

Content and Applications Continue to Power Mobile in 2019

As South Africa continues to suffer the fallout from unreliable electricity, aggressive politicking and ratings downgrades; the country's mobile sector continues to deliver a much-needed monetary injection for Africa's most advanced economy.

South Africa's impressive 90 million cellular connections and stellar mobile penetration rate of 157% boosts the local economy to the tune of hundreds of millions of Rands per annum.

"Our mature mobile market not only helps shore up our economy in the current challenging environment, but there are interesting developments emerging on the mobile event horizon," says Ilonka Badenhorst, General Manager of SA's Wireless Application Service Providers' Association (WASPA).

WASPA is a recognised self-regulating industry body representing over 350 of the local and international companies that develop the mobile content and applications enjoyed by SA's 35 million cellular users. In addition, some of the WASPS are responsible for the transaction-triggered notifications consumers receive ensuring that any movement in a bank account, for example, is as a result of the action of the account holder only. Service messaging on behalf of service providers, in addition, helps consumers manage their diaries. With a much-lauded Code of Conduct refined over the past 15 years, WASPA also plays an important consumer protection role within the mobile industry.

Ms Badenhorst outlines several red-hot emerging trends sure to heat up the mobile market as we head into Winter 2019:

Greater Diversity - the pool of people developing South Africa's future mobile content and applications is greatly expanding. There is a movement developing which is aimed at getting young women, in particular, to code and program. From associations to events, the local 'girl coding' drive will continue to pick up steam this year, offering future education and employment opportunities to perhaps tens of thousands of young South Africans.

Lower Cost - Basic economics say that if you lower the price of something, consumption increases. With this in mind, news that the Independent Communications Authority of SA (ICASA) has begun its market enquiry into the price of mobile data sounds especially encouraging. The end result is likely to be an increase in the rollout of mobile applications.

Better CRM: Customer care, or the lack of it, has long been the bane of the South African consumer. Today, however, many SA firms have implemented chat-based customer care. Not having to pick up a phone and engage in lengthy roundabout conversations with a succession of call centre agents is going down well with consumers and there'll be more to come in 2019. Finally, the consumer's needs (for mobile text) really are being put first!

More Video: It's not all work and no play in SA's mobile market, however, increasing mobile broadband speeds coupled with lower costs means local mobile users are set to enjoy about as much video time as their mobile counterparts overseas.

Incidentally, mobile bandwidth consumption also appears to be good news for country economies.

WASPA was founded on 26 August 2004 with the full support of South Africa's mobile network operators. WASPA has a detailed Code of Conduct to which all members must adhere and a well-established formal complaints process that is central to responsible self-regulation.