

Creating a better, conveniently secure tomorrow with IoT

 By [Sherry Zameer](#)

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As it rapidly approaches maturity, the Internet of Things (IoT) is set to continue a transformational trajectory, introducing new efficiencies in multiple fields by allowing measurement and analysis on a scale that has never been possible before. From agriculture to logistics, from retail to hospitality, from traffic to health, from the home to the office, the applications for monitoring "things" are limited only by the imagination.



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And South African (and African) businesses are showing abundant imagination in their practical deployments of IoT solutions in multiple settings, creating a better tomorrow through almost universal measurement and the introduction of new levels of convenience – including how to access locations, devices and services securely.

Any company, whether South African or international, should bear in mind that understanding consumer expectations can be the key to unlocking the full potential of IoT devices and related smart services.

Consumer authentication has benefits

According to Gemalto's latest Connected Living study, improving the way consumers authenticate themselves to services is one of the most anticipated benefits of IoT, highlighting a desire for a more seamless and secure IoT experience.

Consumers are interested in advanced ways of authenticating themselves through automatic (based on behavioral patterns) or biometric techniques, lessening the need to have to intervene manually, all in the name of a much more streamlined authentication process. Smartphone manufacturers like Apple and Samsung have already placed fingerprint and facial recognition high on the agenda. There is also a widespread positive sentiment towards IoT's potential for improving the quality of home life through connected, smart appliances.

Personalised services is something else that wins consumers over. In fact, a fluid, personalised and unified experience with continuity of services, together with security and privacy, is critical for the successful implementation of any technology.

Living in a connected world

And those types of services are today quite possible. With everything being connected – from small gadgets to digital solutions for large enterprises – IoT is no longer just a buzzword. That much is made clear in an [article](#) by Deon Liebenberg, former IoT managing executive at Vodacom. Liebenberg, in 2017, provided insight into the sheer range of applications for IoT: the 20 use cases he cites range from the obvious, like transport and logistics, to the connected home and wearables; he even suggests tagging pets with IoT transmitters, for those who always need to know the whereabouts of the family cat.

Low-cost tags fitted to cats, dogs, lamp posts, shipping containers or other items are just one part of the puzzle, however. There are other two pieces; arguably the most complex part is the availability of communication networks in areas where there aren't any WiFi networks, or indeed, anything else.

And that's where the bigger takeaway from Liebenberg's piece and other IoT trends articles becomes apparent. The communication networks are there, as are those tags: dedicated IoT networks (like LoraWAN, SigFox and narrowband IoT) are all available in South Africa.

So, too, is the third and final essential component. Software which is able to process the data generated by the tag and transmitted over the IoT network and into the internet. In this regard, there's no shortage of solutions available from cloud providers like AWS and Azure; electronics giant Siemens, too, is in on the action, having recently launched a new cloud-based IoT operating system to develop applications and services for process industries, including oil and gas and water management.

This combination means it is quite possible right now to enable just about any use case. Business owners, who will know best how IoT can add value in their organisation, can now see their ideas become reality. Most crucial of all, IoT solutions delivering new levels of efficiency and convenience are not only possible, but they are also able to be offered with the simple and effective security that will drive consumer acceptance.

ABOUT SHERRY ZAMEER

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