

THE KAMUSI PROJECT

THE KAMUSI PROJECT

TOLEO LA KISWAHILI

Translate

enter word

English - Swahili

Swahili - English

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The Internet Living Swahili Dictionary

# Huru na Bure: Swahili Collaboration and the Future of African Languages on the Web

**-huru** (or -hurru) { **English: free** } [derived: *Arabic*]

adjective , - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ] [see also: [huri](#); [huria](#); [uhuru](#)]

Swahili Example: jiskie huru kuwasiliana nami au mwenzangu yeyote kwenye kikundi hiki

([mawazo na mawaidha](#), 18 Mei 2006

English Example: feel free to communicate with me or any of my colleagues in this group (ideas and advice blog, 18 May, 2006)

**na** { **English: and** }

conjunction , - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ] [see also: [-wa na](#)]

Swahili Example: Anapenda sana mama na baba.

English Example: He really loves his mother and father.

**bure** { **English: free** } [derived: *Arabic*]

adj/adv , - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ]

Swahili Example: mwenyeduka alinipa nyanya tatu bure

English Example: the shopkeeper gave me three tomatoes for free

Martin Benjamin  
 Yale Council on African Studies

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## Huru na Bure:

# Swahili Collaboration and the Future of African Languages on the Web

- Kamusi Project Description
- The Editorial Oversight Model
- Open Knowledge Projects in the Contemporary African Context



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# Kamusu Project Description

1. Project History
2. Visitor Stats
3. Technical Overview

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# Project History

- Began in late 1994 (using Gopher and a listserve)
- First 56,000+ terms entered into Excel spreadsheet and uploaded to the web periodically (users sent submissions via email)
- Launched Edit Engine in 2000
- Introduced Grouping Tool in 2005
- Developing online Learning Center



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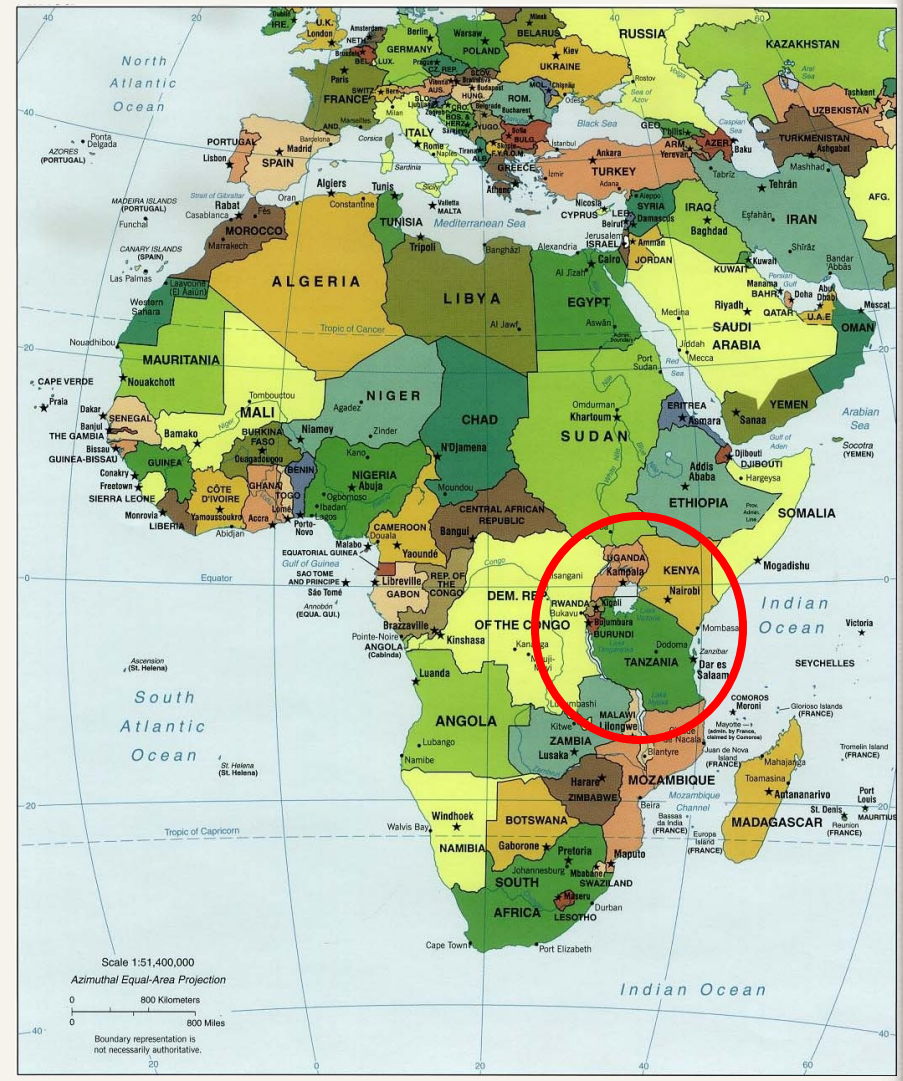
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## THE KAMUSI PROJECT

