

# YouTube takes Africa offline

 By Leigh Andrews

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In meeting the goal of making video more viewable on the continent, YouTube took the bold move of making offline video playback a reality.



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The Digital Entertainment Africa session of AfricaCom 2015 was all about giving work to a new level of entertainers through YouTube. What better format to broadcast the video-sharing platform's dreams for the future than through a short video? In it, YouTube addressed the questions of what other media platform lets dreams be born and transforms normal people's lives.

Heather Thompson Rivera, YouTube's director and global head of product partnerships, said it's essentially the reinvention of television, especially if you look at the success of the final episode of the recent season of *SA's Got Talent*, in which three-year-old DJ Arch Jr beat out his competitors. If you've not seen it, view the eTV video excerpt embedded below:

Rivera stated that while the amount of time Africans spend watching YouTube is growing at a rate of 70% year on year sounds impressive, much more can be done on the continent. That's especially true when you factor in the fact that despite all the growth, the majority of users' experience is poor, based on a 2G connection and average download speed of just 50kb/s.

"It's hard to put a price on anxiety of checking data usage while downloading a video," concluded Rivera. But it's not all doom and gloom...

## The fight against the video buffering wheel

YouTube is making an effort to get things on a faster path by tackling one of the most reviled things on the Internet - the buffering 'spinning wheel' image.

Adaptive video is the answer she alluded to, which involves breaking video up into chunks to serve the video differently as bandwidth connection changes.

Another option is to downgrade it to a lower quality video and compress the video, which has been proven to increase user satisfaction and happiness.

But it's the new [offline feature](#) rolled out on the day of the conference across the continent that's generating the most buzz.

This option lets users watch video content (apart from music videos, of course) offline by saving the videos you're interested in to the YouTube mobile app by tapping the new 'offline' button, and then watching them later during periods of low or no internet connectivity. So far the feature is available in South Africa, as well as Nigeria, Kenya and Ghana.

The perfect innovation for our mobile-centric consumers? Only time will tell...

## ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh\_Andrews.

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