African Publishers and Worldreader Bring E-Books to All

Publishers Gather For a Roundtable Conversation About the Future of Digital Publishing and Increasing Local and International Access to African Books

Accra, Ghana - Ghanaian publishers, with the support of Worldreader, are taking a lead in revolutionizing the way the world reads, giving children, both locally and globally, access to electronic books.

Today 10 local publishers—Adwinsa Publications Ghana Ltd., Afram Publications Ghana Ltd., Excellent Publishing and Printing (EPP), Regener8 Concepts & Investments Ltd., Sam-Woode Ltd., Sedco-Longman, SmartLine Ltd., Step Publishers, Sub Saharan, Woeli Publishing Services—will gather for a roundtable meeting to discuss the future of digital publishing and how to encourage reading worldwide. The event, being held in EPP’s offices, is sponsored by Worldreader, a social enterprise that nurtures a lifelong love of reading by using mobile technology and e-reader devices, such as Amazon's Kindle, to deliver e-books in the developing world.

Combined, these 10 publishers have provided access to more than 83 textbooks and storybooks to Worldreader’s programs in Ghana and Kenya. To date, Worldreader, which helps publishers convert printed titles into digital books, has delivered 33,000 digital copies of these titles to students in its pilot program in Ghana alone.

"It is great to have Ghanaian children's books digitized and made electronically available to children via Kindle by Worldreader," said Akoss Ofori-Mensah, Managing Director of Sub-Saharan Publishers. "The project gives exposure to the books, far beyond the borders of Ghana. Just last week, a librarian in Florida bought 75 copies of "The Cross Drums" for a cultural exchange project between 6th graders at Berkeley Preparatory School in Tampa, Fla. and 6th graders at Ramseyer School in Agogo, Ghana. She said she found out about the book through Worldreader."

Increasing access to books in emerging markets has long been a challenge African and international publishers have tried to address. Books in the developing world are often hard to find, and moving heavy, expensive printed materials into rural area complicates matters further.

However today’s technology provides a perfect solution. Digital books can now be downloaded via mobile phone technology unto e-readers in less than 60 seconds, and children, families, and communities can have a library of thousands of electronic books at their fingertips.

What ultimately connects existing technology to potential readers, however, is access to books. Without authors and publishers who are willing to fill a critical gap and make books available in new, innovative ways, the e-readers would remain empty.

"Sam-Woode is privileged to be associated with Worldreader's pilot project in Ghana. We understand that we are in the era of e-books, and pupils, both in public and private schools,
must be given the opportunity to explore and be exposed to its advantages," added Nana Abahoma Woode, CEO of Sam-Woode Ltd.

Worldreader's Director of Digital Publishing Elizabeth Wood emphasized the importance of these kinds of partnerships, not just for a new generation of African readers but for the global audience as well.

"We know that the kids in our Ghana pilot program are devouring books as fast as we can deliver them. Some of them have read as many as 50, 60, or 70 books these last few months. One student recently told us she has read 90 books!" Wood said. "This kind of hunger for reading can only be satisfied with the help of the publishing community. By supporting and partnering with African and international authors and publishers, Worldreader hopes to achieve its mission of bringing books to all everywhere in the world."

About Worldreader
Worldreader (www.worldreader.org) is a not-for-profit organization that aims to put a library of books within reach of every family on the planet by using electronic book technology. Just as mobile phones have leapfrogged landlines across much of the developing world, Worldreader is helping make e-readers become the easiest, least expensive, and most reliable way to deliver books to underserved areas and underprivileged people. Worldreader currently operates in Ghana and Kenya, with plans to expand throughout sub-Saharan Africa.

For a Worldreader press kit, please see http://bit.ly/oBVyZm.

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