# Swahili Overview:

- 100 million speakers
- About 1.5% of world's people
- Most widely spoken African language
- Much larger than many European languages with massive Wikipedias
- Language of media, commerce, government, education

## TOLEO LA KISWAHILI



The Internet Living Swahili Dictionary



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# Visitor Stats

- 6,000,000+ lookups per year
- Tens of thousands of unique visits per month
- Millions of university uses worldwide
- Used by governments, businesses, churches, ZOOS...
- Frequent use in Africa
- Numerous high-ranked Google results (try “extra-large buttocks” or “sexual intercourse photos” 😊 )
- Probably the most widely used African language resource on the Internet



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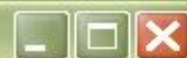
The Internet Living Swahili Dictionary

# Technical Overview

Major features include :

- Edit Engine
- Grouping Tool
- Photo Uploader
- Search Engine and Downloadable Dictionaries
- Terminologies and Dialects
- Discussion Forum
- Learning Center





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**Edit Engine Participants****Editorial Content (Number of submissions noted):**

Martin Benjamin - 1400  
 Sean ORourke - 492  
 Christiaan Kooyman - 190  
 Andrew Clark - 121  
 Paul Shannon - 81  
 David Simonds - 57  
 Peter Schotsman - 56  
 Heidi Glaesel Frontani - 54  
 Katrina Daly Thompson - 27  
 Challa Wright - 27  
 Birgit Bauridl - 26  
 Sonia Silbert - 25  
 Desmond Serrette - 24  
 Karisa Butler-Wall - 24  
 Thomas J Hinnebusch - 22  
 Hassani Saidi - 20  
 Jacob Knight - 19  
 Ian Eagleson - 17  
 Carl Cervone - 16  
 Joram Mwangi - 14  
 Chris Chandler - 14  
 Ann Biersteker - 14  
 Danielle Heard - 13  
 Joe Rodrigue - 12  
 Jeremy Krieg - 10  
 Susanna Nordlund - 7  
 Linda Lonqvist - 7  
 Andrew Smith - 5  
 Arielle Levine - 4  
 Chumvi Mtembezi - 4  
 Ben Stanford - 3  
 Christa Runge - 3  
 Konrad Zieglmeier - 3



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[ tafuta ]  
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SEARCH RESULTS

Search Results for 'tafuta'

- tafuta** { English: discover }  
verb , - [ edit entry ] [ photos: upload ]
  
- tafuta** { English: find }  
verb , - [ edit entry ] [ photos: upload ]
  
- tafuta** { English: hunt for }  
verb , - [ edit entry ] [ photos: upload ]  
  
tafuta vitu : hunt for things
  
- tafuta** { English: look for }  
verb , - [ edit entry ] [ photos: upload ]
  
- tafuta** { English: search }  
verb , - [ edit entry ] [ photos: upload ]
  
