

Google grants preserve African history, increase Internet access

The Google Inc. Charitable Giving Fund of Tides Foundation announced on Tuesday, 8 March 2011, that it is awarding five grants totalling US\$5 million to African projects in support of improving internet access and to enable African countries to participate in and contribute to the global Internet. One grant will assist in expanding the online Nelson Mandela archive.

South African grants

In South Africa, two grants of US\$1.25 m each have been given to the Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory and the Desmond Tutu Peace Centre and a grant of US\$ 0.75m to the Tertiary Education and Research Network of South Africa (TENET), to continue to assist South African universities with Internet and information technology services.

One of the other grants will benefit the Nigeria ICT Forum (US \$0.5m), in improving access to Internet infrastructure in its tertiary education institutions and one to the Network Startup Resource Center at the University of Oregon (US\$1.25 m) to enable more people in numerous African countries to participate in and contribute to the Internet.

Mandela, Tutu go digital

Google's grant will assist in expanding the online Mandela archive and make it available to global audiences, scholars and researchers in the future. In addition to significant audio-visual materials, the online multimedia archive will include his letters and correspondence with family, comrades and friends; prison diaries; and notes he made while leading the negotiations that led to the end of apartheid in South Africa.

"We are delighted that Google has come on board to help ensure that our Mandela Portal becomes a world class source of accurate and reliable information," said Verne Harris, head of the centre in Johannesburg.

The Desmond Tutu Peace Centre in Cape Town, will also assist in the documentation and digitisation of Desmond Tutu's archives and provide an interactive digital learning centre.

Commenting on the initiatives, Luke Mckend, country manager for Google South Africa said, "Google wants to help bring the world's historical heritage online and the Internet offers new ways to preserve and share this information. Our grants to the Nelson Mandela Centre and to the Desmond Tutu Peace Centre will facilitate new digital archives for South Africa's past, giving the global public an opportunity to engage with the history of some of the most extraordinary leaders of our time.

We are also delighted to be announcing additional grants which will help many more people across South Africa and Africa access the internet and benefit from access to information".

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