

Realm Digital introduces DIY website builder tool to Indaba 2011 attendees

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Leading online, social and Digital.co.za/product/mobile-platform/mobile-development partner Realm Digital will use this year's Indaba to publicly introduce withPlatform, a cutting-edge Web development platform in beta that gives even the greenest and most cash-strapped B&B its own website for free.

Taking place on 7 to 10 May in Durban, [Indaba](#) is a top-three global tourism marketing event, says Wesley Lynch, CEO of Realm Digital. "With such a high profile, it is the perfect place to introduce withPlatform's benefits to a wide audience."

[Lynch](#) says a pre-launch version of the free and easy-to-use website building tool has been available to B&Bs during a private beta testing period lasting nine months, allowing [Digital.co.za/ Realm Digital](http://Digital.co.za/Realm-Digital) to fine-tune the tool for maximum usability and benefit.

"We originally built it in response to the generally poor quality of B&B websites. Without Web skills or budget, very few guesthouses are able to build a decent Web showcase. [withPlatform](#) changes all that by levelling the online booking playing field."

He says the tool has had significant success with B&Bs, and it is now ready for broader adoption by Indaba's travel audience. "We're seeing an opportunity to refine our value proposition to our travel clientele with this final-phase beta," says Lynch. "The tool's ongoing success in this vertical will see it debut in other industries, for example small retail stores."

1, 2, 3!

How did withPlatform overcome the Web's still-high barriers to entry? Lynch says first of all, withPlatform doesn't require B&B owners to know anything about technology. "It's as easy as signing up, choosing a template, customising it, and putting it out there for all to see."

Furthermore, withPlatform sites are hosted by Realm Digital, so guesthouses don't have to shell out for hosting costs. "In fact, we have African clients that built their sites at an Internet café, so withPlatform need not even attract ADSL charges," says Lynch.

Finally, withPlatform does not attract a developer fee, as it is based on Platform, Realm Digital's 10 year-old [Digital.co.za/page/Realm Digital-services e-business](http://Digital.co.za/page/Realm-Digital-services-e-business) CMS (content management system). "It is a pared-down version of the state-of-the-art functionality of Platform and the outcome of all the knowledge capital we've built up over a decade," says Lynch.

Essential starter kit

Basically, then, withPlatform gives users an essential starter kit for taking online bookings - for free. For now, it offers users a basic online presence and content management tool, while in future it will offer:

- Online reservation
- Advanced content management system
- Image galleries
- More advanced features such as newsletters, news rooms, feedback & comments and real-time multi-currency

booking will likely attract a fee, and client sites will scale as needed, with a hosting fee past a certain point of popularity.

Ignite the potential of tourism

"Tourism is one of the biggest and fastest-growing contributors to South Africa's GDP. With thousands of small and medium-sized B&Bs driving growth, it has momentum. Tools like withPlatform will help ignite the potential of the sector," says Lynch.

Sign up and be online within minutes at www.withplatform.com.

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