[Darcy Spiller](https://doi.org/10.1108/00242531211280540), (2012) "Know It All, Find It Fast for Academic Libraries", *Library Review*, Vol. 61 Issue: 5, pp.389-390, <https://doi.org/10.1108/00242531211280540>

Book Review of: *Know It All, Find It Fast for Academic Libraries* Heather Dawson

Picture, if you will the following scenario. It is after seven in the evening, you are providing cover for the enquiry desk of a large academic library. So far, most of your enquiries have been "where can I do some photocopying?" or "I can't seem to find Rang and Dale's Pharmacy book on the catalogue, will you help me?" Sprinkled with the odd "where are the toilets?" Fairly run of the mill stuff.....

Then an academic on a very tight schedule approaches the desk and asks you "Where can I get information on the education system of Zambia? I'm in a bind and need it tonight!" This is your moment.... Do you:

- A. Stare at them like a rabbit caught in the headlights and mutter something about the subject librarian not being available and could you come back tomorrow, thank you very much (customer service is everything!)
- B. Google it
- C. Grab a copy of 'Know It All, Find it Fast – For Academic Libraries, by Heather Dawson' off your reference shelves and try to assist the academic with their query?

'Know it all, find it fast' claims to be specifically aimed at information professionals working in a reference capacity in an academic library. Its purpose is to deal with the more commonly asked questions presented at the reference desk. It does not profess to give all the answers to potential questions and it assumes that any employee already has a basic knowledge of the policies and management of their own individual establishment. However, it does offer a 'Survival guide to front-line staff' covering the trickier enquiry that may come their way.

The book is very helpfully, alphabetised by subject/topic, such as 'Banking, Education, Languages, Parliamentary Proceedings' etc. Within each subject there is a further split into three sections: 'Typical questions'; 'Points to consider'; and 'Where to look'. Within the 'Where to look' section the information is broken down again into: Key Organisations; Libraries and Archives; Dictionaries and Encyclopaedias; News Services; Journal Article Indexing Services; and Internet Gateways and Portals. This may seem like a lot of subsections but not every one of them is populated by information, so it keeps the 'Where to look' sections concise and readable.

That is the main thing that I found appealing about the book. It wasn't cluttered with too much information; every section was clear and to the point. It told you where you could start looking for answers and gave a little snippet of information about each source. Letting you know within a couple of sentences whether or not you thought that source was going to work for you. Also the 'Points to consider' section has really useful tips in it. Such as under the Trade Union section there is a tip about remembering alternative spellings (such as Labour and Labor) and synonyms (such as trade unions, labor unions, strikes or industrial action). Now, I know any information professional worth their salt should remember things like this, but when you are caught out with a tricky enquiry, you might be thrown off course and forget these simple things.

Overall, I think this book is marvellous and it will definitely have a place on my bookshelf. This book is not going to give you the definitive answer to the 'education system of Zambia' query, but it does signposts for your way to the answers, it will tell you where to start your search. Ultimately, if you

are looking for an information source to give you a starting point on your reference journey, which is packed full of useful tips, then this is the book for you.