

TRAINING FOR AUTOMATION AT
THE UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE
LIBRARY

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Abstract

This proposal for a poster session discusses and shows pictures of steps taken towards automation in the University of Zimbabwe Libraries. The university is celebrating its 50th anniversary. One of the milestones achieved is to have an automated library system (innovative).

In preparations for this, many discussions and debates were held. Proposals were sent to administration and to donors for funding.

Training for Automation started with stand alone work stations for word processing, e-mail, and CD-ROM database searching. Workshops were held for training librarians followed by demonstration workshops for the faculty. Installation of a campus wide network made it possible for staff, faculty and administrators to access the catalogue from anywhere on campus.

Compulsory library information literacy skills classes for all first years in September 2004, has made the library central to all learning going on at the UZ.

There is a wide acceptance of collaborative teaching of information literacy skills with the Communication Skills Centre by both students, faculty and administration



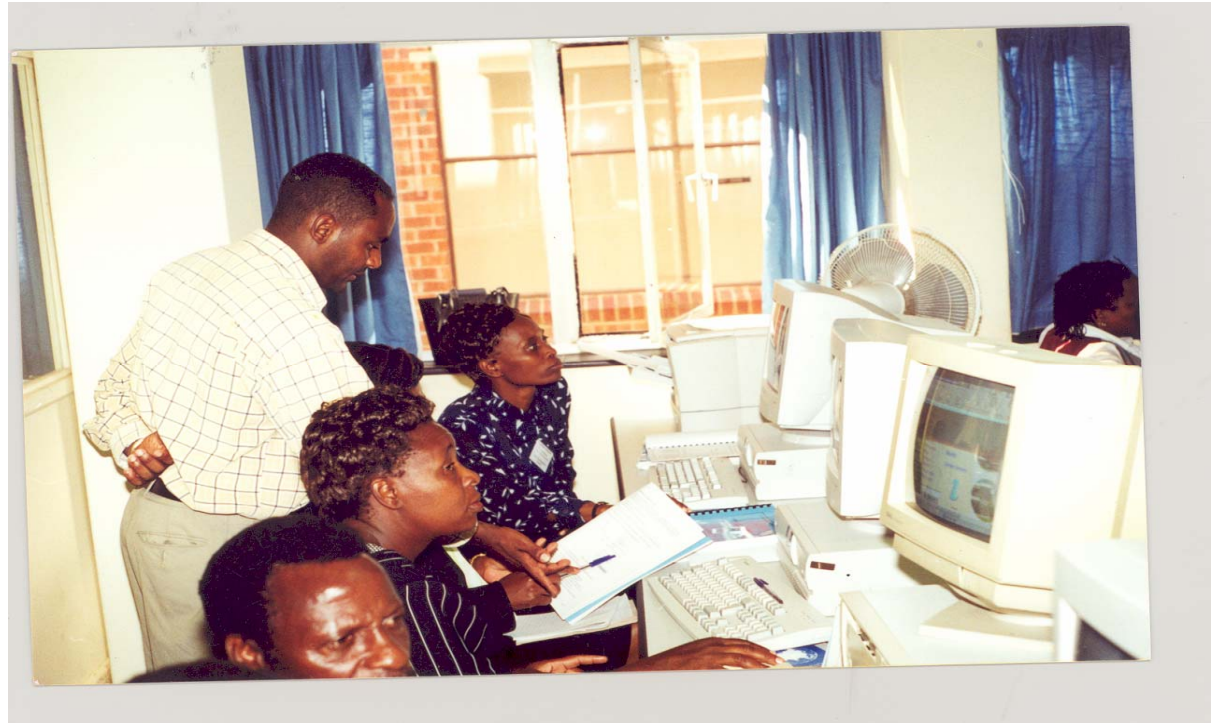
Background

- University of Zimbabwe is celebrating its 50th Anniversary on 11 February 2005. It started with 68 students in 1957 and now is a flourishing institution of higher learning with over 12 300 students enrollment and 3000 staff.
- The University Library was opened in 1958, the small collection grew to 100,000 by 1967
- It is the largest library in the country with over 550,000 volumes of books, periodicals and Special Collection and Government publications.
- It is also the national depository for United Nations and other International publications.



Road Towards Automation

- The library started in the late 1980s to introduce automation.
- Automation was gradually introduced, first as stand alone computers for e-mail and Desk top production of library signs, and handouts.
- A donation of 3 computers brought about CD-ROM database search capabilities.



Training Sessions

- Steps toward automation included a lot of training sessions.
- Some involved a lot of discussions and debate on the different types of systems to get for library automation.
- Donations facilitated training from outside Zimbabwe.
- The PERI project (Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information) sponsored training of trainers to facilitate information technology retrieval competences to librarian.



Now Alive

The UZ Library is now abuzz with the newest up grade of the innovative system in operation.

- Students have to “book” for a chance to sit at a computer.



Academic Excellence

- In September 2005 for the first time all first year students were taught use of the online public access catalogue and electronic resources and the internet.
- Librarians did a tremendous job and the first year students were empowered on using information effectively.
- The teaching staff were very impressed and wanted to learn more themselves.
- The library took a central role and the limelight in meeting one of the key result areas of the UZ strategic plan of having to graduate students with information communication technology competencies



Bright Future

- The University has already responded positively by unfreezing the position of Information Literacy Coordinator.
- More computers have been delivered in the library, with a promise of more soon.



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