

Speaker Presentation Profile

1. PRESENTER'S INFORMATION

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| FULL NAME | Quentin Williams | | |
| DESIGNATION | Manager: W3C Southern Africa Office | | |
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2. PRESENTER'S BACKGROUND

Quentin Williams is a Researcher at the CSIR Meraka Institute and current Manager of the W3C Southern African Office. After graduating with First class honours in his engineering degree from Stellenbosch University, he received the Rhodes Scholarship for postgraduate studies at Oxford University. Here he completed his Phd focusing on Medical Image Processing and Pattern Recognition under the supervision of Prof. Alison Noble and Prof Sir Mike Brady. The thesis concentrated on the use of ultrasound images to detect coronary artery disease and involved close collaboration with the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford, where he managed and conducted an extensive patient study as proof of concept and further diagnostic research. Although only starting at the CSIR in March 2006 he has been involved in setting up a research team and focus for the Meraka Institute's "Intelligent Environment for Independent Living" group and launching the World Wide Web Consortium Southern African Office. He has since been active in the British Publisher eStrategies Africa forum and continues working on making the Southern African office a leading example of an innovative WWW standards champion in the African context that has significant influence in Southern Africa and in the W3C.

3. TITLE/TOPIC OF PRESENTATION

Improving access to Government through better use of the Web

4. PRESENTATION SYNOPSIS/ABSTRACT

Brief summary of content and focus of the presentation:

Current Web technology allows governments to share with the public a variety of information in unlimited quantities on demand. Technology is also available to allow citizens to bring issues of concern to the attention of local, regional and national governments. However, exploiting these capabilities within government systems is a challenge that encompasses environmental, policy, legal, and cultural issues. Establishing effective eGovernment requires openness, transparency, collaboration and skill in taking advantage of the capabilities of the World Wide Web. There is a rich potential for two-way dialogue between citizens and government if open standards are put to work for openness, security and interoperability. This talk describes a variety of issues and challenges faced by governments in their efforts to apply 21st century capabilities to eGovernment initiatives. Examples of eGovernment at work in Europe and Africa are looked at identifying some of the current gaps in technology. The key issue in Africa is the ability to reach the citizens and this talk highlights how technologies such as mobile phones, robust kiosks and information centres can be used to overcome the problems of distance and infrastructure. Although eGovernment provides an easy and open communication channel between government and citizen, implementing it effectively, requires collaboration between and support from government, industry, academia and the public.

Key points for discussion include:

- Reaching the African Citizen: Role Of Mobile Technology, robust kiosks and information centres
- The importance of transparency, security and interoperability
- Who takes responsibility of implementing eGovernment systems
- Is the African citizen ready for eGovernment?