



*Click! focuses on World Wide Websites, PC software, and hardware that can be used to listen to international broadcasters and other English language public broadcasters via Internet-based technology. Broadcaster websites and other web resources are covered. Feedback and suggestions are always encouraged – please include Click! in the subject line of any e-mail.*

## Channel Africa – a shortwave broadcaster that benefits from web delivery

When I first started listening to shortwave, I remember the thrill I got when listening to Radio RSA from South Africa, because the distances involved helped the broadcast feel especially exotic – from a faraway place.



Much has changed in South Africa since then, including the name of the international broadcaster itself, as the service was replaced as *Channel Africa* in 1992. The end of apartheid brought with it a cultural diversity and a change in focus, as Channel Africa now seeks to position itself as the spokesperson for Africa originating within Africa, versus broadcasters like the VOA and the BBC, both of which have extensive Africa-focused programming but are based elsewhere. Channel Africa calls itself “The Voice of the African Renaissance.”

Channel Africa has done a decent job of incorporating Internet technologies to improve the audibility and accessibility of its broadcasts; much of Channel Africa’s programming can be listened to on-demand, though some methods of on-demand listening (i.e. podcasts) are more reliable than others. Paradoxically, the section of the website labeled “Audio On Demand” doesn’t appear to work well.

So what’s on that can be easily listened to on-demand?

*Africa Rise and Shine* is a morning current affairs program that focuses on issues important to Africans in general and South Africans in particular. It’s hosted by Ms. Kgopedi Namane and ranges from politics to human interest, education, science and technology, environment, economics and sports, though much of the emphasis is politics. It appears the program is one hour in duration and is repeated for three subsequent hours. The easiest way to hear the program on-demand is to use the <Podcasts> link to the left on the Channel Africa website and then select

“Africa Rise and Shine”. You can either listen in iTunes, use the RSS feed with your favorite podcatcher software, or download the 55-minute audio file to your computer.

*Africa Midday* is similar in focus to *Africa Rise and Shine*; Mr. Naye Lupondwana hosts. In this instance, it’s a one-hour program that is repeated for a second hour. For on-demand listening, follow the same approach given above for *Africa Rise & Shine*. The “listen” link within the program’s website description doesn’t appear to work.

*Our Heritage* is a weekly 30-minute program about African history and culture; the most recent update available on-demand dates from earlier in August. The program introduces itself as “...a program about who we are, where we come from, and our destiny as Africans.” The program available in late August deals with issues relating to historical artifacts taken to other countries for purposes of conservation.

*Tam-Tam Express* regards itself as a weekly infotainment program (“An African odyssey”) that blends entertainment with serious political debate on relevant economic, political and social issues. Experts, political analysts, and correspondents all participate in the program, which is hosted by Ms. Faz da Hall.

Most of the programming I sampled is well-produced, with the announcers comparatively easy to understand given the accent differences one encounter, and the issues discussed thoughtfully and intelligently.



The website for Channel Africa is, naturally, <http://www.channelafrica.org> ; the site is reasonably well-organized even though some of the audio links are uncooperative. The “Listen Live” and the on-demand links that are organized by time of day do not work; the website coding leads to <mms://> links; that’s an old URL format from Microsoft (Microsoft Media Server) has gradually stopped supporting, though Windows Media Player and other open-source audio players can still open these links.

I have an e-mail into the Internet management team for Channel Africa regarding the problem; I’ll post an update in the ODXA Yahoo Group if I hear anything back from them.