SWAHILI AND THE INTERNET II

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The net has become a widely used means of information and communication within the academic community and beyond. After the glimpse into German-speaking universities with Swahili studies, and the fascinating Kamusi project hosted by Yale University in our last number, we will plunge fully into life this time. There are several Tanzanian and Kenyan newspapers on the net now, most of them offered for free, some requiring subscription. One can find out about radio programs, the time they are being broadcast. Most of the radio stations offer to listen to the program in RealAudio. Students from East-Africa in the USA or in Canada maintain their own sites and offer information on their countries and culture, and many links to other sites related to Swahili language and culture. Johannes Fabian and Vincent de Rooij of the University of Amsterdam are in the process of setting up an internet journal on popular culture in Africa, Swahili texts being a special area of interest.

a) Newspapers

URL: http://www.africaonline.co.tz/rai/

This is the weekly **"Rai - nguvu ya hoja"**. It is published every Thursday in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The homepage offers the contents of the current week's paper. Under the headings "Habari za nyumbani", "Uchumi", "Makala", "Mpembuzi yakinifu", "Maoni na barua", "Michezo", and "Kilonge" there is a short abstract of the article and a link to the article in full length.

URL: http://www.nyenzi.co./majira/index.htm

After a short period of free access the latest news of **"Majira"**, one of the most interesting Swahili newspapers in Tanzania, is only accessible after subscribing (US$ 4 per month) However, on the homepage they promise to allow free access "on archived issues that are approximately six weeks old" For those who can wait, and just want to read something in Swahili now and then, this may be interesting

URL: http://www.ippmedia.com/main_content/

The IPP Group, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania offers a series of media very popular in today's Tanzania The link "local news" leads to a page with English and Swahili abstracts of articles of either **"The Guardian"** or **"Nipashe"** The full stories can be viewed with a click from

here "Business news" brings you to the pages of Dar es Salaam's **"Business Times"** in English The pages of IPP usually download within short time

URL: http://www.nationaudio.com/News/DailyNation/Today/index.html

URL: http://www.nationaudio.com/News/East African/Current/index.htm

"Daily Nation" is one of the English language newspapers from Kenya The index page offers the day's headlines, abstracts from the front page and links to the full stories At the bottom of each article the publishers asks for "comments/views about this article" Other sections of the paper are "letters", "business", "features", "sports", "cartoon", and "advertising" A positive feature is the link to "yesterday's paper" The home page also offers a link to the weekly paper of the same publisher, the Nation Group, **"The East African"** with its sections "front page", "regional", "opinion", "business", "maritime", and "sports"

b) Radio

It is the web that enables us to listen to radio programs from Africa Usually broadcasting of national programs cover only a relatively small area Through the web local broadcasters can offer their programs, be it in full length or partly It is the IPP Group which offers the very popular Dar es Salaam area Swahili program **"Radio One"** through the Internet

URL: http://www.ippmedia.com./Newspapers/radio1.asp

The radio's homepage lists the day's program, gives short abstracts to some selected programs, indicates the "Radio One's Top Ten" hits of the week, and offers to listen live to the program Most computers meet with the hardware requirements for receiving audio files Radio One tells the prospective listener that a "realaudio player [is] required" News are broadcast at 7 a m, 10 a m, 1 p m, 4 p m, 8 p m, 9 p m, 10 p m, and 11 p m (EAT) The main news are at 8 p m At 9 p m Radio One broadcast "Habari kwa mujibu wa RTD" At 6 30 a m "Nipashe, a 15 minutes programme of titbits from our correspondents upcountry and abroad will be on air " Other news often take only three minutes Radio One's program is considered by most Tanzanians as entertaining and interesting

Unfortunately, due to reduced availability of Internet bandwidth and the high demand on the RealAudio server from overseas at peak times it may be difficult to connect to the server

URL: http://www.nationaudio.com

It is the Kenyan Nation Group that offers another East African radio program But until recently the link to listen to the radio program did not work

URL: http://www.voa.gov/voahome/index.html

This is the homepage of the "Voice of America", from where a number of links concerning the vast program of this US governmental radio station for international broadcasting can be connected to. Audio files are offered in different formats: Sun Microsystems' μ-law (AU files); Microsoft's 16-bit RIFF format (wav files) PKZIP compressed; Progressive Networks RealAudio format

The Swahili Service is introduced at

URL: http://www.voa.gov.swahili/index.html

On the first of three pages a very short history of the service, the very important link to **"Programs & Frequencies"** and the time schedule are given. The next page is dedicated to a list of sections the service offers in Swahili (some of them are: sports, America today, women's world, farmers' forum, science & health, African music, African events). The last page gives the names, phone numbers and e-mail connections of the staff ("VOA Swahili Service has six full-time, highly talented international broadcasters and one full-time producer"), and the service's address. There is nothing on a connection to a RealAudio program.