- tafuta** { English: seek }  
verb , - [ edit entry ] [ photos: upload ]

A sample  
search  
result

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# The Edit Engine

**Translate**

tafuta

- English - Swahili
- Swahili - English

Look Up

Swahili-English dictionary entries for "tafuta" | Maingizo ya "tafuta" kwenye Kamusi Hai

To edit specific entries, mark them at left; otherwise all rows will be edited

Kuhariri ingizo utakalo, wekea alama kushotoni; vinginevyo utaonyeshwa mistari yote kubadilika

Key:	modified	must be fixed	should be fixed	non-applicable or deleted	unchanged
Ufafanuzi:	imehaririwa	tazima irekebishwe	afadhali irekebishwe	haihusiki au imefutwa	haijahiririwa

	Word	Sort By	Plural	Part of Speech	Class	Swahili Definition	Swahili Example	English Example	Derived	Note	Dialect	Terminology
	Neno	Panga	Ujumla	Aina ya Neno	Nama	Ufafanuzi	Mfano wa Kiswahili	Mfano wa Kiingereza	Kutoka	Zingatia	Lahaja	Istilahi
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swa -tafuta	tafuta		verb	unspecified						Standard	general
	Eng discover	discover										
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swa -tafuta	tafuta		verb	unspecified						Standard	general
	Eng find	find										
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swa -tafuta	tafuta		verb	unspecified		tafuta vitu	hunt for things			Standard	general
	Eng hunt for	hunt										
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swa -tafuta	tafuta		verb	unspecified						Standard	general
	Eng look for	look										
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swa -tafuta	tafuta		verb	unspecified						Standard	general
	Eng search	search										
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swa -tafuta	tafuta		verb	unspecified		Yumo dukani kulitafuta dawa analotaka.	He is in the store to seek the medicine that he wants.			Standard	general
	Eng seek	seek										

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Edit | Hariri

Additional blank rows:  
Mistari ya ziada iliyo wazi:

0   
0  
1  
2  
3  
4  
5

Reset | Rudia



# Adding Data

Edit Swahili-English dictionary entries for "tafuta" | Hariri maingizo ya "tafuta" kwenye Kamusi ya Kiswahili-Kingerezi.  
To delete an entry, mark it at left | Wekea alama kushoto kwa ingizo ukitaka kulifuta.

Key:	modified	must be fixed	should be fixed	non-applicable or deleted	unchanged
Ufafanuzi:	imehaririwa	lazima irekebishwe	afadhali irekebishwe	haihusiki au imefutwa	haijahaririwa

	Word	Sort By	Plural	Part of Speech	Class	Swahili Definition	Swahili Example
	Neno	Panga	Ujumla	Aina ya Neno	Namna	Ufafanuzi	Mfano wa Ki
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sw -tafuta	tafuta		verb	unspecified		
	Eng discover	discover		verb	unspecified		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sw -tafuta	tafuta		verb	unspecified		
	Eng find	find		verb	unspecified		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sw -tafuta	tafuta		verb	unspecified		tafuta vitu
	Eng hunt for	hunt		verb	unspecified		tafuta vitu
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sw -tafuta	tafuta		verb	unspecified		
	Eng look for	look		verb	unspecified		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sw -tafuta	tafuta		verb	unspecified		
	Eng search	search		verb	unspecified		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sw -tafuta	tafuta		verb	unspecified		Yumo dukani kuli<b>tafuta</b>
	Eng seek	seek		verb	unspecified		Yumo dukani kulita analotaka.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sw -tafuta	tafuta		verb	unspecified		
	Eng obtain	obtain		verb	unspecified		



**Translate**

tafuta

English - Swahili

Swahili - English

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# Verifying Changes

Your updates to the English-Swahili dictionary entries for "tafuta"  
Marekebisho yako ya "tafuta" kwenye Kamusi ya Kiswahili-Kiingereza

