

eNews 24-hour channel takes to the airwaves

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History was made last night at Melrose Arch in Johannesburg when e.tv launched eNews Channel, South Africa's first independent round-the-clock news service, on Channel 403 on DStv Premium and DStv Compact. At exactly 7pm, the fantastic duo of Jeremy Maggs and Redi Direko went on air to signal the beginning of a brand new and innovative phase in local news. "Today is a historic day not only for e.tv, but for the whole of South Africa," group editor-in-chief Debra Patta told the audience.



Pic courtesy of Matthew Buckland

"This is a homegrown channel. We conceived it, built it and now we are delivering it to you," Patta said.

"We will criticise if needs be and we will give credit where credit is deserved. If you are doing something good, people out there will hear about it and if not, things might get a little harder for you," she warned.

"This is a platform where we will debate issues with no fear, no favour and cover stories with integrity, as we believe that this is a way of making a contribution to make SA a better place to live in," Patta added, amid a standing ovation.

Marcel Golding, e.tv and e.sat CEO, said, "As we launch this channel, our first objective is to provide South Africans with ongoing TV news and thereby fill a huge information gap in our country. However, we will not stop there. It is our expectation that, as we grow, we hope to be in millions of homes around the world."

Golding also said that eNews will provide world news from an African perspective in the aim of capturing the true complexity of Africa - its politics, its people and its diversity.

Apart from local, regional and international hard news, the eNews Channel will also offer live reports, breaking news, sport, weather, current affairs, entertainment, financial information and in-depth analysis.

Maggs on Media

Maggs and Direko will anchor the weekday prime-time 7pm - 9pm News Night slot. Maggs, who said to be part of 24-hour news has to be the biggest media happening in years, will present a new half-and-hour show, Maggs on Media.

Direko said: "To be on a 24-hour news platform means that we will be reaching more people who are informed and have the latitude to exercise their choice. It is important to deliver a world-class product."

MultiChoice CEO Nolo Letele said, "Our research shows that DStv viewers want a local 24-hour news channel and when e.tv approached us with this initiative, we knew that they would deliver a good, insightful and independent product that would enhance our content."

Launched in 1998, e.tv - through its news channel e.news - has proven to be a serious competitor to SABC News, both of which play an important role in informing the masses in a diverse, democratic, emerging and liberal country such as South Africa.

"We are taking what is already a powerful brand on e.tv and expanding it into a 24-hour news channel," e.tv COO Bronwyn Keene-Young said.

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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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