

Research Channel Africa website gets a revamp

In the early 2000s, South African-based media group Creamer Media leveraged the research and interactive abilities of the internet by creating a product that allowed users to quickly access information from the large archive associated with the Engineering News and Mining Weekly publications.



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After a user survey conducted in 2011, it became clear that it was time for a major overhaul of the website. It revealed that while users were very satisfied with the content available on the website, which they classified as user friendly and accessible, improvements were required with regards to the search function.

"We archived all of our news articles, features, magazines back issues and research reports in one place and launched the Research Channel Africa website in 2002. Subscribers were then able to log on to the website and search for the information they required," says Kenneth Creamer, CEO Creamer Media.

Access research reports

In addition to daily news reports and weekly features, the website allows subscribers to access research reports about specific mining and industrial sectors, videos, audio items, African country profiles, magazine back copies and an advanced search function.

"This allows users to track developments and news in specific industries, to track the evolution of significant projects, such as the Gautrain or Anglo American's platinum projects, and to access comprehensive research reports compiled by our research unit," says Creamer.

Every year more than 20 industry- and mining sector-specific reports are compiled, in addition to a monthly coal industry roundup and *African Mining* roundup.

"This allows Research Channel Africa to serve as a real window into industry and mining in Africa. We already have 230 companies which subscribe to the service and we anticipate this to have grown to 300 by next year.

Enhanced search results

"Our archives date back to 1998 and contain more than 250 000 items, with this figure growing each day as news items, features, research reports and other multimedia items from our print and online publications are added to the database," says Creamer.

"It became clear that we needed to present this content more effectively, as well as create a more sophisticated and efficient search function to produce higher-quality, more targeted results," explains Creamer.

Following an extensive redesign the Research Channel's home page is now in effect a search page, where visitors are presented with the latest content from all sections of the archives as well as an immediate search facility.

The search facility has been refined through the creation of an option to limit a search to the headline and first paragraph

items, enhancing the quality of results produced.

"This refined search capacity means that users can access content that is highly relevant and reduces the quantity of superfluous results," says Creamer.

Subscribe to content

Subscriptions can be arranged for a single or multiple users within a larger organisation, allowing access to the full spectrum of Creamer Media content.

Users are also able to purchase individual research reports, which is facilitated by the e-commerce facility on the website.

Prospective users are offered the opportunity to sign up for a free trial of Research Channel Africa, allowing them to sample research reports, projects, mine profiles and selected articles.

"The trial sample option provides us with valuable insight into a sizeable market of potential users who were previously only able to 'window shop' through our archives without actually being able to view content and evaluate whether it fulfils their needs," says Creamer. "It is now possible for them to assess more clearly what we have to offer."

"We believe that the refined Research Channel Africa lives up to its mission to offer intelligence on industry and mining. It is our vision to expand the website's footprint and become the research and content leader for economic decision-makers on the African continent," concludes Creamer.

For more, go to www.researchchannel.co.za.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>