Eureka ▶ Design, innovate, engineer

Local initiatives fuelling the digitisation narrative

Thagana Peters is the founder and CEO of Thagana Solutions, a Kenya-based web development and hosting company. He talks about the opportunities in the sector, as brought about by the country's high internet penetration

■ by Caleb Korir
🐦 @PeopleDailyKe

Technology is changing the world in unprecedented ways. Huge corporations and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) alike are now running against time to plug into new technologies in order to reap the huge benefits that comes with it. For many companies, websites have proven to be one of the most important components that every organisation is proud to have. It's for this reason that web development companies have sprouted to fill this gap.

Today many people spend a lot of their time online. It has therefore become critical for companies to set feet on the internet in order to reach their target markets and have meaningful engagements with the market, which would eventually translate into sales and brand awareness.

Thagana Peters, 26, is a web developer and automotive engineer with an interesting ordeal that birthed his web development company. During his college days, he was a blogger meaning he needed a website where he could post his articles and stories.

Expensive venture

He sought for developers to design a website for him, but their charges were exorbitant. To add salt to the injury, most of the developers were foreigners meaning one had to pay with US dollar, making it extremely unaffordable for the blogger. Because of the passion and urge to own a website, he chose to learn web development.

"I started blogging in 2017 when I was still in college and I needed a website. I inquired for web designers, but their services were expensive. I was still in college and I had no source of income, so I started learning how to design a website and I designed my first website in 2018 while still in college. In 2019, I decided to get into web designing officially and that is when I registered my company Thagana Solutions," says Peters.

The journey has not been easy for the young developer, who studied several disciplines including Artificial Intelligence (AI) and web design. He says, "I pursued a certificate in Automotive Engineering at PC Kinyanjui Technical Training Institute in Nairobi and later joined Zetec University to study Video Production. I have other minor certificates in web designing, screen writing and AI."

Gaps in tech

In the world of Internet of Things (IoT), techpreneurs capitalise on gaps in tech, especially with online-based solutions. Websites are critical in this era. Some of the benefits of having a website as an organisation, company or small business includes, but is not limited to online presence, boosts credibility and trustworthiness, brand awareness and also used to provide customers with information about the business. Peters says many web development companies are foreign, which is a huge disadvantage to local businesses.

"Companies need extensive web designing services. I realised that most web design companies were foreign and people or companies were required to pay for their services in foreign currencies such as the US dollar, which makes it an expensive affair," he says, adding that local web hosting has picked pace in Kenya.

Thagana Solutions has partnered with another company to offer web hosting services for their customers.

Some of the advantages of web hosting locally include fast internet loading, fast and accessible customer support from hosting companies and cheaper hosting costs. Peters says foreign web hosting companies take advantage of unsuspecting website owners to advertise on their sites.

"Local servers hosting makes your website load faster. If you are hosting a server locally, the better. I came across a challenge of web hosting when I purchased a hosting site and after paying for it, my website still showed a lot of information about the hosting company. Hosting is creating a working space where a website and website data will be

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stored. There are companies that offer web designing and hosting differently, but at Thagana Solutions we offer both, but in partnership with another company," says Peters.

He continued, "Our customers are individuals, business owners and organisations. We have people who have contracts with us for some years and those who want their websites to be updated and maintained."

World Bank internet penetration in Kenya as of 2020 was at 30 per cent, which indicates an upward trend. Prediction by Statista shows that internet penetration will rise to 58.8 per cent by the year 2026, which will further open more opportunities in e-commerce.

Peters says one of the challenges facing web developers and hosting companies in the country is acquisition of permits and low internet connection, especially in remote areas. However, there's optimism in web development and hosting, arguing that in the last 10 years there was no local company offering such services.

"If you look at a decade ago ago, we had no local web hosting companies, but currently we have even Amazon in Kenya helping local companies to offer cloud storage solutions and server hosting. In a few years to come, web and server hosting will be cheaper and easily accessible in the country," he opines.

Data security challenge

It's said thunderstorm can't occur in a clear sky. This paints a picture that there can't be risks of losing data in cloud storage without cloud storage in the fast place. Peters warns that offline data storage is way too risky compared to cloud storage. He adds that storing data in paper is bulky and can easily get lost and it can never be recovered. He says there are softwares tailored to protect data in cloud storage.

"When it comes to data security, it depends on the software you use to protect the data. When it comes to cloud storage, you can secure your data and prevent hackers by using good security softwares. Storing data digitally is much safer than the traditional way," he asserts.

Peters, who's also the author of The Future Entrepreneurs, says every business can be aided by the internet as it bridges businesses to customers worldwide. "The future is in the internet and every entrepreneur should focus on it. Every business can be supported by the internet, as the internet connects organisations and even individuals such as artistes to the world," he says in ending.

GADGET REVIEW

New wireless mouse for advanced developers

Logitech MX Anywhere 3 is a new Wireless Compact Mouse for advanced creators, developers and analysts on the go, and is reputed to increase productivity by 50 per cent.

The device brings the ultimate speed and performance anywhere and anytime and is 30 per cent faster than touchpad users based on bits per second for the average movement time.

The latest addition to the premium MX family of products, MX Anywhere 3, is built to track on virtually any surface including glass, as you move it with you wherever you are working, such as your kitchen table, couch, local coffee shop or even from the road in a taxi.

It is available in pale gray, rose and graphite. The MX Anywhere 3 for Mac is available in pale grey and features a low-profile, comfortable design that fits well for smaller hand sizes. The mouse connects up to three devices through Bluetooth wireless technology or the included Unifying USB dongle (with the MX Anywhere 3 universal edition). It stays powered up to 70 days on a full charge with the USB-C quick charging.

Featuring the next-generation MagSpeed wheel, the compact mouse quietly scrolls up to 1,000 lines per second and auto-shifts between ratchet and hyperfast

mode, giving creators and developers the highest precision in a compact mouse.

The design provides a strong feeling of control when using the mouse. The buttons are well placed for both left- and right-handed users, and the solid plastic design and rubber grips on the sides give users more control. The scroll wheel is metal, with grooves instead of the smooth surface many competitors have. This, combined with the mouse's sleek size, makes it one of the few peripherals that users with small hands can easily use for long hours.

- Noel Wandera