Key:	modified	must be fixed	should be fixed	non-applicable or deleted	unchanged
Ufafanuzi:	imehaririwa	lazima irekebishwe	afadhali irekebishwe	haihusiki au imefutwa	haijahiririwa

	Word	Sort By	Plural	Part of Speech	Class	Swahili Definition	Swahili Example	English Example	Derived	Note	Dialect	Terminology
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Sw	-tafuta	tafuta		verb	unspecified						Standard	general
Eng	discover	discover										
Sw	-tafuta	tafuta		verb	unspecified						Standard	general
Eng	find	find										
Sw	-tafuta	tafuta		verb	unspecified		tafuta vitu	hunt for things			Standard	general
Eng	hunt for	hunt										
Sw	-tafuta	tafuta		verb	unspecified						Standard	general
Eng	look for	look										
Sw	-tafuta	tafuta		verb	unspecified						Standard	general
Eng	search	search										
Sw	-tafuta	tafuta		verb	unspecified		Yumo dukani kulitafuta dawa analotaka.	He is in the store to seek the medicine that he wants.			Standard	general
Eng	seek	seek										
Sw	-tafuta	tafuta		verb	unspecified						Standard	general
Eng	obtain	obtain										



<<< Make more changes | Fanya mabadiliko zaidi

Additional blank rows:    
Mistari ya ziada iliyo wazi:

Proofread | Pitia kwa makini >>>



# Submit Changes

Translate

tafuta

English - Swahili

Swahili - English

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Confirm Swahili-English dictionary updates for "tafuta"  
Thibitisha marekebisho ya "tafuta" kwenye Kamusi ya Kiswahili-Kiingereza

The following rows will be updated or deleted | Mistari ifuatayo itarekebishwa au kufutwa:

Key:	modified	must be fixed	should be fixed	non-applicable or deleted	unchanged
Ufafanuzi:	imehaririwa	lazima irekebishwe	afadhali irekebishwe	haihusiki au imefutwa	haijahiririwa

	Word	Sort By	Plural	Part of Speech	Class	Swahili Definition	Swahili Example	English Example	Derived	Note	Dialect	Terminology
	Neno	Panga	Ujumla	Aina ya Neno	Namna	Ufafanuzi	Mfano wa Kiswahili	Mfano wa Kiingereza	Kutoka	Zingatia	Lahaja	Istilahi
Swa	-tafuta	tafuta		verb	unspecified						Standard	general
Eng	obtain	obtain										

Please check that this is correct | Tafadhali angalia kama hii iko sawa

- Please send me confirmation when my updates are incorporated into the dictionary  
Tafadhali nitumie ujumbe wa uthibitisho wakati marekebisho niliyofanya yatajumuishwa kwenye Kamusi Hai

Submit changes | Tuma mabadiliko

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SEARCH RESULTS | MATOKEO YA UTAfutAJI

Search Results for 'tafuta' | Matokeo ya Utafutaji kwa 'tafuta'

The results for 'tafuta' are displayed below in **alphabetical** order, so please do not assume that the first entry you see is the **best result**. If you have a good working knowledge of both Swahili and English, please use our **simple Grouping Tool** to better arrange these results.

Matokeo kwa 'tafuta' yaonyeshwa kwa taratibu ya **alfabeti**. Kwa hivyo, usidhani kwamba mwingilio wa kwanza ni tokeo linalozidi yote. Wewe ukielewa Kiswahili na Kiingereza, twaomba utumie **Zana Jumuishi** yetu ili kuboresha orodha ya matokeo haya. Ni rahisi, na utasaidia wasomaji wote wanaokufuata!

-tafuta { English: **discover** }  
verb , - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ]

-tafuta { English: **find** }  
verb , - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ]

-tafuta { English: **hunt for** }  
verb , - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ]  
tafuta vitu : hunt for things

-tafuta { English: **look for** }  
verb , - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ]

-tafuta { English: **search** }  
verb , - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ]

-tafuta { English: **seek** }  
verb , - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ]

Yumo dukani kulitafuta dawa analotaka. : He is in the store to seek the medicine that he wants.

