

Chidi Nwaogu, nominee for Techpreneur of the Year at 2021 FOYA Awards

By  Evan-Lee Courie

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Chidi Nwaogu, serial tech entrepreneur and cofounder at [Publiseer](#) and Savvy, has been nominated as Techpreneur of the Year at the 2021 FOYA Awards, an annual awards ceremony since 2016, which was conceived to serve the strategic objective to retain, reward, and recognise high-quality entrepreneurs and SMEs in Africa.

This [Youth Month](#), we find out more from Nigerian entrepreneur, Chidi Nwaogu.



Chidi Nwaogu, serial tech entrepreneur and cofounder at Publiseer and Savvy

■ ***Congrats on being nominated as Techpreneur of the Year at 2021 FOYA Awards. How do you feel about this?***

I feel excited that the work I do is being recognised, but most importantly, I feel motivated to even do much more and create bigger impact in the nearest future. I'm very passionate about solving some of the world's most pressing problems through innovation in technology, so being nominated as Techpreneur of the Year at the 2021 FOYA Awards is a positive development in the right direction for me and all that I've done in the last decade.

■ ***You're the cofounder and CEO at Publiseer. Tell us more about your business?***

Publiseer is a digital platform that helps independent and underserved African writers, musicians, filmmakers, and video game developers, typically those from low-income and disadvantaged communities, to earn above the minimum wage and live above the poverty line from the sales of their creative works.

“ *Publiseer achieves this by helping them distribute, protect, promote and monetize their creative works worldwide, at no charge, with just a single click, and the digital platform shares in the revenue it generate for these creators, which in turn*

goes back into helping more creators in Africa. ”

In a nutshell, every day, Publiseer discovers extraordinary local African creators, and gives them a platform to focus on doing what they love doing the most and what they know how to do best, which is to create, while Publiseer handles the tedious but important business of transforming their creativity into wealth for them.

When Publiseer accepts a creator on its platform, Publiseer fine-tunes their creative works to industry standard, so that the creator stands a chance to compete on a global scale. Then Publiseer distribute it to its over 400 well-established partner stores so that the creator is easily discovered. Publiseer also protects this content from illegal distribution and intellectual property theft, so the creator truly owns the content. The creators can monitor their sales performance on Publiseer's centralised dashboard, and they receive their royalties via African-tailored payment methods, such as into a local bank account or through a mobile money wallet.

“ Publiseer's mission is to empower the African continent through its young people, and to simultaneously change the African narrative by promoting the beautiful culture and heritage of the African people to the rest of the world, one content at a time. ”

The digital platform is working towards helping at least 2 million African creatives from low-income and disadvantaged communities earn above the minimum wage and live above the poverty line from the sales of their creative works, by 2030.

📌 ***How and when did you get started?***

My twin brother and cofounder, Chika, and I started Publiseer in August 2017.

After selling our second startup company 'PRAYHoUSE', Chika and I decided to take a break from tech entrepreneurship, and pursue other dreams. For me, I wanted to be a published author, and my twin pursued a career as a recording artiste.

I wrote a novel titled *Odd Family Out*, and my twin recorded a studio album titled *Higher*, and now it was time to monetize our hard-work. My twin brother heard of TuneCore, a music aggregator based in the United States, and decided to distribute his studio album with them. They requested a distribution fee of \$99, and he paid immediately. After all, he had just sold his second startup company, but this isn't the case for many upcoming artistes in Africa. He started a social media campaign to raise awareness for his album, and within a month, he had sales of more than \$1,200. Now, it was time to collect, and that's where the problem came in.

TuneCore primarily pay royalties via PayPal, and in Nigeria, and many African countries, we cannot receive money via PayPal, but can only send money, so that payment method was out of the picture. So he had to fall back to the only payment method left and that was cheque payment even though he knew it would take two weeks to receive the cheque and another three weeks to get the money into his bank account. However, after two months, the cheque never came, so he

reached out to TuneCore to know what's causing the delay. That's when he was told that he had taken the money. Upon investigation, it was discovered that someone in Oslo, Norway, had used a fake ID to take his money, and my twin brother was heartbroken. He had to take down his album from TuneCore and sort for local means of monetization.

About a year after, he said to me, "Chidi, a lot of independent African musicians have gone through what I went through trying to monetize my music internationally. And I think we should solve this problem for every African creative out there, including ourselves." And that was when the idea for Publiseer was born; a digital content distribution platform tailored to meet the growing needs of independent African creatives.

🔱 **When you started out you had a goal. What was it?**

When we started out, our goal was to "promote the creativity of Nigerians to the rest of the world." So, when a creative is accepted on our platform, we take care of every necessary media and distribution work from start to finish. However, our goal as a company has evolved over the years.

“ Now, our goal is to help African creatives focus completely on doing what they love doing the most, which is to create, and we handle all the business of transforming their creativity into wealth for them. ”

🔱 **How far do you think you still have to go to achieve your goal?**

We've done a lot, but we still have a long way to go. So far, we have helped over 6,500 African creatives earn a living from their creative works. Our goal, however, is to help at least 2 million African creatives, by 2030, earn a living as full-time independent creatives.

🔱 **You've won several awards. Could you name a few?**

Last year, I won the Migration Entrepreneurship Prize by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) Human Security Division (HSD). I also won the International Telecommunications Union Award for Global Innovation, same year. In 2019, I won the first prize in Entrepreneurship at the Africa 35.35 Award. Same year, I also won the Young Leaders Award for Media and Entertainment and the Bizz Business Excellence Award.



2020 ITU Global Innovation Challenge names Chidi Nwaogu as "Big Winner"

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🔱 **How do you think entrepreneurship has changed over the years and where would you like to see it go?**

Entrepreneurship has certainly changed over the years. In the past, entrepreneurs took several years to build profitable businesses valued at seven-figures. But in this decade, entrepreneurs start out with little or nothing, and go ahead to build tech products that scale very quickly within a few years—onboard hundreds of thousands of active users, generate recurring revenue instantaneously, receive huge funding, and sometimes get acquired by a larger company or go public! I see more funding coming for African entrepreneurs in the nearest future, and more African-born companies having very global presence.

🔱 **What would winning the Techpreneur of The Year mean to you?**

It will be another great validation to the awesome work my team and I are doing at Publiseer. It should give us more exposure, especially to the East African market!

ABOUT EVAN-LEE COURIE

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