

Tech entrepreneur eliminates need for textbooks

Cape Town-based tech entrepreneur, Brett Simpson, has developed a technology solution that eliminates the need for textbooks. The proprietary software allows teachers and students to access learning materials from a touch screen kiosk known as a 'Freedom Toaster'.



"I am passionate about giving people unlimited free access to content that will improve their lives," says BreadBin Interactive's founder and CEO Brett Simpson. "The Freedom Toaster has been nine years in the making and with well over one hundred successful installations around South Africa we are ready to take the distribution to the next level."

The Freedom Toaster came about a decade ago when the cost of downloading open-source software was more expensive than buying the high-priced licensed version. The Shuttleworth Foundation sponsored a kiosk at the Cape Town Science Centre where developers could burn as much free software as they wanted. The concept was so popular that it resulted in long queues on many occasions.

Working with the Department of Basic Education

"We are working with the Department of Basic Education to create a solution specific to their needs which has the ability to change education in South Africa, as we enter into a new digital age," says Simpson. "The learning materials contained on the kiosk are aligned with CAPS and cater to all levels of teachers and students."

People interested in testing the digital content delivery system can visit the Telkom Bandwidth Barn in Woodstock. The leading Cape Town-based incubator and its parent, the Cape Information Technology Initiative (CITI), have commissioned a kiosk that is loaded full of free open-source software for developers, tools and templates for entrepreneurs, educational resources for learners and much more.

Simpson is also an alumnus of TheBarn's Enterprise Development Programme sponsored by the Provincial Government of the Western Cape and the City of Cape Town. "TheBarn gave me invaluable access to business mentors and capacity building courses that really helped me on my way," says Simpson.

"We love the idea of the Freedom Toaster," says Cape IT Initiative executive director Jenny McKinnell. "Bring a memory

stick or a CD and copy as many of the free tools and resources as you want, without paying any download charges. You're also welcome to distribute them as freely as you want. This is true freedom of information and education."

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