-tafuta { English: **obtain** }  
verb , - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ]



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tafuta

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-tafuta { English: discover } verb ,  
-tafuta { English: find } verb ,  
-tafuta { English: hunt for } verb ,  
-tafuta { English: look for } verb ,  
-tafuta { English: search } verb ,  
-tafuta { English: seek } verb ,  
-tafuta { English: obtain } verb ,

Move To Top | Juu Kabisa

Move Up | Pandisha

Add Break | Tenga

Move Down | Telemsha

Move To Bottom | Chini Kabisa

Submit Ordering | Peleka

# The Grouping Tool

## Grouping Tool Instructions

This tool allows you to Group and Rank entries. When you "Group" entries, you are putting together entries that have a similar sense. When you "Rank" entries, you are showing which entries are more important or more

## Maelezo ya Zana Jumishi

Zana hii inakuwezesha kuweka miingilio kwa Kijumuia na Umuhimu. Katika "Kijumuia" utaweka miingilio yote yenye undani sawa. Katika "Umuhimu" utaonyesha kuna miingilio gani muhimu au inayotumika zaidi. Kama una

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Swahili - English

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-tafuta { English: search } verb ,  
-tafuta { English: look for } verb ,  
-tafuta { English: seek } verb ,  
-tafuta { English: hunt for } verb ,  
--BREAK--|--KITENGO--  
-tafuta { English: find } verb ,  
-tafuta { English: discover } verb ,  
--BREAK--|--KITENGO--  
-tafuta { English: obtain } verb ,

Move To Top | Juu Kabisa

Move Up | Pandisha

Add Break | Tenga

Move Down | Telemsha

Move To Bottom | Chini Kabisa

Submit Ordering | Peleka

### Grouping Tool Instructions

This tool allows you to Group and Rank entries. When you "Group" entries, you are putting together entries that have a similar sense. When you "Rank" entries, you are showing which entries are more important or more

### Maelezo ya Zana Jumuishii

Zana hii inakuwezesha kuweka miingilio kwa Kijumuia na Umuhimu. Katika "Kijumuia" utaweka miingilio yote yenye undani sawa. Katika "Umuhimu" utaonyesha kuna miingilio gani muhimu au inavyotumika zaidi. Kama una



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## SEARCH RESULTS | MATOKEO YA UTAfutAJI

## Search Results for 'tafuta' | Matokeo ya Utafutaji kwa 'tafuta'

The results for 'tafuta' are displayed below as they have been grouped and ranked by a Kamusi Project participant. If you have a good working knowledge of both Swahili and English and wish to make further changes to the way these results are arranged, please use our simple [Grouping Tool](#).

Matokeo kwa 'tafuta' yaonyeshwa kama waliorodheshwa na [mshiriki](#) wa Kamusi Hai. Wewe ukielewa Kiswahili na Kiingereza na ukitaka kufanya mabadilisho mengine kwenye orodha, twaomba utumie Zana Jumuishi yetu - ni rahisi kutumia, na utasaidia wasomaji wote wanaokufuata!

-tafuta { English: [search](#) }  
verb , - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ]

-tafuta { English: [look for](#) }  
verb , - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ]

-tafuta { English: [seek](#) }  
verb , - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ]

Yumo dukani kulitafuta dawa analotaka. : He is in the store to seek the medicine that he wants.

-tafuta { English: [hunt for](#) }  
verb , - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ]  
tafuta vitu : hunt for things

-tafuta { English: [find](#) }  
verb , - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ]

-tafuta { English: [discover](#) }  
verb , - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ]

-tafuta { English: [obtain](#) }  
verb , - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ]

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SEARCH RESULTS

Search Results for 'goshawk'

Gabar goshawk (Micronisus gabar), pl Gabar goshawks { Swahili: kizu miguu-myekundu , ( pl kizu miguu-myekundu ) } [Terminology: ornithology] noun 9/10an - [ edit entry ] [ photos: upload ]

pale chanting goshawk (Melierax poliopterus), pl pale chanting goshawks { Swahili: kizu domo-njano , ( pl kizu domo-njano ) } [Terminology: ornithology] noun 9/10an - [ edit entry ] [ photos: upload / view ]

dark chanting goshawk (Melierax metabates), pl dark chanting goshawks { Swahili: kizu domo-jekundu , ( pl kizu domo-jekundu ) } [Terminology: ornithology] noun 9/10an - [ edit entry ] [ photos: upload ]

3 distinct results returned.

