

Making its (Book)mark



By [Danette Breitenbach](#)

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Last night a total of 13 gold and 34 silver awarded on stage (the 44 bronze winners were announced but not called onto the stage), at the [7th Bookmarks Awards](#)...

Held for the first time in Johannesburg, the Awards, which reward the most innovative digital work from agencies and brands across the country, boasted a record number of entries and the number of tickets to the event were exceeded.

“ Nominated by us, Unilever wins Best Marketing Organisation Award! Congrats [@LungaNgcime](#) [@NazeerSuliman](#) [#Bookmarks2015](#) [pic.twitter.com/A9Dg4SBEOQ](#)- Liquorice (@LiquoriceOnline) [February 19, 2015](#) ”

The modern Turbine Hall, in the trendy Newtown district of Johannesburg, played host to the Awards, and began filling up with the sound of nervous anticipation an hour before the Awards kicked off. Hopefuls were treated to drinks and an array of food before the main attraction. The Awards themselves proved to be a slick and professional event that ran for an hour and a half, giving winners plenty of time to celebrate at the after party.

Headed up by John Dixon, the Awards were judged by 54 judges, both local and international.

Matthew Bull, founder of The Bull-White House, in New York, United States, and an international judge, was of the opinion that agencies need to use technology more to do what has not been done before.

High praise for local talent

In an interview preceding the Awards, he said he thought the advertising industry was too reactive and not proactive enough when it came to technology. "Technology has shaped society since the invention of radio and television. Television was not invented for the advertising industry, but became an important media platform. There is incredible technology happening every day and we need to tap into it to be ahead. If technology shapes society then we need to know first where society is going and so tap into the desires of consumers."

“ We're at the Turbine Hall in Jozi for the [@TheBookmarks!](#) Good luck to all the finalists. [#Bookmarks2015](#) [pic.twitter.com/nBkImpldpY](#)- Isobar South Africa (@isobar_sa) [February 19, 2015](#) ”

He also said that South Africans have a phenomenal ability to invent stuff to be used for good. "In 20 years' time who knows where this country will be."

Local judge Alistair Fairweather, Chief Technology Officer for Machine, says this year the Awards criteria placed an emphasis on results. "It is fine to build something beautiful but it must show results."

This year, results counted 40% of the Awards criteria. Saul Kropman, Managing Partner SLV&Co, added to this, saying: "Digital is measurable and that's what makes it so interesting and so powerful."

Tim Spira, IAB SA Board member and Head of the Publishing Council (eNCA), agreed with him, saying that the judges were looking not only for work that stood out, but work that pushed the boundaries. "We also rewarded work that overcame the obstacles faced in South Africa such as limited and slow broadband."

A maturing market

He added that it was good to see more interactive work, which included aspects of social, than straight publishing as in previous years. "This shows how the market is maturing in South Africa."

“ Opening speech now by [@jarredcinman](#) [#IABSummit](#) [pic.twitter.com/YtejxyOFPV](#) - NATIVE VML (@Native) [February 19, 2015](#) ”

Jarred Cinman, IAB SA Chairperson (Native), said that the Awards not only showcased great work but also showed results and "this shows an increase in the spend in our industry."

One of the winners on the evening, Hellocomputer, complimented the Awards' judges. "Overall, I think judges award work when they believe it shows creative excellence and delivers measurable results especially when they see an idea that reshapes the category," says their Executive Creative Director, Simon Spreckley.

Another winner on the night, was Cerebra. Craig Rodney, Managing Director, Cerebra, says 2015 was by far the best run Bookmarks Awards he has ever been to. "Tickets to the event were sold out instantly, the Awards started and ended on time, with still enough time to give credit to the great work delivered during the year."

IAB SA CEO, Josephine Buys, told the Award attendees that becoming part of the IAB worldwide had elevated the Bookmarks Awards to the next level. "This is our opportunity to show that Africa is alive with creative innovation and as cliché as it may sound, everyone here and who entered is a winner because you have contributed to the growth of digital."

Coming soon!

On Monday, we plan to publish interviews with the winners... what makes good work, what you should look for to create the best... and perhaps what you should avoid.

Look out for it!

ABOUT DANETTE BREITENBACH

Danette Breitenbach is a marketing & media editor at Bizcommunity.com. Previously she freelanced in the marketing and media sector, including for Bizcommunity. She was editor and publisher of AdVantage, the publication that served the marketing, media and advertising industry in southern Africa. She has worked extensively in print media, mainly B2B. She has a Masters in Financial Journalism from Wits.

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