

AFAI launches free artists' guide to online action

A new online toolkit, free to download, will guide and assist artists and arts organisations in the effective use of online and social media tools.



The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Toolkit was developed by the African Arts Institute (AFAI) in partnership with the Arts & Culture Trust (ACT). It is available as a free download via Google docs, from www.afai.org.za (News section) and from www.act.org.za (Development Programme section).

The toolkit provides an accessible online resource for anyone in need of advice on how to use everyday IT tools as effectively as possible. Its 45 pages cover new media platforms such as websites and blogs and social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Soundcloud and Vimeo. It also addresses recently popularised initiatives such as 'crowd funding'.

"One of AFAI's key roles is to provide opportunities for education, training and mentorship to build human capital required to grow and sustain the African creative sector. We recognise ICT as an important driver to advance the sector. This toolkit will help artists and arts organisations leverage the use of ICT to widely distribute, access and develop the arts and increase their visibility and impact in their communities," says AFAI general manager, Belisa Rodrigues.

ACT CEO, Pieter Jacobs, adds, "Without the right knowledge and information, seemingly cost effective online marketing efforts could be detrimental to an organisation's reputation. In order to truly reap the benefits of an online presence and to maximize return on investment on digital spend a well-planned marketing and communications strategy is vital. The Arts Toolkit is a valuable source for practitioners in the process of developing strategies for and maintaining online platforms."

Training courses

The Toolkit will be complemented by a series of practical training courses being developed to elaborate on its content in a practical environment. These courses will be presented by AFAI during 2014, with support from the National Lottery Distribution Fund.

The toolkit is also being translated into French, which will increase its reach on the continent.

"We are of very grateful for the support of the Arts and Culture Trust, as well as our other partners who have made this project possible," says Rodrigues.

AFAI publications

Previous publications by the Institute include the Migrant Artists' Handbook, also available online and aimed at African diaspora artists living and working in Cape Town and Johannesburg. The Handbook has proved an invaluable tool for anyone entering the arts and culture industry.

Hard copy publications by the Institute include Voices, a compilation of testimonials: African artists living and working in Cape Town and surrounds; and The African Writers' Birthday calendar, featuring the names, birthdays, countries of origin and most important titles and achievements of close to 300 writers, poets, playwrights and journalists from across the continent.

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