Omaheke

Namibia's Research and Outreach Sandbox

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Chapter Outline

Outline

Namibia Knowledge Portal

Participating Organisation

- Polytechnic of Namibia—Academic and technical support
- Ounongo Technology Centre (OTC), Gobabis—Community liaison
- Telecom Namibia—Sponsorship and technical support
- Directorate of Education, Omaheke Regional Council—School liaison
- Six pilot schools in Omaheke Region, one from each constituency

Participating Schools I

- **Gustav Kandji Junior Senior Secondary School**, Otjinene
  - Very liberal principal, which can be a blessing and a curse
  - 2 visits / 1 outreach trip
- **Mokganedi Thlabanello Senior Secondary School**, Drimiopsis
  - Until recently the terminal SSS for teachers and pupils alike
  - Worst SSS in Namibia, by a margin
  - 1 visit / 0 outreach trips
  - Principal is now using our project as leverage to get a school lab
- **Epukiro Post 3 Junior Secondary School**, Epukiro
  - Committed principal, long–term Internet connectivity
  - 4 visits / 3 outreach trips
- **Rietquelle Junior Secondary School**, Aminuis
  - Belongs to Maltahöhe School Circuit
  - Even Telecom doesn't know whether they have Internet or not
  - 1 visit / 0 outreach trips

Participating Schools II
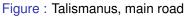
- **Donkerbos Primary School**, Donkerbos
  - No power, sanitation, accommodation, facilities, and accessible via a 40km deep–sand track
  - Predominantly San pupils
  - Best PS in Omaheke Region
  - 1 visit / 0 outreach trips
  - Several NGOs are fighting for dominance with the effect that nothing happens
- **Claudius Heuva Junior Secondary School**, Talismanus
  - Internet goes all the way to a router in the school for which we haven't got the password
  - ...since April 2012
  - 1 visit / 0 outreach trips

A Namibian Rural Settlement

Figure : Talismanus, main road

Donkerbos

Figure : Donkerbos Primary School

Living Conditions

Figure : Donkerbos Primary School, boys' hostel

Activities so far

- Started 2012: All schools visited, necessary actions recorded
- Evaluated the infrastructure: all with computers, none with paid–up Internet access
- Telecom Namibia gives the Internet access (but so far only 2/6 operational)
- OTC in Gobabis "HQ" for this exercise, has a computer lab itself
- outreach activities in the schools that have Internet (3 x Epukiro, 1 x Otjinene, 2 x Gobabis)
- Otjiherero usergroup established

Evolution of Activities

- **Phase 1: Initial outreach** — standard WP beginners' training
  - Attendance good, output bad
  - few edits after the workshop days, and 100% of them reverted
- **Phase 2: Intervention on literacy** — specific focus on general principles to prevent reverts
  - Attendance bad, output bad
  - most participants new
- **Phase 3: Intervention on motivation and activity** — motivational seminars, discussions
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  - several relevant results
- **Phase 4: Implement suggestions** — multimedia support, user group, monitoring
  - Attendance and output TBD

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1. a research cluster, the "scientific arm" of the Namibia Knowledge Portal

2. actually much bigger, 8 scientists, 4 community designers, a decade of experience

3. Aim: co–design technology to help preserve indigenous knowledge

4. frequent brainstorming and planning to prevent "blind activism" and running in circles

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Factors preventing participation

1. **Cultural:** Want to discuss before they write, do not want to speak on behalf of the community

2. Technical: access to computers, availability and stability of Internet access

3. Operational: rules on en discourage participants, knowledge organisation predominantly oral—happy to talk, not happy to write

4. Motivational: No universal answer to the *What's in for me?* question—*It's fun* is not a valid Namibian (African?) rationale

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Steps we currently consider

1. **Persuasion:** use games, feedback, encouragement, competition through persuasive computing and communication

2. De–bushing: bypass the English Wikipedia for now to avoid training that is focused on teaching rules

3. Evolution: re–interpret existing rules

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A Notability Riddle

- **Q:** What do you see?

A not–so–obvious answer

- **A:** The five sacred trees of the OvaMbanderu in Epukiro

End of Presentation

Any questions?