The Swahili VOA Program in RealAudio is available through

URL: http://www.voa.gov/voahome/langlist.html

At the moment there are programs in 28 languages, and the promise of more to come. The program available may be some days old, depending on the broadcast schedule. If a program is broadcast only five days a week, the one displayed on the RealAudio server over the weekend may be from the preceding Friday. Depending on how one connects to the Internet, to listen to a RealAudio program may be very expensive, because one cannot just download a packed file that can be unpacked any time later, but one has to stay on-line and listen in - real-time. Voice of America offers a Gopher Menu at **gopher://gopher.voa.gov/**

URL: http://www.dwelle.de/kiswahili/Welcome.html

The Swahili program of Germany's international service **"Deutsche Welle"** offers the following sections on the web: "audio on demand", "taarifa ya habari", "matukio", "kipindi cha Afrika magazetini", "orodha ya vipindi", "jinsi ya kupokea matangazo yetu", "wafanyakazi wa Idhaa ya Kiswahili", "anuani yetu". With "audio on demand" you can listen online to the Swahili program broadcast last. The press review "kipindi cha Afrika magazetini" gives a comprehensive overview on the news on Africa from German newspapers. Under "taarifa ya habari" one can read the news broadcast by "Sauti ya Ujerumani - Idhaa ya Kiswahili".

c) Sites maintained by individuals

Every now and then one comes across websites maintained by individuals and not by governmental or educational institutions, or commercial enterprises, but by Kenyan or Tanzanian students or other expatriates who just want to tell about their country or to open a platform for communication with compatriots. These sites may be even more short-lived than others - when the people leave the university or loose interest in the subject, these sites just die. Still, some of them may be useful for those interested in Swahili:

URL: http://www.public.iastate.edu/~papaf/

"Papa F's corner" is a very playful site, maintained by a Kenyan living in the United States. This site offers a number of links on Kenya, East Africa, and other Kenyans, as well as a link to "ONLINE Swahili Resources". These resources list only a few and very heterogeneous sites. One link leads to the Kamusi project maintained by Yale University which was introduced in our last issue, and to some entertaining sites on Swahili cuisine, sayings, poetry, and kangas.

URL: http://www.zanzibar.eastafrica.net/content.htm

offers "The Zanzibar Archive", a site made up in the fantasy genre, but giving quite a number of really informative sites on Zanzibar and East Africa: geographical profile, climate, history, explorers, a photographic visit to Zanzibar's famous Stone Town, ongoing events, history, Bagamoyo and the slave trade, and a useful bibliography on Zanzibar.

URL: http://www.glcom.com/hassan/addr.html

is the homepage of Hassan Ali, a Tanzanian staying in Ottawa, Canada who offers an article on kangas by Odemary S. Mbuya and a collection of "Kanga Writings" in Swahili, with a translation into English and an explanation of the meaning. Furthermore he offers links to several other Tanzanians and a list of Internet service providers in Tanzania for those who do not want to miss this medium during their stay in Tanzania.

URL: http://web.ionsys.com/~mourad/index.htm

is another Kenyan offering information on Kenya and Swahili culture, as well as some Swahili poetry.

d) Online Journals

URL: http://www.pscw.uva.ml/lpca/
URL: http://www.pscw.uva.nl/lpca/aps/toc.html

Very recently Johannes Fabian and Vincent de Rooij started an internet project: "Language and popular culture in Africa" (LPCA) and "Archives of popular Swahili". "The main aim of LPCA is to document and further the study of expressions of popular language and culture in Africa.

This is accomplished in two ways. First of all, by making available texts that serve as the medium of African popular culture and are at the same time part of this culture. And, secondly, by providing a forum for electronic publication: the Journal of Language and Popular Culture in Africa [ ] At the initial stage of the project, the texts available at this site will be texts collected in Katanga Province, DR Congo [ ]" (www.pscw.uva.nl/lpca). The editors wish to broaden the scope of the archives to other major Bantu languages and invite everybody to contribute information and articles. Sound and image files will be included soon.

The "Archives" offer a link list of available texts. By now these are: "Letters to the editor from the section Habari za Kwetu in Mwana Shaba (Journal d'entreprise de l'U.M.H.K.)", an annotated list of books and articles containing popular Swahili texts. This list is still short (it contains texts from Fabian's area of research), but it is constructed in a very intelligent way. The annotations offer links to related bibliographic references of the list.

Thus this very recent site opens new perspectives to Swahili studies, and can be counted as a major contribution to the field.

URL:http://web.phil-fak.uni-duesseldorf.de/~skelett/morets/ljua-fc.htm

is the front page of the Swahili journal "Jua" which is edited by the Tanzanian Hassan Adam based in Germany. Unfortunately there has been no update ever since the site was opened - it is still the first issue published in 1996 which can be found here.

All hints to where more sites can be found are most welcome and will be introduced and reviewed in upcoming issues. Please contact: E.Schmitt@em.uni-frankfurt.de. Critique and commentaries are appreciated.