



Bridging the Digital Divide in Ancient Culture

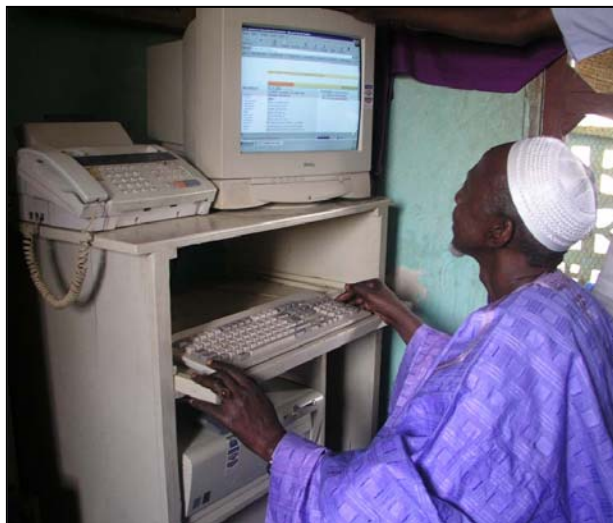


Photo: USAID/Mali Oumar Doucouré

Imam Almamy Korobara at computer terminal researching via the Internet.

"I used to think the Internet was just for people working in offices, but I now realize it is also very useful for religious leaders and their communities. I know that many good things have been done by Americans in Mali. Now I am discovering that the same is true throughout the world. With the Internet, I can find information for the preaching I do on Friday's, and I can help other Moslems understand what's going on in the world. I'm connected."

- Imam Korobara

An UNESCO World Heritage site, Djenné in Mali is internationally known for its mud-brick mosque and the archeological excavation of Djenné-Jeno City. The ancient city dates back to 250 BC and was mysteriously abandoned in the 14th century. Now, Djenné is making modern history with its wired Imam.

USAID provided computer equipment and a one-year Internet subscription for the Imam, an influential religious and spiritual leader who heads the Moslem community in one of Africa's most important Islamic cities. The Imam is a champion of USAID development activities in the area. He has worked hard to bridge Djenné's information gap with new technologies, for example supporting efforts to build the community radio station and a new Community Learning and Information Center (CLIC).

The Internet allows the Imam to access the wealth of information and to promote Djenné's rich historical, cultural and religious heritage. The Imam has always been telling anyone who will listen about Djenné's rich cultural and historical heritage. He can now communicate to a much broader audience through a website he is developing at the CLIC in Djenné which will go a long way in helping him promote his city.

First Person