Would you like to modify this search?

- Search for entries beginning with "goshawk" • Search for entries containing "goshawk" (SLOW) • Search the Swahili-English dictionary for "goshawk"

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### Illustrative images for

pale chanting goshawk (*Melierax poliopterus*), pl pale chanting goshawks { Swahili: *kizu domo-njano*, ( pl *kizu domo-njano* ) } [Terminology: *ornithology*]

noun 9/10an - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) / [view](#) ]



**Mpigapicha:** Christiaan Kooyman  
Mandali: ~~Tevo West National Park~~, Kenya  
Tarehe: 1/4/2005

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- [archaic - English - Swahili](#)
- [colloquial - English - Swahili](#)
- [dialectical - English - Swahili](#)
- [obsolete - English - Swahili](#)
- [recent - English - Swahili](#)

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- [Christian - English - Swahili](#)
- [IT-kInX - English - Swahili](#)
- [Islamic - English - Swahili](#)
- [agriculture - English - Swahili](#)
- [anatomy - English - Swahili](#)
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Specialized English Vocabulary Results for Terminology 'ornithology' (view Swahili)

(Black-backed) Puffback (shrike) (*Dryoscopus cubla*), pl puffbacks { Swahili: *kipwe* , ( pl *vipwe* ) } [Terminology: *ornithology*]  
 noun 7/8an - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ]

Abdim's stork (*Ciconia abdimii*), pl Abdim's storks { Swahili: *korongo samawati* , ( pl *makorongo samawati* ) } [Terminology: *ornithology*]  
 noun 1/2 - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ]

African black duck (*Anas sparsa*), pl African black ducks { Swahili: *bata mweusi* , ( pl *mabata weusi* ) } [Terminology: *ornithology*]  
 noun 5/6an - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ]

African crane (*Crex egregia*), pl African cranes { Swahili: *kiluwiri wa Afrika* , ( pl *viluwiri wa Afrika* ) } [Terminology: *ornithology*]  
 noun 7/8an - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ]

African cuckoo (*Cuculus gularis*), pl African cuckoos { Swahili: *kekeo kijivu* , ( pl *kekeo kijivu* ) } [Terminology: *ornithology*]  
 noun 9/10an - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ]

African darter (*Anhinga rufa*), pl darters { Swahili: *mbizi* , ( pl *mbizi* ) } [Terminology: *ornithology*]  
 noun 9/10an - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ]

African fish eagle (*Haliaeetus vocifer*), pl African fish eagles { Swahili: *kwazi* , ( pl *kwazi* ) } [Terminology: *ornithology*]  
 noun 9/10an - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ]

African golden oriole (*Oriolus auratus* and *O. oriolus*), pl golden orioles { Swahili: *mramba mweupe* , ( pl *mramba weupe* ) } [Terminology: *ornithology*]

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# Running through *Objects*

Front - Card 1 of 2

|< First < Nyuma Geuza Mbele > Last >|

Utanipa nini? (Jibu: zawadi)

Nita  pa zawadi.

|< First < Nyuma Geuza Mbele > Last >|

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# The Editorial Oversight Model

- Advantages and Disadvantages
- Comparison to the Grouping Tool
- Comparison to Wiki Model



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# Editorial Oversight: Advantages

- Maintaining Consistency
- Maintaining Quality
- Maintaining Decorum
- Maintaining Vision

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# Maintaining Consistency

Each submission gets polished for format issues

- working hyperlinks
- data in correct fields
- cross references
- etc...

