

Kenya's quiet information revolution

An information revolution is quietly unfolding in Kenya, potentially allowing the public greater access to government data and independent local news. This month, the nation became a regional leader in open government with the launch of a website providing easy access to volumes of public information. Journalists can tap into public budget data with relative ease through the government portal.

By [Tom Rhodes](#) 18 Jul 2011



"A lot of the information was actually already out there but it used to be very difficult to extract data from the government," says Alex Gakuru, a proponent of open information and chairman of the ICT Consumers Association of Kenya. Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Information Bitange Ndemo said he believes the data will help journalists report on issue-based politics rather than personalities. "The data release will completely change the way the government deals with the public and will strike a huge blow against corruption," Ndemo said. Numerous media reports have documented alleged government corruption in Kenya over many years.

But launching the site has not been easy. Ndemo told me it took five years of pushing and a request for the president's intervention to make it happen. Some may argue that poor Internet penetration allows the government to "safely" reveal data online without subjecting itself to much scrutiny. But fibre-optic connectivity is expected to grow quickly in sub-Saharan Africa over the next two years, so this online data is likely to be seen by ever-growing numbers of people.

Read the [full blog post](#) on <http://CPJ.org>.

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