

Africa's blogging revolutionaries

The world's poorest continent is, not surprisingly, also its least wired. However, web use in Africa has exploded almost ninefold since 2000, experts say. By prying open the stranglehold that repressive regimes once held on the news, it has become, in the hands of ingenious Africans, a powerful tool for democratisation and even disaster relief.

The man was nervous. He was afraid, he said, of the secret police. So he advised me to hire a random taxi to park at a certain church. And there, I was to wait. A few minutes later he called again, this time on a different cell phone. He gave me directions to a nondescript house with an iron gate.

"Sorry about these procedures," he apologized, tapping away at a laptop in a shuttered room. "But I could spend years in prison for what I do."

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