4 Weeks // 4 Countries // 8 Hackers

We are a group of developers and designers from Europe, curious about the growing African tech scene. So we decided to just go there.

We have been working with people from all over the world, but not yet with hackers from Africa. We want to change that. We love travelling and believe that it takes personal contacts to establish lasting networks.

We will meet, connect and share with our peers, bring together European and African hacking culture, and kick off continuous exchange.

We will document our road trip on the web and make a movie about it. We want to get everyone in the international tech scene as excited about African hackers as we are.

TRIP

Why go on a trip and not have a hangout?

We believe that it takes personal contacts to establish lasting connections. And we are curious not only about what African hackers work on, but also about who they are and how they live. We hope that some of them will come visit us in the future as well.

What's the schedule?

Sep 24 - Oct 01	Kenya (Nairobi)
Oct 02 - Oct 08	Uganda (Kampala)
Oct 09 - Oct 15	Rwanda (Kigali)
Oct 16 - Oct 22	Tanzania (Dar es Salaam)
Oct 22 - Oct 28	DEMO Africa Conference, Nairobi/Kenya

We will organize four hack events in four locations reaching hundreds of developers. At the end of our trip we will be present at DEMO Africa, the continent's largest startup event. We will also make interviews with people who will explain backgrounds or share their success stories, and we will leave room for spontaneous meetings with local hackers.

..and then what?

Publicity is a main goal of AfricaHackTrip. We want to get everyone in the tech community excited and enable cooperation, so we will blog and tweet, trying to reach as many people as possible. Most of all, we will make a movie. Actually, many small movies and one big one.

HACK

Why call it a HackTrip and not a TechTrip?
Well, because we are Hackers.
First of all, please note: Hackers aren't crackers.
Hackers are computer specialists that adhere to a certain ethical code:

- Access to computers - and anything which might teach you something about the way the world works should be unlimited and total. Always yield to the Hands-On imperative!
- All information should be free.
- Mistrust authority - promote decentralization.
- Hackers should be judged by their hacking, not bogus criteria such as degrees, age, race, or position.
- You can create art and beauty on a computer.
- Computers can change your life for the better.

Electricity and a computer with an Internet connection are all a hacker needs to create something new, solve a local problem and be globally successful. Anywhere in the world.

We are a group of eight developers, designers and bloggers from Europe. We are fascinated by the technical, but also the socio-economic changes the connection of Africa to broadband Internet is bringing about. We are freelancers or self-employed. Instead of offices, we work in Hubs and Co-Working Spaces, just like our African peers. We develop and market software products and are involved with open source and peer learning in IT, especially for girls and women.

African developers and designers are the most important resource in the growing IT market in Africa. Global companies are already competing over this resource. We want to meet local talents that don't just want to earn money with their computers, but connect their creative potential with the opportunities for change, which open-source thinking offers in a connected world.

We want to meet and get to know African hackers, share their and our networks, tools and experiences to go new ways together. We are not a global IT company and we don't want to be. We just want to hack the world a better place.

##AFRICA##

Why Africa?
Our interest in Africa was sparked by the realisation that over the last few years, an exciting hacker scene has grown in East Africa. Faster, cheaper and more reliable connectivity to the internet, and the rapid rise of mobile communication are major factors for the development of the ICT industry. As both trends meet, it is now often mobile devices that offer first contact with the internet at broadband speeds.
And we wonder: How does free and open source software factor in?

Africa is flat.
The world has been flat for a while now, but the digital divide that excluded most East African countries from that development has only been bridged recently. One major factor contributing to that divide was the lack of affordable, reliable, fast internet

connectivity. The first submarine fibre-optic cable connecting East Africa to broadband Internet was launched in July 2009, by now, all major cities are connected. The "leapfrogging" impact is astonishing, not only in economic, but also in social and political terms. The latter have been sparked in many respects by the use of free and open source software.

> *One example would be __Ushahidi__ which was initially a citizen journalism website that mapped reports of violence in Kenya after the post-election fallout in 2008. The map software was later used to rescue victims after the earthquake in Haiti, and as an organising tool during the Arab spring. By now, Ushahidi is a non-profit tech company that builds free and open source software tools for democratizing information and increasing transparency. And they are involved in a whole lot of super exciting projects, from building coworking communities, to peer-to-peer learning, to launching the __BRCK__ Net Backup Generator for the Internet which aims at providing you with electricity and connectivity even in rural areas.*

Sub-Sahara Africa is – besides China – the fastest growing market in the world. Internet and Mobile Communication are two of the fastest growing sectors in this market.

The African mobile phone market grew three times faster than the world's average between 2004 and 2007, and it is still growing at high speed, due to massive demand and matching investments. At least equally interesting is the immense creativity with which African developers apply mobile technologies to solve local problems. Open source is not yet widely used in programming mobile apps, so we will ask hackers about that.

> *Dual SIM card mobile phones, and mobile money transfer services (e.g. __M-Pesa__) are just two innovations that began in Africa. Examples for what local developers make of the opportunities are: Mobile healthcare in rural areas (e.g. __mPharma__), crop insurance for small-scale farmers based on mobile money transfer (e.g. __Kilimo Salama__) and tools for more transparency in agriculture (e.g. __MFarm__).*

What's in the News?
There's still not too much international media coverage of what's going on in Africa's tech scene. But it has been noted that most of the global players of the internet industry invested heavily in Africa over the past few months:
- May 2013: **IBM** opens an Innovation Centre in Nairobi/Kenya. **Google** announces that it is planning to develop high-speed wireless networks in the region. The **Rockefeller Foundation** invests 97 million US-Dollars into their Digital Jobs Africa program.
- March 2013: **Samsung** presents its Built for Africa Product Range.
- February 2013: **Microsoft** starts its 4Afrika campaign to spread Windows-Phones in Africa and educate 100,000 developers.
- January 2013: **Intel** develops Yolo smartphone for the African market.
- September 2012: **SAP** closes Multi-Million-Euro-deal with the Nigerian Dangote Group.

What we find more interesting:
- June 2013: __iHub__ announces that it will build Gearbox, a makerspace in Nairobi.
- May 2013: __Ushahidi__ starts a campaign for its BRCK backup Generator for the Internet on Kickstarter and reached its goal within days.

- September 2012: **<u>Savannah Fund</u>** starts accelerator programme for African IT entrepreneurs.

PARTNERS

What's the Deal?
AfricaHackTrip is about tech communities. We want to connect people and share knowledge. Doing business is not a primary goal so the participants will spend their private time and money. Because it's going to be fun and we believe we can do something good for the tech scene. Our Partners help us lower the costs, host more events for more people and produce a better movie. We want to focus more on preparing and organizing the trip and less on earning money to pay for it.

We are still looking for more partners.

Hugs, HighFives and lots of <3 already go out to:

If you need more information – we got plenty and love sharing, so please get in touch: press@africahacktrip.org

www.africahacktrip.org