

BUSINESS PERSON OF THE QUARTER: REED KRAMER OF ALLAFRICA.COM

"All of us at AllAfrica are committed to providing visibility and access for the largest possible database of news and information from and about Africa," Reed Kramer, CEO, AllAfrica Global Media

Reed Kramer, CEO of AllAfrica Global Media, is *The Africa Journal's* Business Person of the Quarter for Spring 2007. AllAfrica.com is probably the most important source of up-to-date news and information on Africa. Additionally, the company provides a revenue stream for over 100 African news agencies, and training for African journalists. AllAfrica also continues to expand its operations in Africa. On February 15, 2007, AllAfrica opened an online international news processing center in Monrovia, Liberia.

"The decision to set up operations in Liberia was carefully considered and is based on our belief that the Liberian government's commitment to transparent, democratic processes, and to rebuilding infrastructure is creating an environment where growing, technology-dependent enterprises can thrive," Kramer explained.

The Monrovia office will also be used by the AllAfrica Foundation as a hub for healthafrica.org, an ambitious project to provide a broad range of information and services, as well as a pioneering facility to track and monitor funding for health in Africa.

"We are working to make AllAfrica a profitable operation that can sustain this work and demonstrate the viability of Africa-focus ventures," Kramer said.

The AllAfrica.com website, with more than 12 million monthly page views, is the largest electronic distributor of African news and information worldwide. AllAfrica's office in Cape Town, South Africa manages the website and supervises news processing in Washington, D.C., Dakar, Senegal, and now also in Monrovia, Liberia. A team in Lagos, Nigeria, produces news, culture, and health programs for broadcast and for streaming on the web.

Technology development and architecture is coordinated from an AllAfrica office in Copenhagen, Denmark. The AllAfrica offices around the world are operating as a "virtual news desk."

AllAfrica Global Media was founded in 2000 to continue the work of the non-profit Africa News Service, which produced prize-winning print and broadcast reporting for major media outlets. Kramer and his wife Dr. Tami Hultman founded Africa News in the early 1990s to "fill the void in U.S. coverage of Africa." In 1994 Africa News launched the first African news website.

"At Africa News, we pioneered the business model that involves content agreements with over 125 African news organizations who share in the revenue their stories generate," Kramer explained.

Kramer, his wife, and Amadou Mahtar Ba, AllAfrica's President, founded AllAfrica Global Media. The website AllAfrica.com as we know it today, was launched in late 2000.

"Our timing was exquisite - we started an Internet venture just before the web bubble burst," Kramer recalled.

In 2005, AllAfrica received an 'Africa Economic Developer Award' presented by the Africa Centre for Investment Analysis in Cape Town on behalf of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in recognition of a pioneering effort to present news from and about Africa to the world.

AllAfrica Global Media is currently working on the launch of a new initiative called "AllAfrica Travel," which will provide the first comprehensive online guide to visiting, traveling, and living in Africa, as well as advice for Africans traveling around the continent. The new venture will continue to promote different images of Africa than what is seen in the media so frequently.



Amadou Mahtar Ba, Tami Hultman, and Reed Kramer, founders of AllAfrica Global Media

"We in the media have to treat Africa fairly - not overlooking flaws and problems but also not continuing to provide shallow and inadequate coverage that overlooks the efforts so many people in Africa - many working at the grass roots level - that are changing lives and building a better future by combating diseases, educating children, exhibiting spirited entrepreneurship, and generally refusing to give up against mighty big odds," Kramer said.

He acknowledges that Africa has to address issues of performance, transparency, and accountability, along with resolving persistent conflicts and tackling health crises, but added that "governments in other parts of the world must make resources available as part of the partnership that everyone likes to promote but so often fails to truly embrace."

"Combating the persistent perception of Africa as 'helpless and hopeless' requires concerted efforts by many key actors," Kramer concluded. ●

The Africa Journal would like to acknowledge all the staff at AllAfrica for their commitment to provide thorough coverage of all the countries of Africa. Their vision has contributed to sustainable, economic development for many. AllAfrica.com is an invaluable resource to anyone with personal and professional interests in Africa. www.allafrica.com