

Ubuwiki for Africa offers a global solution

By Indlovu Network

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A localisation of the popular Wiki format could be the solution to low bandwidth in the developing world as an intermediate technology group from Africa calls for greater offline accessibility and knowledge sharing.

"A traveller through a country would stop at a village and he didn't have to ask for food or for water. Once he stops, the people give him food, entertain him. That is one aspect of Ubuntu but it will have various aspects. Ubuntu does not mean that people should not address themselves. The question therefore is: Are you going to do so in order to enable the community around you to be able to improve?" - Nelson Mandela.

Ubuwiki Offline is an intermediate technology solution for Africa where low-bandwidth and high-cost of internet make communication unaffordable for the majority. In the face of the digital divide, Ubuwiki contains a digest of information – Ubuwiki Live - to get users of the popular Ubuntu Linux operating system started. Wikipedia has announced plans to migrate to the Ubuntu platform.

Ubuwiki is an alternative distribution of the XHTML/Java platform created by the open-source Wiki on a Stick (WoaS) project, which exists entirely in a self-contained file, allowing users to edit and change live content to suit their individual needs.

The Indlovu Project responsible for the South African WoaS localisation and distribution, has called for greater offline accessibility of web-pages, and knowledge sharing that does not rely solely on expensive high-tech computers or dependence upon costly highspeed internet and agrees that WoaS-type digital bundles are the way to go in terms of offering computer users an format that respects the needs of human-beings.

Think of Ubuwiki as an MP3 for files and data -- If the only digital music available was via streaming audio, computer users would naturally rebel and find a way of saving the information offline. Luckily we have the international WoaS community to thank for this development that could provide Africa with a solution to its communications deficit in which computer users are constantly frustrated by the lack of offline resources.

We believe Ubuwiki is the answer to the digital divide, since it allows users to edit and build pages 'offline' in situations in which there is no internet readily available, and in keeping with the spirit that is the basis of Ubuntu, the application is shared by the community. Ubuwiki users are encouraged to make use of the popular Ubuntu Linux operating system and the package is intended as a way the broader ubuntu community may stay in touch with each other, sharing knowledge and information in a practical, concrete way.

You can download the package from: <http://sourceforge.net/projects/ubuwikioffline/>

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