

# OPA's 2009 workshops outline changes, vision



By [Issa Sikiti da Silva](#)

16 Nov 2009

The 2009 Bookmarks Awards have come and gone, but prior to the event the Online Publishers Association (OPA), which is tasked to reward excellence, hosted workshops to announce some changes and outline its future vision.

First of all, there were five judges, instead of two including three local, the OPA said, citing Pete Case of Gloo, JP Farinha of 24.Com, Rob Stokes of Quirk, Fernanda Romana of Euro RSCG and Chris Colborn of R/GA, who used criteria such as creativity, strategic value, return on investment, and publishing excellence as the basis for their judgments.

Other changes include an online entry and judging system, judging format change (two rounds: round one and finalist round), and the public voting mechanisms which included rewarding the People's Choice Awards to Biz Community (online advertising and publishing website) for its greatest contribution to online media.

The OPA also noted the following key observations from the 2009 entries: the entrants are ignoring judging criteria, particularly ROI (for example, percentage increases do not count); and entry preparation needs attention, adding that this is a pitch to judges and entries must be properly prepared as the judges have a limited time in which to assess the submissions.

## Tell a story

"The art of storytelling needs to be developed, stop the tick-box syndrome, think about the thread or flow and get strategic, don't just go through the motions (for instance media plans)," the OPA said.

Announcing its future vision, the OPA said that it wants to further enhance the entry categories (possible B2B or B2C category), educate agencies on entry preparation, drive growth of all categories and target traditional agencies to involve themselves.

It also said that it has a vision to create SA's Internet Week, and lastly, it wants to teach, enable, involve and grow.

## ABOUT ISSA SIKITI DA SILVA

Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer.

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