

Leila Janah joins Tech4Africa keynote speaker list

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Women empowerment in the tech sector has received a timely boost at the inaugural Tech4Africa Internet and mobile technology conference following the unfortunate withdrawal of Wordpress founder Matt Mullenweg due to unforeseen circumstances.



"While it is regrettable that Matt is unable to be present as one of our original keynote speakers, we have been fortunate enough to secure a very exciting replacement in Leila Chirayath Janah, CEO of Samasource," says Gareth Knight, MD of Technovated, the organisation behind the conference. "Leila is an example of how out-of-the-box thinking can, and is, revolutionising the approach to employment opportunities for marginalised people.

"Her presence will also highlight how global thinking, skills and experience can be applied to great effect in the African context, which is a key focus of the conference."

Tech4Africa is the first conference on the continent to bring some of the world's leading Internet technology thought leaders and innovators together to share their expertise and experience with local developers, technologists, entrepreneurs and Internet-aware business executives.

The conference is being hosted at The Forum in Bryanston, Johannesburg on 12 and 13 August 2010 and features internationally-recognised experts such as Clay Shirky, Andy Budd and Dustin Diaz, as well as a host of local tech specialists.

"The fact that we are celebrating Women's Month in South Africa makes her participation all the more fitting, and builds on the objective to promote women empowerment," adds Knight.

Samasource is a unique concept in that it aims to create employment opportunities for women, youth and marginalised people through 'microwork', which consists of small tasks that can be performed anytime, anywhere. Importantly, it gives effect to the concept of a social business model based on crowdsourcing technology.

The project currently connects more than 800 women, youth, and refugees living in poverty by providing them with digital work, and has been successfully implemented in Kenya, Uganda, Cameroon, Ghana, and Pakistan.

"This ground-breaking initiative is particularly relevant in the African context, and we believe that Leila has tremendous value to add to the conference, especially on a socio-cultural level," says Knight. "With Fast Company naming her as one the Most Innovative Women in Technology in 2010, she also has a very important message to share with this sector, and one we are proud to be bringing by way of the conference."

About Tech4Africa

Tech4Africa runs from 12-13 August 2010 at The Forum in Bryanston. Workshops will be held on 10-11 August. The event is targeted at business professionals and technologists from businesses of all sizes, from entrepreneurs and start-up owners through to professionals working at large organisations. Clay Shirky - one of the world's leading thinkers and writers on the social and economic effects of Internet technologies will be the keynote speaker at the inaugural Tech4Africa Conference. Shirky joins a stellar line-up of international speakers - including leaders from organisations such as Twitter, Mozilla, digg and Yahoo! - and African technologists from companies such as PesaPal, Ushahidi, Obami and many more.

About Technovated

Technovated is a leading Web 2.0 provider in South Africa and London. Technovated enables content management, delivers e-commerce stores and search engine marketing, provides social media management and stimulates growth for foreign markets through authentic user engagement.

<http://www.technovated.com/>

About Gareth Knight

Gareth is a digital maven and open source evangelist. Educated as a zoologist, he is a veteran of two dot com crashes in London, one web 2.0 acquisition, and runs Technovated.

Previously, Gareth served in London as Director of Product Management for MyHeritage.com, a global family genealogy company based in Tel Aviv.

Before joining MyHeritage, Gareth landed seed funding from London's top early stage investors to co-found Kindo.com, a global family social network with an international team spread around the world. He then led the Product team in London to roll out a localised version of Kindo in 17 languages within 6 months, as well as an aggressive search engine campaign, both of which resulted in users from circa 220 countries and an enviable growth rate.

Kindo was voted one of the top 3 most promising Internet companies in the UK for 2008, and was later acquired by MyHeritage in August that year.

About Tech4Africa partners

Both global and local leading companies from a variety of industries will support Tech4Africa. Delegates will have the opportunity to interact with industry leaders in the vibrant expo environment at the conference.

Tech4Africa foundation partners include:

FNB: - www.fnb.co.za

Internet Solutions: - www.is.co.za

Other Tech4Africa partners include:

Seedcamp: - www.seedcamp.com

Old Mutual: Scholarships Partner - www.oldmutual.co.za

Zoopy: Official Social Media Partner - www.zoopy.com

Digital Edge: Official Podcast Partner - www.thedigitaledge.co.za

Bizcommunity: Official Marketing Media Partner - www.bizcommunity.com

Memeburn: Official Media Partner - www.memeburn.com

Balancing Act Africa: Official Media Partner - www.balancingact-africa.com

Homecoming Revolution: Official Media Partner - www.homecomingrevolution.co.za

TechCentral: Official Media Partner - www.techcentral.co.za

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