

Mobile Web Africa conference opens in Johannesburg



By [Bylssa Sikiti da Silva](#)

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Harnessing the potential of Internet and applications on mobile devices is the main theme of the inaugural two-day Mobile Web Africa conference that has opened today, Tuesday, 13 October 2009, at the Michaelangelo Hotel in Sandton, Johannesburg.

Mobile Web Africa

The conference, organised by All Amber and which is being attended by close on 200 local and international delegates, heard that Egypt, Nigeria, Morocco, South Africa (fourth position), Sudan, Algeria, Kenya, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe are the top 10 countries in terms of Internet penetration on PC, while only 33% of Africans have access to Internet via their mobile phones.

Top 10 countries

These top 10 countries make up of 85% of all Internet users market in Africa, according to recent statistics.

SA has over 4.5 million PC Internet users and close to 10 million mobile internet users [a stat challenged by [World Wide Worx](#) researcher [Steven Ambrose](#) in a [tweet](#) this morning], and the expectation is to have at least 15 million mobile internet users by 2013.

“It is amazing how such a luxury item has quickly become a valuable tool of global development, shifting from being held to the ears to being held by hand, and becoming an instrument of promoting economic growth,” Jose Henriques, Vodacom executive head of Internet services, said.

“Mobile phones are the advance guard for mobile broadband networks and at the same time they are promoting economic benefits and providing a basic tool of education, for instance helping parents to afford to educate their children.”

Push for mobile penetration

Given the limitations of opportunities of fixed-line Internet in Africa and the unstoppable rise of mobile revolution and its socio-economic advantages, Henriques said that African countries such as Zambia, Kenya, Rwanda and Nigeria are really working hard to push for mobile penetration, especially in rural areas.

The African mobile Internet market continues to grow dramatically, staying slightly behind the Middle East (fastest-growing

region), with pages viewed having increased by 422% between April 2008 to April 2009, and Google being the number one and Yahoo in third in each of the top 12 countries striving intensively on software development.

The top 12 countries include SA, Nigeria, Egypt, Kenya, Libya, Zambia and Tanzania.

However, Henriques warned that he said the only way companies will succeed to advance the mobile Internet cause is to give a decent access experience to the user (setting configured), get their price right and affordable and provide content adaptation.

“Must ensure”

“One must ensure that the Internet is accessed in any phone with cost-effective rates and the possibility to get any big website into a small screen,” he explained.

The conference sponsors and partners include The Grid, Nokia, Samsung, Brandsh, Cellsmart Technologies, IS, Multimedia Solutions, VC4Africa and Bizcommunity.com.

For more, go to www.mobilewebafrica.com. To follow live tweeting from various delegates on Twitter, click [here](#) and [here](#).

ABOUT ISSA SIKITI DA SILVA

Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer.

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