# Exciting tech developments in Africa

**TECH4AFRICA 2012**
**31 October-1 November**
**The Indaba Hotel and Conference Centre**
**Fourways, Gauteng**

From a tech perspective the world of tomorrow is looking very different from the world of today and nowhere is this more evident than in Africa. Our physical workspace and personal downtime are increasingly shifting to mobile, with Africa being the second-largest but still fastest-growing mobile market in the world.

Tech hubs are starting up all around the continent, bringing people together and encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation. With an ecosystem to support ideas and innovation, we are also seeing increased interest and investment from international VCs and PEs in tech companies in Africa.

While there are developments across the board from outsourcing and cloud computing to streaming media and satellite TV, the mobile landscape is a case in point for how much is happening in Africa. What started with awareness of the success of M-Pesa has meant more innovation in mobile money, mobile wallets and payment mechanisms.

As we adapt to Africa's consumer landscape and connectivity infrastructure, the rest of the world is looking to the continent for new models and ways of finding solutions through mobile technology from m-health and m-education to m-commerce or mobile apps.

As it has for two years previously, Tech4Africa 2012 is playing an important role in bringing this ecosystem together. Here are comments about Tech4Africa 2012 from two of our speakers:

## Brett Commaille of AngelHub on Ignite

As one of the first big players to step in to bring like-minded people together Tech4Africa 2010 was the first organisation to catalyse tech society, becoming an example of what can happen when people collaborate.

From the beginning the goals of Tech4Africa fitted in with those supporting early-stage entrepreneurs to get networked, mentored and helping them to grow. Three years on and with the establishment of AngelHub, Tech4Africa and AngelHub now have a closer association, working together to help South Africans and Africans find a unique tech model.

I believe strongly in the potential that lies within South Africa and if entrepreneurs are supported early on and given the same opportunities and access to networks that start-up entrepreneurs are given overseas, there is no reason why they should not be hugely successful. We have brilliant minds and entrepreneurs in this country; however they need to be shaped and helped and shown the way.

Through his amazing vision and drive Gareth Knight has built a track that other people can climb onto. I have a lot of admiration for Gareth, especially his sincerity and phenomenal work ethic, and am proud to be associated with him as a person. He is a fantastic example to other young entrepreneurs and South Africa needs examples of action, people who go out and do things.

It's tougher for the guys who dream big because the risks are high but AngelHub likes businesses that dream big; those that have a high impact and are able to grow larger than the money invested in them. We support highly scalable businesses -

businesses that can grow faster with less and these tend to have a strong leaning to technology.

There are exciting things happening - in mobile, consumer retail interaction and digital publishing - with good B2B-type opportunities especially for those that take existing behaviour and remove any pain in the process. However when what's being produced is too far advanced for the market, often the biggest challenge is waiting for the market to catch up!

## Neal Ford of Thoughtworks on Agile

When I discussed with my colleagues at our South African office what we wanted to do at Tech4Africa 2012 we all agreed that we wanted to do something that focussed on hard core tech aspects - one of which is engineering practices - especially as we feel this to be the most interesting aspect of tech development.

We also felt it would be a great opportunity for a large group of people to experience new ideas i.e. ideas that they may have heard about but that they needed experienced people to show them how to do properly.

One of these engineering practices is peer programming whereby two people get together to write code and a good example of this is Agile. At first it may seem counter-intuitive - two people working together side-by-side writing code - however we will show participants how to write high quality code the proper way, enabling them to see for themselves how, like lots of complicated things, it's easier once they have been shown how to do it.

Our programme for Wednesday 31st October is divided into two parts - the morning will be a combination of an "eyes-forward" demonstration of techniques, and in the afternoon the group will be split up into smaller break-away groups so that they can practice some of these techniques.

This gives an idea of what delegates can expect from Tech4Africa 2012. Hope to see you there!

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