

ONLINE TRIP BACK IN TIME



LINKED IN: The new Connected Classrooms from Google, which helps schoolchildren explore South African history without leaving their classrooms, was launched in Joburg yesterday.

PICTURE: BOXER NGWENYA

Pupils explore historic sites virtually

NONTOBOKO MTSHALI

nontobeko.mtshali@inl.co.za

SOUTH African schoolchildren can now experience historic sites across the country in real time without leaving their classrooms, thanks to online virtual field trips.

As part of the country's 20 years of democracy celebrations, Google, 21 Icons and Pearson have teamed up to bring historical trips and interactive learning sessions to schoolchildren through the "Connected Classrooms".

Yesterday afternoon, pupils from five schools went on a virtual tour at the Constitution Court's infamous Old Fort prison, com-

monly known as Number 4, where they were hosted by a tour guide and posed questions.

The next session will be held on October 13. Pupils will be able to go on a virtual walkabout on Vilakazi Street in Soweto.

Google in Education's programme manager, Karen Walsta, said the connected classroom project was part of this year's Doodle 4 Google competition, in which pupils are invited to submit a doodle (sketch) under the theme "The South Africa of My Dreams", which will be featured on the Google homepage.

The competition is open to children between the ages of 6 and 17,

and submissions from schools, parents, teachers and caregivers on behalf of the pupils are also welcome.

Submissions can be done online or sent to Doodle 4 Google, Box 11882, Silver Lakes, 0054, no later than October 22.

The submissions will be categorised into four different age groups, and the highest-ranking doodler from each age group will be named as the age group winner.

The group winners will be announced during an awards ceremony on November 29 and, from the four, the overall winner will be chosen and their doodle

will be featured on the South Africa Google homepage on December 2.

The winner will also walk away with a R100 000 technical grant for their school, a tablet, a R500 Google Play voucher and a T-shirt with their doodle printed on it, among other things.

The judging panel consists of Google employees and guest judges, who include singer and Unicef goodwill ambassador on malaria and children's health Yvonne Chaka Chaka; Brand South Africa chief executive Miller Matola; radio personality DJ Fresh; and actor and novelist John van de Ruit.