IBM offers low-cost computing solution for Africa

September 23 2009

US computer giant IBM and South Africa's Canonical on Wednesday announced the launch of a Web-based service aimed at helping African businesses that cannot afford traditional personal computers.

US computer giant IBM and South Africa's Canonical on Wednesday announced the launch of a Web-based service aimed at helping African businesses that cannot afford traditional personal computers.

The IBM Client for Smart Work targets users of low-cost netbook computers providing a personal computing software package whose features include email, word processing, spreadsheets and social networking.

IBM said Smart Work will "help businesses in Africa bridge the digital divide by leapfrogging traditional PCs and proprietary software."

"Businesses that could not afford traditional PCs for all employees can now use any type of device and low-cost software to enable all workers to work smarter anywhere using a variety of devices," the New York-based company said.

Smart Work runs on Canonical's Ubuntu open-source Linux operating system.

"Starting with Africa, we see that this smart client package can help realize our vision of eliminating barriers to computer access for emerging markets," said Canonical founder Mark Shuttleworth.

"The IBM Client for Smart Work builds on the movement toward open standards and Web-based personal computing by giving people the power to work smarter, regardless of device," added Bob Picciano, general manager, IBM Lotus Software.

IBM estimated that Smart Work will deliver up to 50 percent savings per seat versus a comparable Microsoft-based desktop.

(c) 2009 AFP