

# Toby Shapshak on innovation in Africa

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2 Dec 2014

Loving what you do is easier said than done and is outside of today's reality of the need to make a living.

This was the sentiment put forward by Toby Shapshak, addressing an audience of freelancers at the South African Freelancers' Association on Tuesday morning.



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## Evolution of journalism

His talk, Trends in Media was in the context of a "vastly changing world". He said there had been an incredible evolution of journalism over the last four decades of innovation and the development of technology.

He said Africa was responsible for many global solutions due to its innovation. Africa 10 years ago was a write-off. It was thought of as the hopeless continent. Today six out of 10 of the fastest growing countries are in Africa.

Africa has been responsible for the innovation of mobile money and mpesa transactions account for 40% of Kenya's GDP, he said.

Pay-as-you-go was also an African first, pioneered largely by Vodacom in Africa.

## Wireless connections

Innovation is about solving real problems and Africa has many of them. That is why solar power is the next big thing for the continent. The 20th century which gave rise to the advent of the computer, was the most fruitful period of innovation and the silicone chip changed everything. "The next big thing was wireless connectivity which brought about networking. In the 21st century we have cloud computing and all communication is mobile."

He said that of Africa's 100 million Facebook users, 80% used mobile access. "Globally, Twitter is the front page news."

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