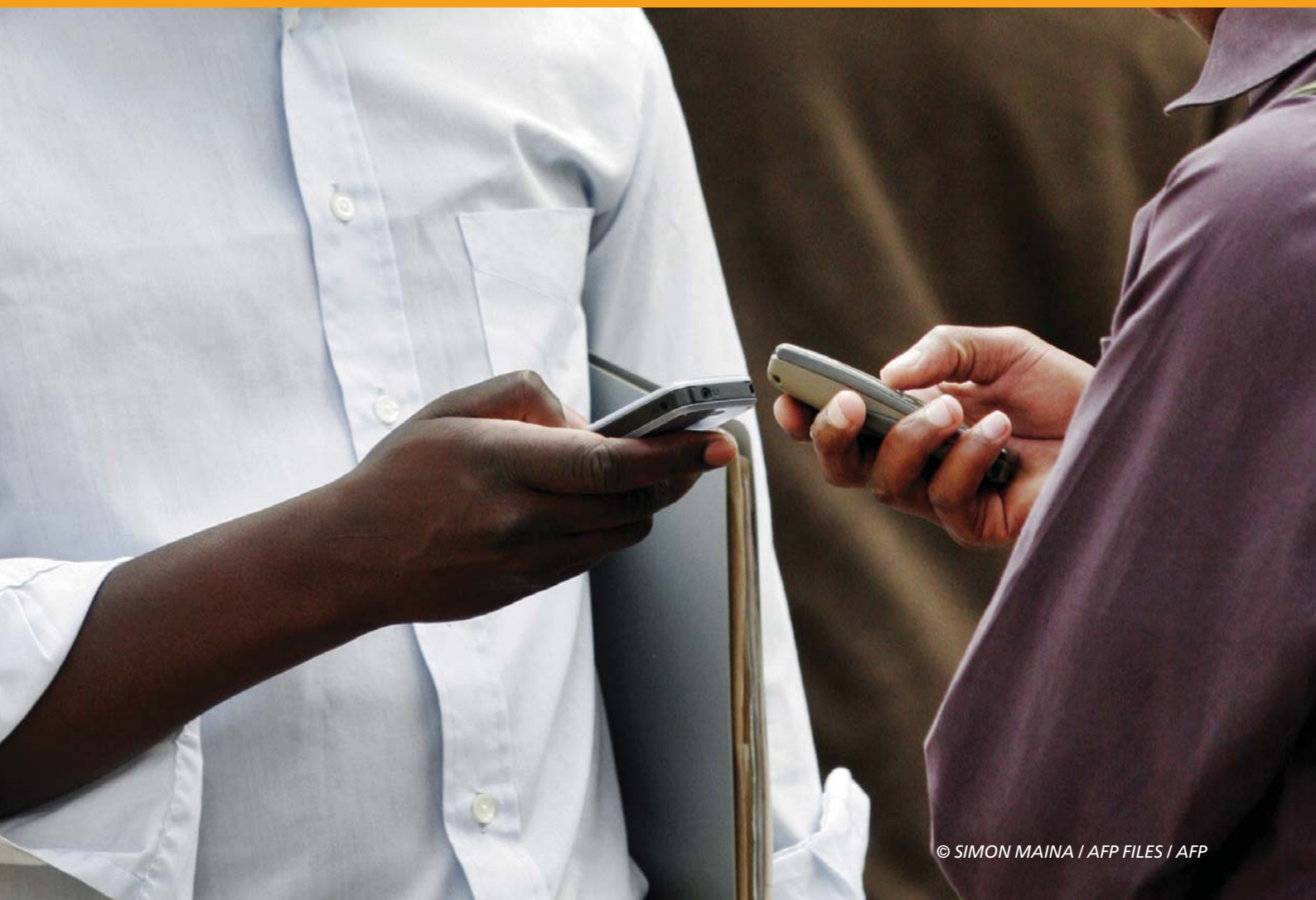


# Mobile media services at Sub-Saharan African newspapers

A guide to implementing mobile news and mobile business



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A guide to implementing mobile news and mobile business



