of Internet and this included the nature of the reference interviews, users search behaviour and expectations as well as the roles of the reference librarian. These changes were seen to impact negatively on reference services and these included a decline in reference enquiries, information overload and disintermediation among others. However, benefits were also discovered such as immediacy, vastness of information and ability to satisfy users among others. Recommendations were made for the librarians to effectively market their services as well as integrate Internet and traditional reference services in order for the profession to remain valuable.