

SA mobile industry is winning war against fraudsters

South Africa's mobile content and applications industry is steadily winning the war against fraudsters attempting to target local cellular users with unauthorised micro-billing.



Jacqui Jones of WorldPlay Mobile Solutions

This welcome fact was communicated to an assembled gathering of the world's leading players in Direct Carrier Billing (DCB) at the recent World Telemedia Conference in Marbella who agreed SA's mobile fraud prevention measures were world-class.

Speaking on the pop-up streaming channel of the globe's only dedicated mobile commercialisation and payments annual event, Jacqui Jones of Johannesburg-based WorldPlay Mobile Solutions was upbeat in her assessment of wireless industry fraud mitigation measures in SA and communicated her optimism about the future of the industry.

"From clickjacking to ransomware and malware, different types of mobile fraud are attempted by criminal syndicates at different points in the mobile value-added services (MVAS) ecosystem, as with other types of digital payments. This makes collaboration and total adherence to fraud prevention measures by every local wireless application service provider (WASP) so crucial," explained Jones.

“There can be no weak links in the MVAS value chain or the mobile consumer suffers and so too does the long-term sustainability of the WASP industry,” she adds. “Fortunately, South Africa appears to be in better shape compared to many European and most world mobile content and applications markets and I’d put this down to the formation of the Wireless Application Service Providers’ Association (WASPA) of SA as far back at 2004, as well as the willingness of WASPA members to work together and make some tough decisions by steadfastly enforcing certain basic policies that were good for the industry,” she said on the sidelines of the event in Spain.

Local players have successfully used WASPA as a very effective tool to enforce key fraud prevention policies in South Africa. “Although it is commendable the industry has worked together to restore consumer confidence a lot more work needs to be done and we cannot rest on our laurels,” says Jones.

For its part, Jones said WorldPlay uses Opticks which has proved effective in protecting the aggregator’s role in the MVAS ecosystem. She recommends MCP Scanner to clients to track their advertising platforms and to alert the firm of any suspect activity.

Jones says that clients in the gaming, video content, ePublishing and lifestyle content spaces are most interested in monetising their services through SMS, USSD or OBS. Subscription-based services provided on the OBS (Online Billing Service) model remain especially popular and cellular users continue to transact with SA mobile content and applications services with confidence as the local mobile industry makes headway against fraud.

“As the South African experience shows, fraud can be mitigated and we’re always ready to advise clients how best to turn their mobile creativity into bottom-line boosting reality.”

“DCB, for instance, is ideally-suited to micro-billing mobile users really small amounts for certain mobile or real-world products and services. A huge advantage of billing consumers via their prepaid or postpaid mobile accounts is that there are typically many times more mobile users in most countries compared to credit or debit card users.”

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