

Help improve literacy in South Africa and write a #bookly

To promote literacy in South Africa, NATIVE VML's Mxit e-reader app, bookly, is now expanding into a writing platform.

Last year, NATIVE VML launched bookly, a sophisticated e-reader app for Mxit that delivers smartphone functionality to even the most basic feature phone. With more than 450 local and international books on the platform, bookly became popular fast. There have been over 13 million pageviews from close to a million unique visitors since launch. It has won numerous awards including 'Most Innovative App' at the MTN App of the Year Awards, and the prestigious 'Best Start-up' at the annual FutureBook Innovation Awards in London.

It comes as no surprise that bookly will now become more than a platform that inspires reading, but one that inspires writing as well. With the notion that every phone is a book and with a phone, anyone can be an author, bookly's new mobile site will invite users to **tell their story and write a #bookly**.

"By expanding bookly into a writing platform, we will allow children and young adults to create content that is relevant to them – and written in their own language. That way, bookly will become a platform that inspires writing, in any language, on any mobile device," says Levon Rivers, NATIVE VML's Head of Inventions.

Writing a bookly is easy. It's a bite-sized piece of content that can be anything including short stories and poems. It can be written by anyone – from famous authors to aspiring ones. Any age, any language and from anywhere.

Users are encouraged to share their booklys on social media, not only earning recognition for themselves but encouraging more kids to read at the same time. Readers can review other people's booklys and share them as well.

To motivate more children to write, NATIVE VML has introduced The bookly Award. This award will recognise and reward the best booklys. The entry deadline for the first bookly Award is 21st March, and will see winners walking away with fantastic prizes and of course, taking a step towards becoming one of South Africa's next big authors.

Prominent South African authors will also be adding to the content on bookly, and workshops have been set up in Johannesburg and Cape Town to teach kids about the initiative and inspire them to write more.

"At NATIVE VML, we create purpose-driven work that lives in people's lives," concludes Rivers. "We are calling on all South Africans to make a positive impact on literacy in South Africa. Whether it be writing a bookly, sharing someone else's or simply telling people about The bookly Award, this is your chance to help improve literacy in our country."

bookly can be found at the following:

- Online - www.bookly.co.za
- Twitter - twitter.com/booklySA
- Facebook - www.facebook.com/booklySA
- Mxit – add 'bookly' as a contact or mxitapp.com/bookly
- Youtube - www.youtube.com/user/booklySA.

If you're an established author or an educational workshop organiser who would like to get involved, please contact us at info@bookly.co.za