- (cur) (last) 03:06, June 23, 2006 WAvegetarian (Talk | contribs) **m** (→Zone defense - if you want to get picky about bolding, why not do it right)
- (cur) (last) 18:29, June 22, 2006 Noeticpage (Talk | contribs) (→Zone defense)
- (cur) (last) 03:35, June 21, 2006 WAvegetarian (Talk | contribs) **m** (RV vandalism)
- (cur) (last) 03:18, June 21, 2006 Fool5 (Talk | contribs) (→History)
- (cur) (last) 10:24, June 20, 2006 Wikibofh (Talk | contribs) (→Observers - fix cap)
- (cur) (last) 19:09, June 20, 2006 71.243.112.196 (Talk) (→Observers)
- (cur) (last) 19:49, June 15, 2006 Wikibofh (Talk | contribs) **m** (Reverted edits by 123fakestreet (talk) to last version by 216.143.236.62)
- (cur) (last) 19:27, June 15, 2006 123fakestreet (Talk | contribs) (→Cheers)
- (cur) (last) 19:26, June 15, 2006 123fakestreet (Talk | contribs) (→Beach Ultimate)
- (cur) (last) 19:26, June 15, 2006 123fakestreet (Talk | contribs) (→The early days (late 1960s))



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# Maintaining Quality

- Questionable submissions can be checked against a variety of sources, including discussion among scholars, **before** being presented to the public
- User submissions trigger thorough editorial review of an entry, including the addition of derivational, usage, and other data

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# Maintaining Decorum

- Attempts at vandalism or indecency never see the light of day
- Would-be vandals rarely bother, because their efforts die at the editor's desk

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# Maintaining Vision

- No revert wars
- No deletions of terms because a term in use is “not proper Swahili”
- No inclusion of vanity neologisms that are not in actual use

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# Disadvantages of Editorial Oversight

- Users do not have the satisfaction of seeing their changes “go live” immediately
- Submissions create mandatory work for the editor or editors
- Eager contributors can overwhelm the system
- Users might feel inhibited by “big brother”



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# Comparison to the Grouping Tool

- Grouping Tool changes go live immediately
- Editor reviews changes when convenient, and can approve/revert/ make more changes
- Little room for mischief
- Grouping Tool is a much less popular feature than Edit Engine

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# Comparison to the Wiki Model

- Wikipedia is a police state (“in which a sophisticated security apparatus monitors the population constantly for threats, and individual rights and freedoms are curtailed. It is indeed possible to be both a functioning democracy *and* a police state” – from *Salon*, 23 June 2006: <http://wapurl.co.uk/?IDIKG5P>)
- Thousands of editors act as enforcers
- Wikipedia succeeds ***because of*** the Watchlist feature
- Kamusi plans to add Watchlists to dictionary entries, and to Wikify explanatory lessons in the Learning Center

special page

## My watchlist

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia  
(for )

Candidates for deletion are

You have 28 pages on your watchlist (excluding )

Below are the last 19 changes in the last 7 days  
Show last 1 | 2 | 6 | 12 hours 1 | 3 | 7 days all  
[Hide bot edits](#) | [Hide my edits](#)

Namespace:

**August 4, 2006**

- [\(diff\)](#) [\(hist\)](#) . . List of disasters; 14:40 . . 82.164.166.21
- [\(diff\)](#) [\(hist\)](#) . . 1996; 14:15 . . 84.164.166.21
- [\(diff\)](#) [\(hist\)](#) . . m List of largest buildings in the world; 14:06 . . version by 69.91.120.86)

**August 3, 2006**

- [\(diff\)](#) [\(hist\)](#) . . Dhow; 19:15 . . 80.193.182.14
- [\(diff\)](#) [\(hist\)](#) . . New Haven, Connecticut; 19:06
- [\(diff\)](#) [\(hist\)](#) . . m Boma (acronym); 18:46 . .
- [\(diff\)](#) [\(hist\)](#) . . m May 21; 18:28 . . Fabricati

