

Tribute

Gary Marsden's Legacy at the University of Cape Town

Edwin Blake
Melissa Densmore
Marion Walton

University of Cape Town

Gary Marsden established the UCT Centre in Information and Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D) in 2008. The Centre provides a space from which researchers can apply their disciplinary expertise to ICT problems experienced on the African continent and has gathered a critical mass of researchers and post-graduate students who can strengthen this field. It provides an important base for African and international researchers in the area of ICT4D from which to undertake research and train postgraduate students and to make a powerful statement on the significance of this area of research in the developing world. The Centre's researchers demonstrate how the application of modern information technologies can be applied specifically to solving some of the problems facing the African continent.

The UCT Centre in ICT4D was founded to seek out new information technologies and new ways to use them for socioeconomic development and justice. With Gary as the driving force and lead scientist, the Centre rose to international prominence. Our location in Cape Town, South Africa makes us ideally suited for this research—and since our founding we have grown in staff, students, and financial support. The Centre is also an exchange hub of ICT4D knowledge, with numerous international visitors each year.

Our graduate body grew as did our scientific output, with Gary personally supervising 20 of our 56 students to graduation. He also hosted both the Interact and ICTD conferences in the year of his death. Tragically, he died when the fruits of this establishment were ripening. His presence and the Centre's reputation have attracted excellent new staff and many visitors keen to collaborate. Such are the resilience and power of his vision that we have been able to survive his loss. We were shaken, but we have pulled together in a common commitment to propel his vision of an interdisciplinary, human-centered research facility.

Today, we are a core group of eight staff and more than 50 students across three departments. We have numerous ongoing projects in a wide range of application areas (digital libraries, service delivery, health, education, networking, and digital participation) and are engaged in participatory and co-design research in a number of areas across the African continent. Our students go on to teach in African universities and to continue their engagement in promoting effective uses of ICTs for development. We are grateful to Gary for his leadership and inspiration and for bringing us together to continue his work through the Centre in ICT4D at the University of Cape Town. ■

Edwin Blake, Professor, University of Cape Town and Director, UCT Centre in ICT4D, South Africa.
edwin@cs.uct.ac.za

Melissa Densmore, Senior Lecturer, University of Cape Town and UCT Centre in ICT4D, South Africa.
mdensmore@cs.uct.ac.za

Marion Walton, Associate Professor, University of Cape Town and UCT Centre in ICT4D, South Africa.
marion.walton@uct.ac.za

To cite this article: Blake E., Densmore, M., & Walton, M. (2015). Gary Marsden's legacy at the University of Cape Town. *Information Technologies & International Development*, 11(4), 43.

