eBook distribution solutions emerge from Africa

There is great demand for eBooks in emerging markets however the demand for eTextbooks is even greater. Countries such as Kenya, Nigeria, China and Brazil are struggling to gain access to eTextbooks in their classrooms and universities. The societal factors of some of these countries require easy-to-use solutions that are also scalable and specifically designed for these markets.

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The spotlight will be on the London Book Fair during the upcoming days, one of the largest book fairs in the UK. South African startup, Snapplify, has been attending the London Book Fair since they launched in 2011 and has signed leading local and international publishers. The company has been working on new digital publishing models for high growth emerging markets and has recently given a stronger focus to the academic market. This year the London Book Fair has dedicated an entire stream to Education, with multiple seminars focusing on Academic publishing. Snapplify has extensive experience providing digital publishing solutions to education publishers, particularly those expanding into emerging markets via digital textbooks, a topic currently under extensive research by the Snapplify team.

The company has recently launched their Academic eReader which is being used by Macmillan Education. The eReader allows users to make notes, highlights and annotations on their eBooks which is associated to their individual profiles. Snapplify stores all actions made by students in secure cloud servers allowing students to safely access their eBooks on any device using their unique login details. This solution has been widely accepted in African countries where students are sharing devices and cannot afford to own individual ones.

There is a great demand to enable the distribution of eTextbooks to emerging markets where bandwidth and internet connectivity are strained and inconsistent however solutions to these problems are currently being solved in Africa by caching data at institutions and supporting offline reading capabilities. It is fundamentally important to build solutions to solve problems in emerging markets especially where literacy rates are low and access to education is difficult. The state of the academic eBook industry in South Africa has not been critically measured until now. A research paper which will soon be released by the Snapplify team will analyse the adoption rate of eBooks in schools and universities and will go onto expose major obstacles to mass adoption.