

Liberia's blackboard blogger

By [Erik Hersman](#)

13 Mar 2009

Alfred Sirleaf is an analog blogger. He runs the “Daily News”, a news hut by the side of a major road in the middle of Monrovia. He started it a number of years ago, stating that he wanted to get news into the hands of those who couldn't afford newspapers, in the language that they could understand.



Alfred serves as a reminder to the rest of us, that simple is often better, just because it works. The lack of electricity never throws him off. The lack of funding means he's creative in ways that he recruits people from around the city and country to report news to him. He uses his cell phone as the major point of connection between him and the 10,000 (he says) that read his blackboard daily.

Not all Liberians who read his news are literate, so he makes use of symbols. Whether it's a UN or military helmet, a poster of a soccer player or a bottle of coloured water to denote gas prices, he is determined to get the message out in any way that he can.



Advertising works here too. It's L\$5 to be on the bottom level, L\$10 to be on the sideboard and L\$25 on the main section. He doesn't get a lot of advertising, but he manages to scrape by.

His plans for the future include decentralising his work, this means opening up identical locations in other parts of Monrovia, and in a few of the larger cities around the country. I

don't put it past Alfred either, he's a scrappy entrepreneur on a mission to bring information and news to ordinary Liberians. He's succeeded thus far, and I would put my money on him growing it even further.

Article published courtesy of [AfriGadget](#)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Founder of AfriGadget, Erik Hersman grew up in Sudan and Kenya. He is a passionate advocate of change, brought about through the use of technology. Personal blog - www.whiteafrican.com He also tweets as [@whiteafrican](#).

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