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# 1. Introduction

The content of this report is based on a series of interviews held on-site in Uganda, Kenya and South Africa in February and March 2011. The aim of this report is to provide a comprehensive guide for Sub-Saharan media companies looking into the mobile channel. The typical reader is a media manager who needs to understand the overall opportunities and challenges in the market today and in a foreseeable future to be able to make up his or her mind on how to take mobile further in their own organisation.

In Uganda and Kenya mobile usage is growing fast; however, most mobile media services offered are still quite basic and the usage and volumes are still low. For that reason we also looked at South Africa in hopes of finding media services that had proven to work and had been accepted by larger audiences in a market with similarities to that of Sub-Saharan countries. Hence this report encompasses data from three markets in different stages of mobile development.

Contemporary case studies of mobile media from the regions are presented here, together with additional ideas of services that could be implemented. In chapter four and five you will find discussion, hands-on tips and recommendations from the author based on research and discussions on-site with African media houses as well as years

of experience in mobile media. You will also find a list of questions you need to answer, one at a time, when you move into mobile. These questions can be adapted and used whenever you introduce any new channel in your media portfolio.

Each media company/newspaper interviewed was asked a series of questions in order to describe their experiences, their lessons learnt from mobile, opportunities and challenges in their markets as well as their future plans. In the end of each interview, the newspapers were presented with example services that they were asked to evaluate – whether these concepts could work in the newspapers' own portfolios. The case study section is found in chapter three. In addition to interviews with media companies/newspapers in the different countries,

interviews were held also with mobile network operators, service enablers, researchers, media experts, technology entrepreneurs and media agencies to build a larger understanding for the African mobile media market from different angles. Please see the end of this report for details about all interviews conducted.

The report also contains articles written by other media experts. You will find these in boxes throughout the report. Please note that any opinions and recommendations in these boxes represent each author's own recommendations. Also please note that this is a guidebook with tips and tricks that we hope will inspire and guide you. It is not a rulebook. What works in one market might not work in another; you will all have to find your own way.

This report is a part of a larger project by WAN-IFRA, with the support from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). Through the "Mobile News for Africa" project, WAN-IFRA aims to test, implement and promote innovative content production and delivery models through new

technologies, accompanied with new business models for newspapers in emerging markets and developing democracies.

Recognising both that mobile telephony is rapidly developing as the major communications platform in the developing world – mobile penetration in Africa alone has grown at a rate of 65 percent over the past five years (Rao 2011) – and also that the mobile is not just a telephone; it is a global address, a transaction device and an identity marker for hundreds of millions of poor people, the project aims to assist local newspapers in Sub-Saharan Africa develop new content, new services and delivery systems as fully functional and financially viable local mobile platforms, serving the information needs of local communities.

An intrinsic wider objective is to enable more Africans to access news, meeting the need for information on critical public issues. Online access via mobile platforms is also spreading very quickly. This holds unprecedented opportunity for media in Africa to engage with citizens and provide interactive and customised news services.

The author of this report is **Kristina Bürén**, Managing Director at WAN-IFRA Nordic and WAN-IFRA Research Director, responsible for developing the series "Shaping the Future of the Newspaper" and "World Press Trends". Kristina has been working with mobile services and mobile business development with media companies since 2004. Her numerous projects include research, service development, consulting and training of news media as well as the coordination of three-year long negotiations with mobile network providers in Sweden aiming at improving the conditions for Swedish media houses. Kristina is also a well known moderator and speaker at international events related to digital media.

