

New Vision regains top spot in Uganda's cyberspace



By [Walter Wafula](#)

7 Aug 2012

New Vision has displaced *Monitor Online* as the most visited local website in Uganda following its redesign. The website which is the online version of *The New Vision* print newspaper in Uganda regained the top spot last week after the revamped version was uploaded.



According to [Alexa.com](#), the site which provides information and statistics about global websites, *The New Vision* online is ranked 8th among the top 500 sites in Uganda, while its rival *Monitor Online* moved to the 10th position. *Monitor Online* is a product of The Monitor Publications Limited, Vision Group's main rival in Uganda's media industry.

Most visited sites in Uganda

Facebook, Google.co.ug/com, Yahoo and YouTube are the top five most visited sites in the country. *The New Vision* online was the most visited site until it was revamped in 2011.

Following the redesign, *Monitor Online*, reportedly the first news website to launch in Uganda, regained its position until last week. In the last week, audience reach by *The New Vision* online increased by 40% compared to 20% by *Monitor Online*. While the latter's monthly reach declined by 2%, *New Vision's* reach edged up to 19%.

Redesigned to ease navigation

In an interview last week, Susan Nsibirwa, Vision Group's head of marketing told Bizcommunity that *The New Vision* website was redesigned for the second time, to ease navigation of the site for the newspapers online readers.

"We got feedback from our readers that there were some navigation issues stemming from the redesign so our response has been a totally new," she said.

Browsing *The New Vision* website is now easier and its pages load faster than in the past ten months.

"Ours is a dynamic industry - and we're not afraid to admit that there's always room for improvement in order to stay on top of our game," Nsibirwa added.

The redesign comes less than a year after *The New Vision* first revamped its website to give it a fresh and trendy look. But the revamp made the site sluggish and many users found difficulty in locating the content they were looking for.

The new site has also come with its limitation for many. Two days after the site was uploaded, users were required to sign up for *The New Vision* e-paper to access stories on the home page. The e-paper is the digital version of *The New Vision* print newspaper. The requirement left many users who are used to reading the online copy free of charge irritated.

Mixed reactions

On Friday, a reader who identified himself as JZ commented: "New Vision used to be my online reading paper for details and Monitor (online) for headline. Since they lost the vision in search of money by all means to build the NRM house, I now do the reverse. Keep up, that is how corporations collapse."

To sign up for the e-paper, users are required to pay \$0.38 per day, \$2.66 per week, \$11.27 per month or \$135.24 per annum. To subscribe to the digital version one can either pay cash at the Group's office, online using an ATM Visa card (Credit/debit card) or via mobile money.

By the time of the interview, many stories on the website were free of charge while the company required readers to subscribe for the e-paper to pay for some. Although Alexa.com indicates that *The New Vision* online has become more popular than its main rival. The website is losing some its visitors and readers to *Monitor Online* which is still offering all its online stories and content free of charge.

For instance, Faozi Ochol, a Senior 6 vacist who was looking for admission lists to Makerere University last Friday left the *The New Vision* website and visited the *Monitor Online* website for the same.

"Monitor uploaded for us the list. New vision wants us to first pay for it," he ordered when he got to the site. Moments later, the admission lists were uploaded on the *Monitor Online* sites for free.

"You expect readers to pay to see a list that *Daily Monitor* will release anyway....seriously what you guys are doing is not there," a disappointed Tonie had commented earlier on. But Nsibirwa insists *The New Vision* is not charging for content but for the e-paper.

"There is still a lot of content that is free," she commented.

Although the website risks losing many readers to *Monitor Online*, Nsibirwa argued that Vision Group's game plan is to remain the main source of breaking news in the country.

"As a multimedia group we have to look strategically at the bigger picture in light of all our media channels and the role they play."

ABOUT WALTER WAFULA

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