FNB, Internet Solutions endorse African technology development through partnership with Tech4Africa

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Internet Solutions and First National Bank (FNB) have given their full backing to Tech4Africa, the premier Internet and emerging technology conference, in their role as Foundation Partners and have committed to supporting the long-term development of home-grown technology solutions on the continent.

"From our earliest discussions with FNB and Internet Solutions it was evident that they share our values and vision for the future of Internet and mobile technologies on the continent," says event organiser Gareth Knight. "The reality is that Africa is playing catch-up in these sectors and that this can only be overcome through collaborating with the best minds in the industry, locally and globally."

"Both partners bring tremendous value to the conference because of their appreciation for the way in which technology can and should be applied to drive economic prosperity in Africa, and have clearly demonstrated their skills in this sector."

Knight points to Internet Solutions' position as a leading provider of Internet infrastructure across the continent. As the trusted partner in IP driven solutions, Internet Solutions enables their clients to be truly competitive in the global economy.

Company MD Derek Wilcocks says Internet Solutions' participation extends well beyond its support of the conference and providing connectivity to participants over the two days.

"We see the future of the Internet in the way people are able to collaborate. Social media is changing the way organisations work and providing opportunities for governments to interact with their citizens," he says. "The conference topics are at the heart of the future of our industry and we want to be part of that learning experience and also contribute to that debate."

"For us, it's about more than the technology and technical ability, it's about the impact that we as an organisation can have on people's lives," he adds.

Knight says that FNB's role as an enabler of business and technology ideas is equally important and that the bank's participation at Tech4Africa will hopefully spur on more home-grown development.

"FNB has demonstrated a strong entrepreneurial edge and willingness to invest in the market through introducing technology-driven solutions such as PayPal and cellphone banking. In short, they are walking the talk, which other institutions are still struggling to achieve," he says.

FNB Commercial's head of small business sales, Marcel Klaassen, says FNB is continuously driven by innovation, which is based on a strong entrepreneurial spirit within the division.

"We recognise the role that technology, e-commerce and innovative banking solutions play in the entrepreneurial environment and are proud to facilitate knowledge sharing and international best practice trends in these areas," he says. "We understand that the most difficult barriers for entrepreneurs to overcome is the lack of support and mentorship and have therefore tailored a business proposition around small businesses that address both their financial and non-financial needs. We look forward to engaging with existing and aspiring technology entrepreneurs."

Tech4Africa will be featuring international and local technology visionaries including Clay Shirky, Leila Chirayath Janah,

Jonathan Snook, John Resig and many others who will be sharing their knowledge and experiences. The conference is taking place on 12 and 13 August 2010 at The Forum in Bryanston, Johannesburg.

About FNB Commercial

As a company with entrepreneurial spirit at its heart, FNB Commercial is committed to supporting South African entrepreneurs to take advantage of the business opportunities present in our country by offering innovative business banking solutions. This commitment is reflected in our vision to enable, grow and accelerate entrepreneurship in South Africa.

With this over-arching focus on entrepreneurship, FNB Commercial has a suite of ground-breaking business banking products aimed at assisting small business owners with running their businesses more efficiently. To ensure that our clients receive the support they need, we have invested in several innovative platforms that offer convenience, accessibility, cost effectiveness and security.

About Internet Solutions

Internet Solutions is a wholly owned subsidiary of Dimension Data. The company is Southern Africa's most established and experienced Internet Service Provider. Since 1993 Internet Solutions has been providing end-to-end connectivity solutions and related services across the African continent. Today IS is a provider of Internet Protocol-based Connectivity, Communications, Cloud and Carrier services in the African market and for African clients into the global market. IS provides services to large public and private sector organisations, medium sized organisations, and through its value channel program to smaller organisations and consumers.

About Tech4Africa

Tech4Africa runs from 12-13 August 2010 at The Forum in Bryanston. Workshops will be held on 10-11 August. The event is targeted at business professionals and technologists from businesses of all sizes, from entrepreneurs and start-up owners through to professionals working at large organisations. Clay Shirky - one of the world's leading thinkers and writers on the social and economic effects of Internet technologies will be the keynote speaker at the inaugural Tech4Africa Conference. Shirky joins a stellar line-up of international speakers - including leaders from organisations such as Twitter, Mozilla, digg and Yahoo! - and African technologists from companies such as PesaPal, Ushahidi, Obami and many more.

About Technovated

Technovated is a leading Web 2.0 provider in South Africa and London. Technovated enables content management, delivers e-commerce stores and search engine marketing, provides social media management and stimulates growth for foreign markets through authentic user engagement.

http://www.technovated.com/

About Gareth Knight

Gareth is a digital maven and open source evangelist. Educated as a zoologist, he is a veteran of two dot com crashes in London, one web 2.0 acquisition, and runs Technovated.

Previously, Gareth served in London as Director of Product Management for MyHeritage.com, a global family genealogy company based in Tel Aviv.

Before joining MyHeritage, Gareth landed seed funding from London's top early stage investors to co-found Kindo.com, a global family social network with an international team spread around the world. He then led the Product team in London to roll out a localised version of Kindo in 17 languages within 6 months, as well as an aggressive search engine campaign,

both of which resulted in users from circa 220 countries and an enviable growth rate.

Kindo was voted one of the top 3 most promising Internet companies in the UK for 2008, and was later acquired by MyHeritage in August that year.

About Tech4Africa partners

Both global and local leading companies from a variety of industries will support Tech4Africa. Delegates will have the opportunity to interact with industry leaders in the vibrant expo environment at the conference.

Tech4Africa foundation partners include:
FNB: - www.fnb.co.za
Internet Solutions: - www.is.co.za

Other Tech4Africa partners include:
Seedcamp: - www.seedcamp.com
Old Mutual: Scholarships Partner - www.oldmutual.co.za
Zoopy: Official Social Media Partner - www.zoopy.com
Digital Edge: Official Podcast Partner - www.thedigitaledge.co.za
Bizcommunity: Offical Marketing Media Partner - www.bizcommunity.com
Memeburn: Official Media Partner - www.memeburn.com
Balancing Act Africa: Official Media Partner - www.balancingact-africa.com
Homecoming Revolution: Official Media Partner - www.homecomingrevolution.co.za
TechCentral: Official Media Partner - www.techcentral.co.za