*"This report would not have been possible had it not been for the time and hospitality shown by media experts in Africa. To all of you who have contributed to the report and who have welcomed us into your newsrooms and offices – thank you. Also, a big thanks to those who gave input and who have taken the time to contribute to this project. A special thanks goes to Sam Rich, for showing us a bit of life in Uganda, and last but not least, many thanks to the Mobile News for Africa project manager Louise Hallman, who has contributed to this handbook with a great deal of background research and all practical arrangements when travelling in Africa as well as editing and participating in interviews on-site." - **Kristina Bürén**, handbook author*

This report is the result of contributions from several experts who has contributed with articles and insights. Authors of articles:

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BlackBerry

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## 2. Setting the scene

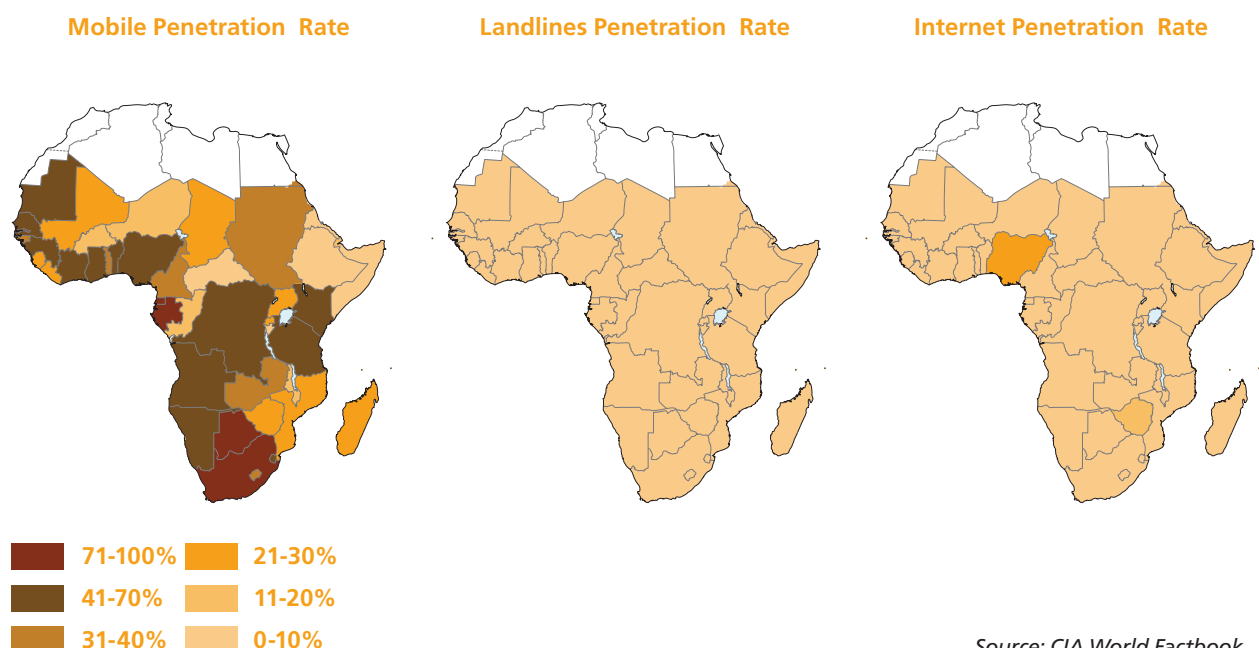
# Mobile in Sub-Saharan Africa

The Sub-Saharan African news publishing industry today is facing an interesting future. There is a lot of development in the region, not least in the mobile sector. It is a market that has recently seen a deregulation in the mobile network operator sector, with better financial agreements slowly emerging as a result of competition, and where several world-renowned phenomena have emerged such as Kenyan M-PESA, mobile money, which has spread over Africa, making the region into a frontrunner when it comes to mobile money transactions even as seen from a global perspective. And yet, this emerged in a market that has some of the lowest mobile penetrations in the world. Today Africa is one of the regions in the world where mobile usage and mobile internet usage is growing the fastest, and also one of few regions that still see a steady increase in newspaper readership.