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# Open Knowledge Projects in the Contemporary African Context

- Accessibility of IT in Africa
- Relevance to African Audiences
- Training and Experience
- Funding

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# Accessibility of IT in Africa

## *Current Infrastructure*

- Urban: Internet cafes and schools with unreliable connections
- Home computers/ internet limited to wealthy enclaves
- Rural residents and urban poor have little or no access
- Much more hardware and connectivity than 10 years ago

## *Projections for next 10 years*

- Efforts underway to get computers into many more schools
- "\$100 laptop" may increase home computing, though still prohibitive for the \$1/day majority
- Cellular technology is becoming ubiquitous
- New optical fiber links to north are currently being laid

Without access, participation is ***impossible***



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# Relevance to African Audiences

People will not adopt IT without:

- Localized software
- Locally relevant content (in local and international languages)

People will not participate in Open Knowledge projects unless:

- A critical mass of relevant content is already available
- They see a substantial likelihood that their efforts will bear fruit within a reasonable period

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# Training and Experience

- The great majority of potential contributors in Africa have learned their computer skills in recent years, or have not yet had the opportunity
- For most people (worldwide), “computer skills” *only* means the ability to word process, send emails, and fill in web forms
- Open Knowledge projects must cater to a basic skill set (the current incarnation of MediaWiki fails miserably!)
- Hands-on training



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# Funding (or lack thereof)

- African economies are marked by people needing to pay attention to making a living
- IT access usually costs individuals \$-£-€-¥
- Even busy professionals with good IT skills and access often need financial incentives
- Volunteering is a luxury
- African funders have other priorities (HIV, Darfur, clean water...)
- Overall funding for Africa is paltry
- But, Open Knowledge initiatives can contribute greatly to the infrastructure that will build the African economies of the future

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# The Future of African Languages on the Web

- Software infrastructure is mostly in place for Swahili (Kamusi is ready/ MediaWiki needs to be made user-friendly and localized)
- Other major African languages are lagging
- Hundreds of smaller languages have zero web presence
- Do we, as the technical developers of collaborative open knowledge initiatives, support:
  - A. Darwinian “sink or swim”?
  - B. Engaging the financial resources to really build tools for speakers of languages spoken in the world’s poorest places?



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# Free means:

- Open
- No cost to the user

# Free does not mean

- No cost to produce

**-huru** (or -hurru) { **English: free** } [derived: *Arabic*]

adjective , - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ] [see also: [huri](#); [huria](#); [uhuru](#)]

Swahili Example: jiskie huru kuwasiliana nami au mwenzangu yeyote kwenye kikundi hiki

([mawazo na mawaidha](#), 18 Mei 2006

English Example: feel free to communicate with me or any of my colleagues in this group (ideas and advice blog, 18 May, 2006)

**na** { **English: and** }

conjunction , - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ] [see also: [-wa na](#)]

Swahili Example: Anapenda sana mama na baba.

English Example: He really loves his mother and father.

**bure** { **English: free** } [derived: *Arabic*]

adj/adv , - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ]

Swahili Example: mwenyeduka alinipa nyanya tatu bure

English Example: the shopkeeper gave me three tomatoes for free

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# Huru na Bure: Swahili Collaboration and the Future of African Languages on the Web

**-huru** (or -hurru) { **English: free** } [derived: *Arabic*]

adjective , - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ] [see also: [huri](#); [huria](#); [uhuru](#)]

Swahili Example: jiskie huru kuwasiliana nami au mwenzangu yeyote kwenye kikundi hiki

([mawazo na mawaidha](#), 18 Mei 2006

English Example: feel free to communicate with me or any of my colleagues in this group (ideas and advice blog, 18 May, 2006)

**na** { **English: and** }

conjunction , - [ [edit entry](#) ] [ photos: [upload](#) ] [see also: [-wa na](#)]

Swahili Example: Anapenda sana mama na baba.

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 Yale Council on African Studies