WORLDREADER EXPANDS LITERACY EFFORTS BY LAUNCHING
WORLDREADER MOBILE
Together with partner biNu, the nonprofit extends its goal of getting “Books to all” via mobile phones and announces over 500,000 readers per month

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA – April 9th, 2013 – Worldreader (worldreader.org), the nonprofit aiming to boost literacy by providing digital books to children and families throughout the developing world, today announced a new method of getting e-books to millions of people on a device they already own: their mobile phone.

Until now, Worldreader’s mission of getting e-books into the hands of people in the developing world functioned via e-readers. To date, Worldreader’s programs in Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda and Tanzania have shown inspiring results of children reading more, providing students access to over 440,000 e-books in English, Kiswahili, Kinyarwanda, and Twi. In fact, in the first few months of 2013, Worldreader has already added e-reader programs at the Kibera Girls’ Soccer Academy in Nairobi, Kenya, and expanded work in Ghana to reach over 1,800 new young children and families in Ghana’s Eastern Region.

Now, as a way to extend its reach, Worldreader has introduced “Worldreader Mobile,” a cell phone application designed for low-end “feature phones.” After months of beta testing, Worldreader Mobile now boasts 500,000 active readers a month in Africa, India and the rest of the world. During testing in January, children and adults consumed the equivalent of 17,000 books on their feature phones using Worldreader Mobile— which has 1,200 books available including CK-12 textbooks, health books provided by the World Health Organization, English language content from the US State Department, stories from African’s Caine Prize winners and Harlequin romance novels.

According to USAID, nearly every home in sub-Saharan Africa has access to at least one mobile phone, making it possible to deliver important health and skill building reading material to millions of people. Sub-Saharan Africa is the fastest-growing mobile market in the world, with an average annual growth rate of 44 percent since the year 2000, showing large scale potential to get more e-books to people in the developing world.

"There are more mobile phones than toothbrushes on this planet," said David Risher, co-founder and CEO of Worldreader. "Together with our growing e-reader program, Worldreader Mobile connects us to millions of the world’s poorest people, providing the books they need to improve their lives."

In 2011, Worldreader partnered with biNu, which has a technology platform that makes Internet connectivity fast and affordable on mass-market phones. The biNu mobile app is used by more than five million people across the developing world and includes more than 100 channels, including news, weather, messaging and also books, via Worldreader Mobile. The platform compresses the mobile data so any phone can have a smartphone-like speed, even on the lower bandwidth 2G networks that account for the majority of mobile phone subscriptions in Africa today and the foreseeable future.
“Our mission is to provide a social, fast and affordable internet to the six billion people in the world who don’t have high end smartphones, and whose only connected device is likely to be their mobile phone. Worldreader’s mission is to promote reading in developing countries in the easiest way possible so our partnership is a perfect fit,” said Gour Lentell, biNu co-founder and CEO.

Initial findings show powerful potential for a digital reading revolution on mobile devices:

- Worldreader Mobile is currently on five million “feature phones,” primarily in Africa and Asia.
- It has over 500,000 users/month, who spend 60,000 hours reading on their mobile phones per month. 100,000 of these readers are reading more than 20 times per month (Worldreader calls these readers “power readers.”)
- In preliminary research conducted by Worldreader, teachers, caregivers, older siblings and parents are using it as well and over a third of the readers surveyed said they would use Worldreader Mobile to read children’s stories to their young.
- Although early adopters seem to be more male-focused, 70% of power readers are women—reading on average over 17 books a month.
- In January, Worldreader Mobile users read the equivalent of 17,000 books on their feature phones.

For more information on Worldreader, please visit www.worldreader.org.

About Worldreader
Worldreader is a US- and European not-for-profit organization that aims to put a library of digital books within the hands of children and families across the planet. Founded in 2009 by former Microsoft and Amazon executive David Risher, and former Marketing Director at Barcelona’s ESADE Business School Colin McElwee, Worldreader works with device
manufacturers, local and international publishers, governments, education officials, and local communities to bring books to all.

About biNu
biNu is a privately held company that develops the biNu mobile app platform that dramatically improves Internet access speed, usability and social connectivity of mobile phones. With biNu, even basic mobile phones exhibit high-end smartphone-like capabilities. biNu works on the thousands of Java-enabled and Android-devices and supports millions of users globally with rapid adoption rates in emerging economies where mobile phones are the primary Internet access device. Today, over 100 channels are available via biNu including social media, search, reference, books, SMS, news, weather and entertainment. biNu is a privately held company backed by Eric Schmidt’s TomorrowVentures, Dick Parsons, Ronald Lauder, Paul Bassat and other private investors in Australia and the US.

Media Relations
Jen Lauricella, SutherlandGold for Worldreader, Worldreader@sutherlandgold.com, +1 (925) 890-1292
Susan Moody, Director of Communications, Worldreader, susan@worldreader.org, +(34) 639 366 634
Paul Naphtali, Head of Public Relations, biNu, paul.naphtali@binu.net, +(61) 418 864 550