



DIGITALIZING SWAHILI IN THE 21ST CENTURY: THE CASE OF NATION MEDIA GROUP'S SWAHILIHUB PROJECT

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Kiswahili had made tremendous steps as a language globally and has ultimately managed to place itself as the most widely used African language. Kiswahili has spread widely and is taught, not only in universities in East Africa, but also in many universities outside Africa especially in America and Europe. Information Technology has immensely contributed to the realization and efforts of this drastic spread of Kiswahili in the globalized world. Digitalization of any language, which means putting that particular language into a suitable format to be used in a computer, phone or online, has become a sure way of easily making Kiswahili accessible to the rest of the world. Actually Kiswahili has become a tool of development in East Africa because it has embraced all the sectors and hence has reference to economical, legal, technological, political, medical and social contexts. The Swahilihub website, a project of Nation Media Group is powered by its two main Kiswahili papers Taifa Leo- of Kenya and Mwananchi of Tanzania.

www.swahilihub.com hence becomes the only all-inclusive Kiswahili site with news, features, archives copies of Swahili newspapers, historical old Swahili captioned photos and Swahili videos, television news videos, teach yourself Swahili, e-paper, Q-FM radio, poems in Swahili and other archives dating up to 1958. Swahilihub is a one stop shop and as its slogan suggests- the Home of Swahili- takes East Africa, where Kiswahili originated, to the outside world via a digital channel.

This paper will endeavor to briefly explore the past and current Kiswahili efforts in their digital platforms before Swahilihub in the 21st Century. The paper will however mainly dwell on the place and utility of Swahilihub to the various users in general. Finally it will look at the future prospects of Swahilihub and Nation Media Group in developing Kiswahili digitally to move with the times.