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Poll

Should Agriculture minister William Ruto resign?

Why we need a database of public buildings

Published on 19/02/2009

By Millicent Muthoni

Michael Otechi, the managing director of Contract Service Associates (a construction management and consulting services firm), has been selected to serve as editor of www.emporis.com, a building data repository created and maintained by a German firm, Ms Emporis Corporation.

Emporis.com is a free website about buildings from all over the world. It documents structures — from huts to skyscrapers — in more than 60,000 cities worldwide. This information targets professionals in the building industry and people with an interest in buildings. It is also an effective way of disseminating building information.

The database also includes ancient buildings and structures planned for construction in future and covers the whole gamut of building types — offices, hotels, residential blocks, towers, metro stations, tunnels, schools, stadiums, police stations and bridges.

"Having worked in the construction industry for 18 years, I am excited at the opportunity to document the structures in our country," he said. "I believe that this flow of information will be useful for government, professionals as well as international agencies. I hope that developers and building owners will be generous with information."

Building codes

Otechi is expected to help place Kenyan buildings on the digital super-highway. In this role, he will compile and document information regarding the building industry and data about already existing structures.

This information includes building height, area, parking space, blueprints, emergency exit routes, uses, building materials, location, age and other properties.



Aerial view of buildings in the city. Photo: Boniface Okendo/Standard

Such information can be used for research, ratings and analysis of building data. The website publishes research results, market data and commentary that reaches millions of people worldwide over its data feeds and various other distribution channels. Together with the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat, Emporis is tasked with indexing anything that can be built, listing it in their database and connecting it with its environment, such as images, involved companies and surrounding objects.

Otechi is an architect and a member of the International Code Council, an organisation concerned with building safety achieved through effective building codes.

Digital access

He hopes the exercise will put Kenya on the super-highway by enabling identification of buildings and street addresses on the Geographical Positioning Information System, which Emporis updates in

Total Votes Cast: 8532

	<u>%age</u>
No	0.60
no	0.01
No	28.3
no	0.01
No	0.46
Yes	70.5

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After General Elections farmers in Rift Valley and elsewhere in the country did not plant crops as expected due to the post-election fiasco. The effects of this is the culmination of insufficient food harvest particularly grains. Several leaders scrambled for the meagre Maize storage at cereals boar ...

william kibet kimeli,
United Kingdom

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real-time in collaboration with Google Maps. These digital maps can then be channelled through mobile phone or Internet.

Besides upholding and maintaining building standards, this information would be beneficial in many ways including identifying and tracing buildings for utilities, service delivery and business.

Building users and visitors, emergency service providers like fire fighters, local and foreign investors seeking working and living space, government planning agencies and professionals in the construction industry like architects, surveyors, planners and engineers will find this an informative and helpful resource.

Digital access is necessary for the efficient running of a metropolitan area, which Nairobi is envisaged to be by 2030.

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