

# YouTube pursues Ugandans with local edition

 By [Walter Wafula](#)

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YouTube, the popular online video transmitter has rolled out a local domain name for Uganda to enhance and ease access to relevant film content in the East African nation.



The broadcasting division of global technology giant Google Inc, unleashed its Ugandan domain name [www.youtube.co.ug](http://www.youtube.co.ug) on Thursday, 1 December 2011, before going live on Friday. The domain was officially launched by Ruhakana Rugunda, Uganda's minister for information and communication technology, in Kampala.

Speaking to guests at the launch, country manager of Google Uganda, Ham Namakajjo said the innovation will now offer Ugandans some of the most informative and entertaining video content from around the world through a local interface that promotes content most relevant to them. It is reported that over 3 billion videos are viewed on the platform by 800 million people per day, globally.

"This is a new opportunity for content creators in Uganda to bring the work of local artists, musicians, newsmakers, leaders, and ordinary people to a global audience," Namakajjo added. "We have fantastic collections of video content right here in Uganda and, with a new localized version of YouTube, Ugandans will be able to connect and use this information more easily."

Through the initiative, Google expects to spur the use of internet for various purposes and its executives are looking forward to seeing many more Ugandan videos on YouTube.

## Other content providers

NTV Uganda, a subsidiary of Nation Media Group, with headquarters in Nairobi, offers the most video content in Uganda. Equally relevant is Bukedde TV, a subsidiary of Vision Group, a media house in Uganda.

Another content provider is HiPipo.com, a social entertainment site that offers the latest news and gossip, celebrity profiles, and buzz from the entertainment industry in Uganda. HiPipo.com ranks, and presents the Top 20 music videos in Uganda every week on its website and YouTube channel.

With YouTube.co.ug, Ugandans now have greater flexibility to tell their stories and find videos most useful to them. Namakajjo said the initiative will further open up small businesses to another route to market their products and interact with clients.

Commenting on the new development, Rugunda stated that information remains an invaluable resource that can be used by people young and old alike, professional and amateur to open up their worlds to new opportunities.

## Employment opportunities

"Accessing relevant information and sharing helpful stories on the Internet is enabling people to learn, train and partner with each other to help better their lives." In addition, he noted, "The government remains committed to creating employment opportunities for Ugandans and YouTube will definitely help in creating this entrepreneurial spirit."

After unveiling the platform, YouTube is now obliged to make the platform a comprehensive destination by ensuring that videos load and play quickly - even in places where bandwidth is at a premium. Quick access to the internet also remains a key priority for internet players across Africa despite the existence of at least three undersea bandwidths cables.

The launch of YouTube.co.ug is just one of the many initiatives that global technology firms Google and Firefox are undertaking to boost internet use in Uganda and the rest of Africa. To make the internet relevant to more citizens, the two firms have in recent times translated their search engines in local languages such as Luganda, Swahili and Luo.

The introduction of the YouTube.co.ug follows the launch of similar ones in South Africa, Egypt and Kenya which are experiencing fast growth in internet and mobile phone uptake in the 21st century. Namakajjo was tight-lipped on YouTube's next destinations. However, Nigeria and Ghana often stand out as attractive markets in West Africa for new players on the continent and could be on YouTube's waiting list.

## ABOUT WALTER WAFULA

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