



Media Contact: Jessika Fruchter (415) 633-9321 / jfruchter@techsoupglobal.org
Krista Van Lewen (303) 963-5530 / kvanlewen@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Social Activism Goes Mobile in NetSquared Year Four

NetSquared.org launches fourth annual competition bridging mobile technology and social change

SAN FRANCISCO - February 25, 2009 - NetSquared.org, an initiative of nonprofit TechSoup Global that leverages the work of social innovators through a series of prize-based challenges or competitions, has launched its fourth annual challenge focused on the use of mobile technology for progressive social change.

This year's NetSquared Year Four (N2Y4) Mobile Challenge (www.netsquared.org/n2y4) began accepting submissions on February 23 and will continue through April 3. Each project will be required to incorporate a mobile platform or other mobile technology in order to be considered.

"Accessibility was the determining factor when we decided on mobile technology as the theme for N2Y4," said Billy Bicket, director of NetSquared. "Mobile phones are in the hands of 2.2 billion people around the world, and provide people with unprecedented power to share information, collaborate and accelerate progressive social change."

The challenge cycle runs from February through May, and culminates in a two-day NetSquared Global Conference held May 26 -27, 2009 at the Cisco Systems Vineyard Conference Center in San Jose. All conference attendees have an opportunity to share their perspective and insights from the field with competing projects, and vote to fund N2Y4 Mobile Challenge winning projects competing for \$50k in cash-prizes and in-kind resources.

In 2008, the Ushahidi Project - a project that combined the use of mobile phones and citizen journalism to report incidents of post-election violence in Kenya - was the top vote-getter and took first place in the NetSquared Year 3 (N2Y3) Global Challenge. Challenges are peer-judged, and the

Ushahidi team received an award of \$25,000 toward the further development of its project.

"Winning the N2Y3 was huge," said Eric Hersman, one of Ushahidi's founders. "It was monumental. That \$25K helped us start putting together the team that would rebuild the Ushahidi platform from the ground up. We were able to move immediately, instead of waiting the three to four months it would take us to get a larger grant."



Brought to you by TechSoup, a project of CompuMentor • T 415-633-9300 • F 415-633-9400 • www.techsoup.org



Here's how the challenge process works:

1. *The Challenge* - Anyone with a project designed to advance social change can enter the challenge. NetSquared offers a number of cash awards for innovative projects based on Challenge sponsor's criteria.
2. *The Submissions* - Project ideas should be submitted to the Netsquared.org Project Gallery. Visit www.netsquared.org/projectgallery overview for details.
3. *The Community Feedback and Vote* -The NetSquared Community provides peer-review/feedback and votes on the best projects. Fourteen projects finalists will be selected, and three winners will be chosen to receive cash awards on the last day of the N2Y4 Global Conference.
4. *The Award* - Cash is distributed to a subset of winning projects based on Challenge Sponsor criteria. The winning projects will share half of a \$50,000 cash award, with the other finalists dividing the balance of the award funds. In addition, all of the finalists are eligible for substantial in-kind support donated by the NetSquared Innovator Support Network to help them turn their visions into realities.

About NetSquared:

Now in its fourth year, NetSquared - an initiative of nonprofit TechSoup Global - continues to work toward linking Web-based tools and mobile technology with progressive social change. NetSquared achieves this goal by mobilizing individuals and communities, providing Web-based tools, and awarding financial support to leverage social action projects.

Headquartered in San Francisco, California, NetSquared has worked internationally since 2005. In that time the initiative has:

- Incubated hundreds of social action projects in various stages of development
- Awarded more than \$240,000 in financial support through prized-based Challenges
- Provided a platform for cross-sector collaboration
- Fostered monthly face-to-face meetups for social innovators in 25 cities around the globe and growing

To learn more about NetSquared visit www.netsquared.org. To learn more about TechSoup Global visit www.techsoup.org.

