

African Sports Content Network is decentralising consumer access to quality sports products

 By [Papama Nyati](#)

13 Oct 2020

African Sports Content Network (ASCN) was founded with the mission to decentralise consumer access to quality sports products. The idea came to the mind of founder, Junia Stainbank, while he was working as a broadcaster.



Junia Stainbank, founder of African Sports Content Network (ASCN)

Stainbank noticed flaws in the economics of the sports media industry, particularly on the African continent, where two-thirds of television audiences don't have access to premium live broadcast content - the exclusive rights to which are generally held by the multinational Pay-TV platforms.

Junia Stainbank shares his thinking behind [African Sports Content Network \(ASCN\)](#) and the potential it has.

■ ***Can you tell us more about the problem you are solving and the market opportunity for ASCN?***

More than half of the addressable viewership for sports media globally is a free-to-air, and/or digital audience, which is being engaged by unlicensed publishers who are carrying a disproportionate quantity of eyes with drastically less resources to attract and keep their attention. So naturally I thought 'surely empowering those platforms should be the key objective in decentralising the consumer access to quality sports products?' - which is our mission.

There is a pretty accessible range of media organisations that make up our core market on the continent and we used the lower end of that sweet spot as the basis of all our calculations. But since then we've expanded the scope of our editorial objectives to include a lot more European, North American and Australasian sport after engaging with several rights owners during the outbreak of the pandemic. So a great deal of our 2 or 3 year objectives in terms of expansion and user-

acquisition have been brought right up to our doorstep in 2020.

■ ***What was the time frame between coming up with the idea and taking the first step in implementation?***

I had the first incarnation of the idea (which was, in its first draft, a kind of 'shared cost' model like Groupon for sports content) in November 2017, and I registered the company in January. I then spent over a year researching the market - because a good idea isn't always a good business. And unfortunately we live in a data scarce region, so I had to validate my model and rework my pricing over and over and over and over again. As I uncovered new bits and bobs of data from dozens and dozens of media sources over the course of 12 months, I actually then put the car in gear and started entertaining the idea of development in the middle of 2019.

■ ***What is the plan to acquiring, 1) content contributors and 2) content consumers?***

At the moment, there are a lot of really talented visual content creators that have reached out to us.

“ We already have started working with video and photographic journalists from Rwanda, the UK, Egypt, Algeria, Kenya, Ghana, Uganda, South Africa, the UAE and Zambia. ”

Building the CoCoZone (Content Contributor Zone) portal was not something we took lightly. We consulted with freelancers from beginning to end of development to ensure that we were designing a platform that was sensitive to the unique challenges of video and photographic freelancers, and I think that's been evident to the community in even the application process and how we've engaged with them so far.

The big game-changer in onboarding users/ licensees, we believe, will be free Associate Content. Yes, free. We've created an entirely separate wing in the CoCoZone for Associate Contributors; leagues, federations and rights owners with any level of basic internal production capability to register their own, private profiles and upload editorial video content at will, which we claim no legal ownership over whatsoever.

This innovation was always a vague idea in our plans, but implementing it now came about as a result of the pandemic. With this content being free, we lower the barrier to purchase by 100% and create passive marketing opportunities through rights owners who will take to the innovation and drive traffic on our behalf.

■ ***How does the future look for ASCN?***

Engaging with and onboarding Associate Contributors is my main concern in the coming weeks, and we've been having great conversations with rights owners in and outside the continent so far.

ABOUT PAPAMA NYATI

Research & Marketing Strategist at AfricArena

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