

ISPA Membership Shows 21 Years Of Solid Growth

South Africa's Internet Service Providers' Association has never experienced a period of negative membership growth, clearly demonstrating the growth of Internet usage in South Africa and the high regard the country's Internet Service Provider community has for the 21-year-old Industry Representative Body (IRB).

"For ISPs committed to doing things right, ISPA membership is a badge of respectability," says ISPA chair, Graham Beneke. From a total of 168 small, medium and large Internet and access providers in February 2015, ISPA membership today stands at 184 firms who have committed themselves to upholding the ISPA Code of Conduct and doing things right.

"ISPA Code of Conduct compliance is no walk in the park. This ensures the Association attracts the very best calibre of member who becomes a true partner on ISPA's journey to build a modern, fair and equitable South African information society," Mr Beneke explains.

ISPA's united voice has resulted in many legal, legislative, regulatory, competition and consumer victories for the local web, all funded by member contributions. Nothing demonstrates the value of ISPA membership more clearly than today's liberalised and choice-driven Internet landscape," says Mr Beneke, ISPA.

It's not all about compliance, however. ISPA annually grows its base because the ISP community sees tremendous value in membership. Mr Beneke summarises the top five key benefits of ISPA membership below:

1. ISPA creates consumer confidence and the ISPA logo is familiar to South African Internet consumers as a mark they can trust to uphold their rights.
2. ISPA's status as an IRB and implementation of an effective take-down notification procedure, which can be used by all of its members as protection from liability, in terms of the ECT Act, for content that is hosted on, stored, or transmitted through, their networks.
3. For ISPs wanting to make a positive contribution to a fair legislative framework, there is strength and legal support in numbers.
4. Every year for the last 16 years, ISPA, together with many partner organisations in the Internet industry, has hosted the iWeek conference which is free to all members - and the public. Members get to participate in open and closed workshops, seminars and lectures where industry developments, governance of the global web and new technologies are discussed. iWeek also sees the annual prize-giving for ISPA's SuperTeacher Competition, recognising rural educators for their innovative use of ICTs in the classroom.
5. ISPA has, through the operation of South Africa's most important Internet exchanges, also supported the development of local infrastructure and lowered the cost to communicate. Members benefit from the fact that Internet exchanges encourage local traffic to remain local, and provide a more responsive experience to Internet users. Now run under the auspices of INX-ZA, the multi-site Johannesburg exchange extends to three strategic data centres, and is accompanied by exchanges in Cape Town and Durban.

