



Preliminary Bid to Host ETD 2011

(This is a preliminary document only – pending official support from NRF as host institution)

ETD 2011: Leap-frogging the Digital Divide

Introduction

Open Access has received much attention in recent years in South Africa and its neighbouring countries (e.g., Botswana, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Namibia). Numerous advocacy and training events (see <http://www.sivulile.org/>) have been organised to strengthen the community of adopters. In practice, most such adopters have set out to implement ETD projects as a first step.

In 2005, the South African National Research Foundation (NRF) and the Committee of Higher Education Librarians in South Africa (CHELSA) initiated a national project to popularise ETDs within tertiary institutions by: (a) encouraging institutions to set up ETD projects; (b) assisting institutions without the capacity to do this themselves; and (c) setting up a national portal for access to ETDs produced in these institutions. This project is well under way and it is expected that the national portal will be operational within 2009. Some smaller institutions are already being assisted by the national project, using a proxying model unique to the global south. Many of the larger institutions (e.g., Rhodes University, University of Pretoria, Wits University) have active and established ETD projects.

The hosting of ETD 2011 would bolster these efforts and help the local community to learn from the experiences of others, while in turn sharing its experiences with international counterparts. Hosting the conference in South Africa would encourage participation from Sub-Saharan African countries, for many of whom digital forms of publishing enable leap-frogging over the proverbial digital divide. South Africa also is an ideal destination because it maintains an African identity while providing world-class facilities for a conference such as ETD 2011.

Proposed Dates

Late September or early October 2011.

While this is typically during term time for many universities, it is not yet peak season in Cape Town and the typically wet winter would be transitioning into summer. March/April is the other recommended alternative.

Venue

The proposed host city is Cape Town, South Africa. Cape Town (<http://www.tourismcapetown.co.za/>) is a popular destination for visitors from all over the world because of its modern infrastructure, African roots and spectacular mountain and ocean settings. It has a population of 3 million people, and road, rail and air infrastructure to support this. It has a rich history and vibrant culture that emanates from its multicultural influences and populace.

There are multiple options for suitable venues within and near the city, which will depend on the scale of the event.

The first option is the popular Cape Town International Convention Centre (<http://www.cticc.co.za/>) in the heart of the city, which offers facilities for up to 1500 delegates, including support for all elements of the conference experience.

The second option is the Spier Estate (<http://www.spier.co.za/>) in the winelands adjacent to the city, which offer facilities for up to 400 delegates. Banqueting facilities for up to 650 delegates are available on-site in the African-themed Moyo restaurant (<http://www.moyo.co.za/>) that is part of the complex.

The third option is the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront (<http://www.waterfront.co.za/>), which is a hub of intense activity at a working dockside, encompassing multiple conference venues catering for up to approximately 400 delegates.

The fourth option is to use facilities at the University of Cape Town (<http://www.uct.ac.za/>). While certainly adequate and at a lower rate than corporate venues, these venues are only available outside normal academic terms.

All corporate venues cost less than 400 ZAR (40 USD) per delegate per day in 2009 (including lunches, tea/coffee breaks, plenary venue hire and core facilities and support) – with an expectation of a 10% increase per annum stated in most cases. Each venue has both plenary rooms for the number indicated and smaller rooms for 1-2 breakout sessions.

Internet access (typically wireless) is always available, though at a relatively high cost. It is expected that this cost will drop significantly by the end of 2010 because of new infrastructure that is being rolled out across the country and the Southern Africa region.

Conference Organisation

The conference will be officially hosted by the South African National Research Foundation (NRF), the major government body responsible for research funding and development. The University of Cape Town is a potential regional co-host.

Responsibility for organising the conference will lie with the South African National ETD Project, a collaborative effort between the NRF and the CHELSA. The members of this committee are currently as follows:

- Henda van der Berg, Acting Manager: Information Resources and Services, NRF
- Pat Liebetrau, Consultant to NRF, DISA, University of Kwazulu-Natal
- Daisy Selematsela, Executive Director: Knowledge Management and Evaluation, NRF
- Hussein Suleman, Consultant to NRF, University of Cape Town

- Gwenda Thomas, Librarian, Rhodes University
- Felix Ubogu, Librarian, Wits University

Financial and logistic support must still be confirmed once there is agreement to host the conference at the institutional management level.

There are no confirmed sponsors but similar recent events in Southern Africa have received generous support from UNESCO, OSI, and similar agencies, in addition to local companies related to the electronic publishing industry. International agencies will especially be asked to fund attendance of delegates from neighbouring African countries.

Travel

The recommended mode of travel for visitors outside South Africa is air. Cape Town International Airport has connections to most parts of the world (via Johannesburg) and regular direct flights from major hubs, including Atlanta, London, Washington DC, Frankfurt and Singapore.

From within South Africa, there are road networks from all major cities. These cities are typically also served by domestic airports because of the long distances between cities.

Accommodation

All recommended conference venues have adjacent and nearby business grade hotels that can accommodate delegates to the conference. In instances where delegates need to stay elsewhere, shuttle/bus services will be arranged.

There are more than 16000 rooms within the city proper, ranging from full service luxury hotels to guesthouses. 3600 of these are within walking distance of the Convention Centre.

Rooms range in price from 700 ZAR (70 USD) in a reasonable B&B to 4000 ZAR (400 USD) in the Westin Grand adjacent to the Convention Centre. A room at the Spier Estate Hotel costs approximately 3100 ZAR (310 USD). For comparison, a room at the Holiday Inn in central Cape Town costs approximately 1000 ZAR (100 USD).

Some Proposed Social Activities

The African themed dinner at Moyo@Spier is recommended, whether the conference will be at Spier or not.

The Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens provides garden-setting venues for informal and formal socials at the foothills of Table Mountain.

Wine-tasting in the many vineyards in and around Cape Town is a popular social activity for many conferences. There are numerous working vineyards where this is possible, with many capable of hosting smaller events.

Weather permitting, a cocktail function at the top of Table Mountain can accommodate approximately 400 people.

Tourist Information

Tourist information can be found on <http://www.tourismcapetown.co.za/> or on similar websites.

Lonely planet and similar travel guides provide free information for tourists on their websites.

Restaurants are too numerous to list, but specific details can be found on the site above. Cuisine is varied and caters for all tastes.

Major local attractions for international visitors include: Table Mountain (the photograph on the first page, which was taken from the ferry on its way from Robben Island in the early evening); Victoria and Alfred Waterfront; Cape Winelands; Cape Point (the South-western tip of the continent); Kirstenbosch National Gardens; Robben Island (where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned); and the increasingly popular Township Tours.

Nightlife in Cape Town includes the usual nightclubs, bars/pubs and movie theatres; but many locals prefer the excellent stand-up comedians and Jazz clubs!

Steering Committee of South African National ETD Project
27 February 2009