

# The Schools' Project

Appreciating Heritage, Using Technology, Teaching Research



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# What was the Schools' Project?

- The Schools' Project, run in conjunction with the eThekweni Municipality's Ulwazi Programme, Goethe Institut and McNulty Consulting, in 2011/2012.
- Operated in township and peri-urban schools in eThekweni.
- Aim was to teach digital literacy and research skills, and develop students' interest in local culture and heritage.



# How was it structured?

- Run as an extramural activity for Grade 11 students.
- A mentor held classes twice a week, teaching participating students research and digital skills.
- Run for an eight week period.
- Weekly thematic tasks were set (articles to research and write) for the students to complete in their own time.



# Research Themes

- Main themes centered around school history, family history, historic environments and culture.
- On Fridays, themes were introduced for the students to work on during weekends, ready to upload to the web by the next class.



# Mentors



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# Technology

- Run at schools that already had a computer lan.
- Internet was provided using 3G modems.
- Word-processing using Microsoft Word, browsing using Firefox.
- Collaborative, online publishing using an open-source content-management system (CMS).



# Project website

The screenshot displays the Ulwazi School's Project website. At the top, there is a logo consisting of a stylized red and yellow flower-like shape next to the text "ULWAZI School's Project". Below the logo is a navigation menu with the following items: HOME, OUR MENTORS, SCHOOLS SELECTED, and ABOUT THE SCHOOLS' PROJECT. A search bar is located on the right side of the navigation menu.

The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Latest News:** This section features four news items, each with a title, date, and a brief description. The items are:
  - Award-ceremony at Amatshezulu High School** (21/05/2012): Friday marked the end of the Ulwazi Schools' Project at Amatshezulu High School in...
  - Test at Amatshezulu High School, Geordedale** (11/05/2012): Today marks our last day with Amatshezulu High School team as we are writing our online Test. As...
  - Stolen Computers and Taxi Violence** (03/05/2012): One have to mention that challenges in this school are overwhelming. Bad news is that Amatshezulu...
  - Progress at Amatshezulu High School** (12/04/2012): When we started with the project at Amatshezulu High School it was towards the end of the first...
- Navigation:** A sidebar on the right containing links to:
  - Ulwazi Homepage
  - Community Memory
  - Programme Blog
  - About the Programme
  - Contact Us
- Recent Comments:** A sidebar on the right displaying recent comments from users like "siNe khalala(sick nuts)" and "Nall" on various project-related posts.
- Most Popular:** A section at the bottom left featuring two popular articles:
  - Ulwazi launches pilot school project**
  - Keeping You Posted About The Project at Sibusisiwe CTH School**



# Utilising Mobile

- Mobile interface developed for the project website, allowing students to use their mobile phones to access content.
- Students taught how to use their mobile phones to create content (audio, images) and submit content to the website.





# What was learnt by students?

- Oral history and interview skills.
- Article writing.
- Emailing and Internet literacy.
- Online research.
- Digital media production.
- Online publishing using CMS.



# E-learning test

- At the end of the course, students were required to do an online test.
- Questions were set that required the student to use the Ulwazi Community Memory website to answer.
- There were also a number of questions on the ICT skills that students picked up through the programme.



# Certificates



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# Challenges

- Infrastructural - electricity outages, limited network coverage, outdated software and computers.
- Starting at a low-base of ICT-literacy in students, despite the schools having computer labs and classes.



# Results

- Project run at four schools - Menzi High (Umlazi), Elangeni College (KwaMashu), Sibusisiwe High (Umbumbulu), Amatshezulu High (Hammarsdale).
- 80 students trained in research skills and digital literacy.
- 74 user-generated articles research and written, on previously un-recorded subject matter, in English and isiZulu.
- Replicable model, tested and refined. Scaleable!
- Highway Africa New Media Award - runner-up in 'Technology for Community Engagement' category.



# More information

- On the schools' project: [www.ulwazi.org/school](http://www.ulwazi.org/school)
- Ulwazi Programme: [www.ulwazi.org](http://www.ulwazi.org)
- Goethe Institut: [www.goethe.de/johannesburg](http://www.goethe.de/johannesburg)
- McNulty Consulting: [www.mcnulty.co.za](http://www.mcnulty.co.za)

