

YouTube South Africa launched

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From today, Monday, 17 May 2010, YouTube users in South Africa are now able to log on www.youtube.co.za and do what they always do best: broadcast themselves in their own words, upload their videos, and share their stories with the international community [*just like Zoopy does - managing ed*].



"Today, I am excited to announce the launch of the South African version of YouTube," Alon Chen, YouTube marketing manager said, speaking this afternoon at the Atlas Studios in Johannesburg.

"Content uploaded by users in SA will show up as 'browse pages' on the YouTube South Africa site," Chen said, adding that this will make it easier for locals to find videos most relevant to them and their way of life, thus creating a new space for the national community and giving SA users the opportunity to increase their exposure.

Largest online video site

Since launching in 2005, YouTube has massively grown to now become the world's largest online video website, with the number of users worldwide reaching a whopping 450 million users worldwide, and some 2 billion views per day, and 24 hours of new content uploaded every minute. YouTube mobile has seen a growth of 2000% in 2009, as the average Android user watches 10 video playbacks per day.

It is believed that such an overwhelming number of users prompted the company to forge ahead with many innovative initiatives to enhance user experience and push the YouTube Revolution to higher levels.

"We are an innovating company and a one-stop shop for video that constantly brings new features to enhance users' choices," Chen said, citing innovative features such as pay per view and full length TV, high definition (1080p), 3D, YouTube Feather Beta (www.youtube.com/testtube), audio-captioning and audio-translations, and more social interactions, among others.

On the issue of copyright and content ID issue, Chen said when a user launches a video, it goes into a system that scans it to see if it does not violate copyright regulations.

Partnered with content creators

Chen said YouTube has partnered with thousands of content creators, large and small to showcase their creative word to YouTube around the world. "We have taken a number of steps, above and beyond what the law requires to protect copyright holders," he added.

YouTube partners in SA include the SABC (the public broadcaster) and Rhodes University (based in Grahamstown, Eastern Cape). "It is about partnerships, whether they are small or large, such as filmmakers, broadcasters, film studios or learning institutions," he pointed out.

On the issue of community safety, YouTube said it will continue working hard to ensure users stay safe on the site - something the company believes is at the core of its success and integrity.

Safety initiatives include clear policies regarding what is acceptable and not acceptable in the site, robust mechanisms to enforce these policies and educational efforts to increase safety awareness.

In this ever-changing world made smaller by globalisation and fast-moving technology, some observers believe YouTube SA will put the country at the cornerstone of global interconnectivity and eradicate social intolerance and the fear of the unknown as various people and cultures will seek to discover each other's cultures.

Outside the genre box

Rhodes University's YouTube content combines issues in a single video that is outside the genre box - arts through a human rights lens and science in service of democracy. The channel presents amazing stories about Africans for Africans.

For more, go to www.youtube.co.za.

ABOUT ISSA SIKITI DA SILVA

Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer.

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