

Winners of the First African Blog Awards

The winners of Waxal - Blogging Africa Awards (BAA) for journalists have been announced. Waxal is an initiative of the Panos Institute of West Africa (PIWA) with the partnership of Highway Africa and Global Voices Online (sub-Saharan Africa).

By Ndesanjo Macha 10 Mar 2009



Waxal (pronounced WA-HAL), which means “speak” in Wolof, captures the essence of the evolution of the worldwide web as a platform for conversation and for raising marginalised voices. The first edition of the awards recognises the use of new media by professional journalists in Africa and by African media organisations working to promote the production of alternative information and citizen expression.

After reviewing the submitted blogs, members of the jury awarded four prizes corresponding to the three categories announced at the beginning of the contest and an additional special award of encouragement. The jury looked at blogs that illustrate good editorial line, quality of expression, interaction with users, originality, regular posts and a variety of format for content. Ten blogs have also attracted the attention of jury members.

The jury was made up of Dr. Lilian Ndangam, Cameroonian Media Professor based in Canada, Joel Phiri, filmmaker and multimedia expert from Zimbabwe and Fatou Jagne, freedom of expression and media expert. She is the co-ordinator of Article 19 Africa. All jury members are bilingual.

And the winners are:

- Best Journalist Blog (Francophone): Cedric Kalonji from the Democratic Republic of Congo (he used blog at www.congoblog.net blog). Kalonji has been working for five years as a journalist for Radio Okapi. He receives one million CFA Francs (about US\$2,000).
- Best Journalist Blog (Anglophone): Rosebell Kagumire, a journalist from Uganda. Kagumire works for the *Independent* newspaper. She blogs mostly about her job as a journalist. Rosebell receives one million CFA Francs (about US\$2,000).
- Best African Civil Society Organisation's Blog: Lusaka Times, a news and discussion blog run by Zambians from around the world. Lusaka Times receives 2 millions CFA Francs (about US\$4,000).
- Special Panos Institute West Africa Prize for West Africa: Israel Yoroba Guebo from Côte d'Ivoire. Israel receives 500,000 CFA Francs (about US\$1,000).

Below are blogs that received congratulations from the jury:

Category one: Best French-speaking journalist's blog (non-hierarchical classification):
Edouard Tamba from Cameroon

Ramata Sore from Burkina Faso
Basile Niane from Senegal

Category two: Best English-speaking journalist's blog (non-hierarchical classification):

Emmanuel Onyango from Tanzania
Conrad Dube from Zimbabwe
Khaya Dlanga from South Africa

Category three: Best African Civil Society Organisation's Blog (non-hierarchical classification):

Penplusbytes' blog that covered 2008 elections in Ghana
REgul-Telco-Afrik from Senegal
20mai.net from Cameroon
Remastp News

Other blogs captured the attention of jury members individually, but were not unanimously selected for different reasons:

Remmy Nweke from Nigeria,
Martin Aihonnou from Benin
Nadine Kouamouo-Tchaptchet from Côte d'Ivoire
Vusi Gumede from South Africa
Shashank Bengali from Kenya

The winners each received their prizes at a special event in Dakar, Senegal on 9 March, 2009.

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