

African News Innovation Challenge announces finalists

40 pioneering digital journalism projects have been shortlisted as finalists in the inaugural [Africa News Innovation Challenge \(ANIC\) that Google launched in May](#) this year.



The project will provide grants from US\$12 500 to US\$100 000 for projects aimed at strengthening and transforming African news media. The challenge welcomes proposals that improve data-based investigative journalism, mobile news distribution and new revenue models. Grantees will receive technical advice in carrying out their projects.

Projects reviewed

There were 153 applicants that were screened by a technical review team that evaluated projects that have the potential to strengthen and transform Africa news media.

Projects were assessed for their potential to be replicated by media elsewhere in Africa, or to be scaled up across the continent, to create wide and sustained impact.

Broad range of innovation

"We are thrilled with the broad range of innovation and ideas among the finalists," says ANIC manager, Justin Arenstein. Arenstein is a Knight International Journalism Fellow, who leads the initiative as part of a wider digital innovation program with Africa's largest association of media owners and operators, the Africa Media Initiative (AMI).

"The teams with the strongest links to newsrooms and technology partners had an advantage, as did those that could already point to some proofs-of-concept."

Short-listed finalists include proposals to improve data-driven investigative journalism and the security of journalists or their sources, as well as improve audience engagement, mobile news distribution, data visualization, new revenue models and workflow systems.

"The finalists are also all projects that haven't lost sight of the core focus for the initiative: quality journalism," says Arenstein. "There is a danger in any innovation program that we get blinded by gadgets and hype. The technical review panel therefore focused on projects that demonstrated a keen commitment to journalism itself."

Finalists attend a TechCamp

Finalists will attend a TechCamp in Zanzibar, in partnership with the Tech@State program, where they will have the opportunity to refine and defend their proposals with the assistance of leading media technology strategists, including experts from the U.K. Guardian's data team, Mozilla's OpenNews initiative, Google, previous Knight News Challenge winners, and the World Association of Newspapers.

Shortlists

The finalists are (in alphabetical order):

1. actNOW
A application that empowers audiences to act on investigative reportage, by petitioning government o corporations, in response to televised, radio, or print exposes.
2. AdBooker
A streamlined workflow management system for generating quotations, managing artwork production and placing advertising in print media, while also serving as a staff/personnel management tool.
3. AfricaCheck
A proposed pan-African, non-partisan and crowdsourced fact-checking website that systematically verifies claims made in media reports.
4. AfriCartoons
A proposed pan-African syndication portal for editorial/news cartoons and news infographics, as well other editorial illustrations.
5. africanDRONE
A proposed network of three journalistic 'eye in the sky' drone teams at TV stations in east, west, and southern Africa.
6. AfricanSpending
An African data portal, supported by an intensive fellowship programme, that improves watchdog journalism by "mapping the money" through aggregation, analysis and visualisation of government budgets from across the continent.
7. BudgIT
An infographic service that produces financial literacy materials for newsrooms using both static and interactive graphical explanations of state budgets and other public finances.
8. BloggingGhana
A centralised aggregator and syndication market for Ghanaian blogs, to showcase the best local writers/content producers for republication in legacy media.
9. Code4Ghana
A fellowship programme to strengthen media's watchdog powers by embedding coders into public interest newsrooms to kickstart data-driven journalism, by harnessing newly available open governme data and by sensitising Ghana's tech tech community to media's needs.
10. Citizen Desk
A validation toolkit, to help news organisations run mobile-optimised platforms for aggregating, verifying, publishing and rewarding citizen journalism.
11. Circle
Circle provides newsrooms with a toolkit for creating citizen/audience organised 'circles' of advocacy groups or stakeholders around news events or issues.

