

Fact-checking service launched

Reportedly Africa's first fact-checking website, [Africa Check](#) officially launched on 31 October 2012 in South Africa. The service is run in a partnership between Wits University and the AFP Foundation.



"The website is Africa's first website dedicated to fact checking, to promoting ideas of verification and accuracy in the public debate," said Anton Harber, head of the journalism department at Wits University and thought leader, during the unveiling of the site.

Speaking to journalists the launch, Harber laid out the purpose of this new service: "We will quite simply follow things that are said in the public arena by politicians or by other media or by experts, and where we think they need checking, we will verify them and we will publish what we find, to say this was true, this was not true, or it was disputed and here's how you understand the nature of that dispute."

The non-profit service functions on the support of partners and donations - Google is listed as one of the donors - while a team of fact-checkers at the university do the heavy lifting.

"In South Africa it can be difficult," said Harber, "Although we have a constitution and laws about transparency and openness and making public data available to the public, in practice it is not always easy to get the information. There's not necessarily a culture of openness in a lot of government departments."

Though only available in South Africa at the moment, the project intends to expand to other African nations. Africa Check also aims to involve journalists and other interested parties through an interactive forum.

For more, go to www.africacheck.org.