

Facebook's Internet.org free basic services are bringing African people online

Facebook celebrated the one-year anniversary of the introduction of the Internet.org app by hosting a Developer Day at iHub in Nairobi, Kenya on 27 July 2015 and introducing new services...

Over the last year, Facebook has worked closely with more than a dozen mobile operators across 17 countries to give people access to relevant basic internet services without data charges. Now, Internet.org is available to more than a billion people. African countries where Internet.org has been launched include Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Senegal, Zambia, Ghana, Angola and Malawi.



Chris Daniels, VP of Internet.org

"By providing people with access to free basic services through Internet.org, our goal was to bring more people online and help them discover the value of the internet - and it's working," says Chris Daniels, VP of Internet.org.

"It brings new users onto mobile networks over 50% faster on average, after launching free basic services and more than half of the people who come online are paying for data and accessing the internet within the first 30 days. In the past month, people using the service accessed health services more than a million times, which speaks to the ultimate goal of Internet.org of helping to make an impact in people's lives."

Scaling up Internet.org services

The anniversary also marks the start of a new phase for the free basic services. Facebook has made it easier for any mobile operator to sign up for and turn on Internet.org in new countries through a partner portal (www.internet.org/operators) that includes technical tools and best practices, improving the process to offer free basic services to the unconnected.

It has recently announced Internet.org platform (www.internet.org/platform), which makes it simple for any developer to create services that integrate with Internet.org. FbStart (<http://fbstart.com>) is a new program from Facebook, designed to help early stage mobile start-ups build and grow their apps.

In partnership with Internet.org, FbStart offers a set of benefits specific to social good developers, as well as mentorship opportunities with the Internet.org team. At the Nairobi event, Facebook will show how its FbStart tools and resources will help developers to build, grow and monetise services whether developing for feature phones or smartphones.

"Our goal is to work with as many mobile operators and developers as possible to extend the benefits of connectivity to diverse, local communities across Africa. We look forward to working in partnership with more mobile operators and developers to bring internet access and relevant basic internet services to the unconnected in the months to come," concludes Daniels.

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