

Ugandan online store and info service launches

I Know Information Services LTD, an information and communication technology (ICT) company in Uganda has launched two websites www.icareug.com and www.iknowuganda.com to provide on-line shopping and information services to Ugandans.

By David Muwanga ^{23 Aug 2007}

The services will offer online shopping and delivery services to people living outside the country seeking to send support to their family members in Uganda.

The firm's managing director Robert Katuntu said iCare's services will make life easier for most Ugandans "We shall enable the clients to buy a range of products like vouchers, airtime, gifts, pay school fees and deliver them direct to the clients' nominated recipients with physical address and or mobile phone number within 24 hours of receiving the order."

Meanwhile, iKnow will provide online business information about Uganda.

"Our online database contains profiles of organisations, individuals and financial tools and services to help users succeed in business," he said on Thursday, 23 August, at the launch of the sites in Kampala.

The websites were developed after research showed that getting information about business and other facilities in Uganda was a hassle. And most company websites are rarely updated and there was a growing need for this information.

"...[O]ur website will be updated daily and our tools and services are designed to ease the routine of doing business. The website is written for Uganda's unique environment," Katuntu explained.

Katuntu also said that other offerings on the website will include business advice and tips on starting, managing and growing a business, to save small business enterprises from collapsing as 90% of businesses in Uganda eventually fail because of lack of such information.

The website will also profile winning businesses, personalities and ideas, on top of advertisements which companies will be able to do on the site.

There will also be a full listing of government agencies, embassies on Uganda, visa requirements and business prospects.

Access to sections of the website will be by subscription, which Katuntu said will cost sh20,000 a month (approx \$12), but listing will be free of charge. There is also a 14 day free trial period.

The Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on ICT, Edward Baliddawa said that despite the development of the new solutions for electronic commerce, there are no laws to protect the sender of the products and the recipient.

"We need a legal framework that would regulate e-commerce and one other step government is taking is that although internet services are expensive it is putting in place a US\$100 million national digital fibre opt

backbone that would reduce the costs of internet and internet connectivity by half," he said.

"We have also tasked the ICT Ministry to ensure that the three legal pieces of law that regulate electronic commerce are tabled before Parliament as soon as it resumes," Baliddawa concluded.

This includes the electronic transfer bill, the electronic signatures bill and the computer misuse bill.

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