

First things first... I am not a hippie. I am not a tree-hugger. I am not a political activist. I am just a Journalism student, who has a keen interest in History, Politics and humanity's incredible ability to ruin all the good stuff about this planet of ours.

I am a cynic. I am critical. I do believe that we can use history and past mistakes to fix the present and secure a better future. Global warming - I think I believe it exists. The apocalypse of 2012 – I'm rooting for that to be real, for it to be a cleansing session for our world. South Africa – I'm a true patriot at heart but very aware of this country's flaws and inability to solve crises.

I am at [Rhodes University](#) , where I am currently doing my fourth and final year, specialising in New Media. As part of my online course, I have joined the myDigitalLife community and will be writing a blog which deals with the issues of development and sustainability in South Africa.

It looks into current projects or aspirations relative to development, and proposes ways in which new technologies and digital media could support this develop and maintain its sustainability. It is a blog that looks to inspire individuals, community organisations, NGO's, private corporations, perhaps even governments, to become involved in developments necessary to our country's growth and suggest ways in which to sustain these developments using New Media.

In order to begin discussing the challenges of development and sustainability in South Africa, it is necessary to first define 'development', 'sustainability' and how new media technologies could assist with these challenges.

Development cannot be narrowed down into one specific definition, because even as you start to Google it, the definitions begin to split between economic development, arrested development, community development, sustainable developments, research and development, and environmental development. Blah blah blah...

In the most general terms then, development refers to the act of improving by expanding or enlarging or refining; a process in which something passes by degrees to a different stage.

Therefore, I propose that 'development' means the following – the process by which a problem is broken down and analysed; solutions are suggested, problematised and planned. But the key point of development is that it is a continual process; it is ever-evolving and growing. The original list of problems and projected solutions must always be referred back to, as a way to determine current growth and success, or failure.

I consider the problematic areas in South Africa's development to include the economy, culture, social environment, governmental departments, political sphere, environmental aspects and educational systems. Each of these will be covered in-depth, throughout my blog posts.

"Sustainability is the capacity to endure." In terms of the economy, culture, social environment, governmental departments, political sphere, environmental aspects and educational systems then, sustainability refers to South Africa's capacity to improve on their problems and maintain a working, successful order within all or most of these spheres.

The first area that I will be tackling will be the education system. It seems like the logical place to start because it is the area that I believe everything else stems from. No matriculation means no university, means no degree, means fewer job opportunities, means less income, means poverty, means poor living conditions, means lack of governmental support, means the demise of a life.

But, this is a complex area of the South African socio-economic-cultural sphere; I am not going to throw my theories, research, data and opinion at you right away. Rather I will leave you to consider the following quote...

*"It's impossible to separate the issue of environmental sustainability from those of social and economic development. Without proper environmental management, our world's fragile climate patterns and eco-systems will collapse. Even relatively minor changes in average global temperatures can result in major changes to climate and weather patterns, affecting the livelihoods of millions of people. There are many critical environmental issues, often inter-related, which are central to developing (and monitoring) appropriate and effective*

*sustainability objectives”*

And encourage you to read more from the [Sustainability South Africa](#) website which aims to offer an information hub for chartered accountants, corporate sustainability managers and the general business community. It highlights the current major sustainability issues and gives the history of sustainability reporting along with the available standards and guidelines. I believe that their work in the economic field can be applied to the other sectors of South African society.

If you were even just a little bit interested in what they said. I promise mine will be as intelligent... but probably more humorous. And cynical. And realistic (I hope).

Take care,

Ciao ciao!