

Latest online stats reveal that local really is lekker

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There was a time when South Africans ignored local content in favour of international content, when anything 'homegrown' was deemed substandard when compared to anything from European or American descent. That time has past.

Ironically, in the only truly global marketplace where consumers can choose to consume content from any corner of the world, South Africans are proving that local really is lekker.

The latest Nielsen online figures for July 2009 put local users at the 6.99 million mark, compared to 5.66 million in July 2008. That's a growth of 1.3 million users, or a percentage increase of 23.6.

Total unique browser figures (including South Africans) for the same period, puts the total figure for July 2009 at 11.75 million, compared to 9.35 million in July 2008. That's a growth of 2.4 million users, or a 25.5% increase.

"What is really interesting is that South African eyeballs make up almost 60% of the total growth figure," says Josh Adler, head of measurement at the Online Publishers Association (OPA).

"The local audience is not only growing at a phenomenal rate, but it's also growing faster as a share of total eyeballs."

Even more significantly, Adler adds, is that local browsers are spending more time consuming local content. Average time spent by domestic browsers on the sites measured increased from 7.33 minutes in July 2008, to 8.35 minutes in July 2009. That's a 13.9% increase.

"This is an indication that local sites are stickier than they used to be, perhaps more interactive. They draw the users in and keep them in for longer periods of time. In a nutshell, we believe it means that local sites are upping the game, and improving the user experience," says Adler.

It's worth mentioning, too, that these figures will likely increase as South Africans benefit from the expanded bandwidth allowances when Seacom goes live. Expect more people online, for longer periods of time as browsing the internet becomes less and less frustrating.

"The bottom line is that South Africans are active and avid users of the local online world. They are consuming the content, and they are doing so more often for longer periods of time - in stark contrast to the declining figures of other, more traditional, media consumption. If local advertisers want to be seen and heard, there is no better place to be," concludes Adler.

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