

Opera injects \$100 million in African digital economy

Mobile browser, Opera, is planning to invest \$100 million (R1.3 billion) over the next two years to speed up internet adoption in Africa and strengthen the internet ecosystem with local partners.



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Africa is on its way to transform itself into a digital continent with the rapid adoption of mobile internet. For the past five years, the Opera Mini browser has reportedly been a key facilitator in bringing more than half of Africa's internet population online by featuring tools for lowering data costs.

Recently, the company celebrated 100 million monthly users in Africa and is now focusing on making the next generation of web browsers to cater the needs of African internet users.

Developing AI-powered news engine with compression technology for Africa

According to a GSMA Intelligence report, the biggest consumer barriers to internet adoption in most African countries are the [lack of digital skills and awareness](#), locally relevant content and affordability. To bring more first-time internet users without the fear of high data costs or lack of locally relevant content, the company invests in developing a state-of-the-art artificial intelligence engine for smartphone users that will ensure content discovery is at the heart of the browser. Users in Africa will get fully personalised and localised content delivered to their browser, while the data usage can be reduced up to 90%.

Opera is working with over 47 top tier African publishers covering 107 websites on this initiative.

Seeking local partners

To grow together with the African internet ecosystem, the company is planning to seek local partners to integrate value-added services, mobile payment and data bundling into its browser product. This will grant consumers access to quality content and services, giving them the ability to transact more easily on their mobile devices. The range of services to be added over the next 12 months will create a content and services hub.

"Africa is a very important market for Opera," says Richard Monday, vice president of Africa, Opera Software. "We aim to invest heavily in Africa, to build a local platform and grow with the local business partners. This platform will expand the user

base for content providers, e-commerce businesses, operators, OEMs and others to strengthen the African internet ecosystem.”

New offices to be opened in Nigeria and Kenya

Currently, the company has operations in Cape Town and Johannesburg, South Africa and is expanding with new offices in Lagos, Nigeria, and Nairobi, Kenya to support business and product development. The plan is to hire around 100 people for these offices over the next three years.

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