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DEPARTMENT OF RECORDS AND ARCHIVES MANAGEMENT

A WEBOMETRICS STUDY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE
EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL BRANCH OF THE
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES (ESARBICA)

BY

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IN

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Abstract

Lennart Björneborn's famous tweet, '*connecto ergo sum*', which means, '*i link, therefore I exist*', puts forward the intriguing dimension of the web as a platform for link-based research, a major tenet of Webometrics. Webometrics, as discussed in this study, explored the web presence, web visibility, web-impact and linkage of archival institutions in the ESARBICA region; examining the types of institutions that provide links to archival institutions in the ESARBICA region; to examine the search queries that lead patrons to the websites of archival institutions in the ESARBICA region; establish the essential web services provided to clients, as well as ascertaining the extent to which archival institutions in the ESARBICA region have implemented Web 2.0. The study was underpinned by the Citation Analysis theory. Search engines, metasearch engines and web content analysis were used to collect webometrics data from ESARBICA archival websites. The data was analysed using UCINET for Windows © 2002, Microsoft Excel © 2013 and NVivo 10 © 2014 software packages. The findings of the study revealed that the web-impact of ESARBICA archival institutions is generally low as evidenced by the low impact factors attained. The impact results show that in the ESARBICA region, Southern Africa was more represented with the archival institutions from six countries (Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe), while the Eastern African region had archival institutions from two countries (Kenya and Tanzania). The findings further showed that not all archival websites attained web presence in the form of accessible websites, as such, institutions such as the National Archives and Records Services of Botswana made use of their Facebook page to attain web presence. The link classification results revealed that the ESARBICA websites mostly attracted industry links with extensions .com and .co as the most popular Top Level Domain (TLD). A strong link relationship was noted between archival institutions and research based activities in universities, as well as evidence of openness as archival institutions published documents with archives related discussions on Google Scholar. The study showed that ESARBICA archival websites are not interactive in nature and have not yet embraced Web 2.0 tools on their archival websites. The implications of the study included that archival institutions without websites might consider attaining web presence through constructing websites, establishment of link relationships by archival institutions, making efforts to avail more data to enhance web presence in ranking. The study recommended that ESARBICA archival institutions host standalone websites; establish links with archives related research sites; establish a feedback mechanism and make use of Search Engine Optimisation and Web 2.0 tools to enhance web visibility of archives.