

## NEWS FROM:

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## UCT researcher seeks to boost tourism industry

A candidate for a PhD in Commercial Law at the University of Cape Town has proposed ways to make the tourism industry in South Africa more competitive and innovative through the protection of intellectual property.

Caroline Ncube's thesis, *Intellectual property protection for e-commerce business methods in South Africa: Envisioning an equitable model for SMEs in the tourism industry*, examines how intellectual property law should protect e-commerce business methods to ensure that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in tourism, one of South Africa's immediate priority sectors, are not disadvantaged.

Using both qualitative and quantitative data, she concludes that the current favourite, standard patent protection of the core functionality of these methods is inequitable due to its anti-competitive and innovation-chilling effects. She suggests that the alternatives of free and open source software and open business models, which allow innovation sharing and are cost effective, ought to be used instead. She finds that copyright protection for descriptions, illustrations and website presentations of e-commerce business methods, trademark protection for their associated marks and trade secret protection for their unpublished non-core aspects, are similarly equitable and ought to be relied upon.

Ncube has an LLB from the University of Zimbabwe and an LLM from the University of Cambridge. She has been studying part-time in the Faculty of Law at UCT since 2005. During this time she has also been working full-time as a lecturer in the Department of Commercial Law while writing her PhD thesis. Her supervisor is Professor Julian Kinderlerer at UCT.

**ENDS**

**Please note:** Information in this release is based on the supervisor's citation for the PhD thesis. UCT advises journalists to obtain a copy of the thesis and/or interview the PhD graduate to verify and expand on this information.

***Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department***

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