12. CorruptionNET
A '5w&H'-driven journalistic template system for crowdsourced/citizen-based corruption reporting projects, in partnership with social mobile network (MXit), to help newsrooms solicit verifiable and actionable information, while still protecting the identity of the source.
13. Churnalism for Africa
Extend the UK-based churnalism.com to work with African news sources, press releases and Wikipedia to help combat plagiarism and 'churning' of press releases in African media.
14. ConvergeCMS
An open source and data-optimised, cross-platform workflow management and publishing system to help streamline and professionalise African newsrooms.
15. CheckDesk
An 'open news' diary, content editing and fact-checking platform to allow audiences into the newsrooms, to help shape media content through collaborative co-creation of news.
16. DataDesk
A ScraperWiki outpost and helpdesk in Cape Town's HacksHackers chapter to provide free data mining and coding assistance to investigative, data, and other digital journalism pioneers.
17. DataWrapper
A partnership with African newsrooms to implement the new open source DataWrapper visualization tool, to help newsrooms publish interactive infographics as quickly as possible with minimal technical skills.
18. End-to-End
An investigative demonstration of "supply chain" mapping and social network analysis, into the cocoa industry, using the SourceMap platform to help show newsrooms how to present complex investigativ stories in an interactive yet simple way.
19. FlashCast
A platform using smart, location-aware LED displays to transmit local news, with audience 'conversation' responses around current events, to passengers in public transit/taxis.
20. Green Hornet
A user-friendly plug-and-play toolkit for African journalists to protect whistleblowers, and sources in collaboration with the Tor Project and Al Jazeera.
21. ImpimpiTagz
A cross-platform citizen reporter app that allows citizens to report the abuse of public facilities or trust by government officials and elected politicians.
22. INVSTG8.NET Microcollaboration for journalists
A community-driven platform to enable journalists to surmount structural barriers to news-gathering, through micro-collaboration, by linking them to data and information via social tools/technologies.

23. LandQuest

A toolkit of interoperable resources for data extraction/data scraping to help newsrooms find, collect and then structure information into datasets for journalistic analysis, with the prototype pilot project creating an online, open, and location-driven database of Kenyan land ownership.

24. ListeningPost

Africa's proposed first social-media driven newsroom that produces actionable intel from citizen reporters, by establishing a Storyful listening post and a ScoopShot-type citizen reporter app calibrated for poorer communities.

25. MicroScope

A transnational platform for team-based collaboration by data-driven investigative journalists from a coalition of legacy media to track toxic and fake medicines being dumped and sold in African countries through information sharing, data wrangling, and shared reporting.

26. moJO - keeping media honest by monitoring online journalism

A plug-and-play toolkit of analytical software tools for African journalism observatories to keep the media honest and help improve media professionalism.

27. Mekooa: feel the pulse of your local community from miles away

A platform for creating personalised news from subscribers' home regions, for migrant workers or Africans in the diaspora, keeping them informed about important events and issues back home.

28. Mapping Africa's Wealth

An investigative toolkit for media in African countries with little open data, showing media how to mine offshore data troves for locally relevant information, as well as tools for transforming offline information into actionable digital data, using a transnational investigation into Africa's extractive industries by a network of newsrooms and technology partners as the proof-of-concept showcase.

29. mWallet

An integrated IVR and mWallet system to provide community radio stations with new revenue streams from social listings, announcements, and audio 'classified' advertising.

30. Newsbooks Africa

A streamlined workflow management platform to help journalists and media organisations write, collaborate, publish and sell print and digital books based on reportage. The system will be piloted at a number of African media partners.

31. newsAPI

An API (Application Programming Interface) that will give 3rd party developers licensed access to editorial and other content at Uganda's largest media house to help create new ways to share and monetize news.

32. openAFRICA

A digital document and knowledge management toolkit for African freedom-of-information organisations and investigative journalists, using a pan-African semantic document repository, to improve insight into and analysis of public knowledge.

33. ODADI - liberating public data to strengthen African watchdog media
An incubator for watchdog journalism in South Africa that embeds data wranglers and coders into newsrooms, with support from an external development team, for improving evidence-based reporting and investigative journalism.
34. OurHealth
A mobile-optimised citizen reporting tool for soliciting reports at specific venues, with the prototype project deployed at hospitals and clinics in 52 districts in South Africa for patients, nurses/doctors, and news correspondents to report on service standards and related issues.
35. Oxpeckers
A "newsroom stack" of interoperable social network analysis, source document management, and other digital analysis and data management tools for investigative newsrooms, with the prototype toolkit piloted in an environmental "CSI team" at Africa's leading investigative newspaper.
36. StarLive
A real-time web and mobile channel for ordinary citizens to participate and ask questions, via connect reporters, at press conferences and public meetings.
37. Sauti ya Mtaa: Geo-located Citizen News
A location-driven publication platform that uses geo-fencing for hyperlocal news, commentary, video and data, to allow communities to share news.
38. TruthGauge - Keeping 'em Honest!
A platform for the media to rate the accuracy of claims made by politicians, so as to keep the electorate well-informed and the politicians honest.
39. Wikipedia Mobile
A campaign to boost, by hundreds of millions, the number of Africans reading Wikipedia in 37 African languages on mobile devices.
40. QuestionBox
A public booth and audio notice board system for deep rural villages, with mobiles in them, to allow citizen activists and community radio to inform communities about social projects and collect and broadcast feedback.

To meet the finalists, go to africannewschallenge.org/meet-the-finalists