

Facebook heads to Nigeria for a social call

LAGOS, Nigeria - Chris Cox, chief product officer at Facebook, is in Nigeria this week to speak at Social Media Week in Lagos about the future of media, and to meet with Nigerian entrepreneurs and content creators.



With 8.6 million people in Nigeria using Facebook on mobile every day, Facebook is a great place for businesses to reach their customers. Nigeria is the first stop on a week-long trip to West Africa where Cox will visit Nigeria, Ghana and Senegal, to learn about the challenges and opportunities people in the region face so that Facebook can better serve the region.

Inspiration for content creators

During his talk at Social Media Week — the region's premier new media and social media conference — Cox highlighted Nigeria's status as a hub for innovation and creativity because of its fast-growing mobile technology sector and its vibrant film and music industries. He focused on how the world is moving to digital video, with formats such as virtual reality, live video broadcast and 360 video giving people new ways to tell their stories.

"Stories matter, whether it's the stories of our lives or the story of Africa's growth and ascendance," says Cox. "We want Nigeria's storytellers — the musicians, the filmmakers, the novelists — to take their stories to the rest of the world. The explosion in mobile video and live video, gives people a new way to share their story and perspective with the globe — and this is happening on Facebook."

Cox talked about how creators like Femi Kuti are using Facebook to bring fans into their lives and extend their presence beyond the stage and recorded media. He also discussed how innovators like Afrinolly - the creative hub where technology meets art — are using virtual reality and 360-degree video to create exciting and compelling new storytelling formats.

Cox is the most senior Facebook executive to visit Nigeria since Mark Zuckerberg visited Lagos in September 2016. He arrived in Nigeria at the weekend and attended New Afrika Shrine to see Femi Kuti, one of his musical heroes. Kuti's hour

long set was streamed via Facebook live to the world and Cox was honoured to be invited to play keyboards for one song.

“I’m looking forward to hearing more about how Nigerian creatives, developers and entrepreneurs are using mobile technology, video and Facebook platforms to create inspiring applications and services for their customers and communities,” says Cox. “The level of innovation we see in this market is amazing. As Africa’s most populous country, Nigeria is an important market for us.”

Facebook accepts local currency

When Mark Zuckerberg visited Nigeria, one of the requests he heard was for businesses to be able to pay for advertising and other services in Naira. In response, Facebook has started accepting locally issued Nigerian Naira cards from new advertisers for payments on its ads platform.

Starting on March 8, Facebook will kick off Boost Your Business, a series of free training sessions designed to help thousands of Nigerian small business owners understand how to leverage digital platforms for growth. The sessions will be facilitated by trainers led by She Leads Africa in key cities including Lagos, Kaduna, Abuja, Port Harcourt and Ibadan.

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