### 2.1 Usage and infrastructure

East Africa has more than 120 million citizens with a large majority living in rural areas. Near half of the population is under the age of 15 years, and about one-third of the adult population is illiterate. The region may be characterised by general weak infrastructure, but it is also the region with the highest annual growth rate in mobile subscribers. By the end of 2009 there were almost 50 million mobile subscribers in the East African region resulting in a mobile penetration of 40 percent of the total population. In Kenya, the annual growth rate is over 50 percent. Other East African countries show similar growth patterns (Hellström 2010).

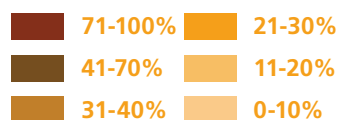
Mobile subscription statistics from the region are however hard to obtain and not particularly reliable owing to the common practice of owning multiple SIM cards to avoid the excess cross-network call charges. Some users even own multiple mobile phone handsets for each operator, and phones designed for up to four SIM cards to be installed at once are also available. The growth that the region has experienced over the past few years is linked to this multiple connections per user. It is however also common in rural areas for one mobile phone to be shared by many people as a village phone. Sharing of SIM cards is not as common but also occurs.



Source: CIA World Factbook

**FACTBOX:**

COUNTRY	Mobile users	Mobile Penetration Rate	Landline users	Landline Penetration Rate	Internet users	Internet Penetration Rate
Eritrea	141,000	2.37	48,500	0.82	200,000	3.37
Central African Republic	168,000	3.39	12,000	0.24	22,600	0.46
Ethiopia	4,052,000	4.46	915,100	1.01	447,300	0.49
Somalia	641,000	6.46	100,000	1.01	106,000	1.07
Burundi	838,400	8.21	31,500	0.31	157,800	1.54
Comoros	100,000	12.58	25,400	3.20	24,300	3.06
Democratic Republic of the Congo	10,163,000	14.17	40,000	0.06	290,000	0.40
Malawi	2,400,000	15.11	175,000	1.10	716,400	4.51
Niger	2,599,000	15.78	65,000	0.39	115,900	0.70
Djibouti	128,800	17.01	16,800	2.22	25,900	3.42
Burkina Faso	3,299,000	19.69	167,000	1.00	178,100	1.06
Rwanda	2,429,000	21.36	33,500	0.29	450,000	3.96
Sierra Leone	1,160,000	21.63	32,800	0.61	14,900	0.28
Liberia	842,000	22.24	2,000	0.05	20,000	0.53
Zimbabwe	2,991,000	24.75	385,100	3.19	1,423,000	11.78
Chad	2,686,000	24.97	13,000	0.12	168,100	1.56
Mozambique	5,971,000	26.02	82,400	0.36	613,600	2.67
Mali	3,742,000	26.43	81,000	0.57	249,800	1.76
Uganda	9,384,000	27.11	233,500	0.67	3,200,000	9.25
Madagascar	5,997,000	27.35	181,200	0.83	319,900	1.46
Zambia	4,407,000	31.75	90,300	0.65	816,200	5.88
Togo	2,187,000	32.29	178,700	2.64	356,300	5.26
Sudan	15,340,000	34.05	370,400	0.82	4,200,000	9.32
Lesotho	661,000	34.34	40,000	2.08	76,800	3.99
Guinea-Bissau	560,300	35.09	4,800	0.30	37,100	2.32
São Tomé and Príncipe	64,000	35.65	7,800	4.35	26,700	14.87
Cameroon	7,397,000	37.53	323,800	1.64	749,600	3.80
Tanzania	17,677,000	41.35	173,552	0.41	678,000	1.59
Nigeria	73,099,000	47.10	1,419,000	0.91	43,989,000	28.34
Kenya	19,365,000	47.15	664,100	1.62	3,996,000	9.73
Swaziland	656,000	47.87	44,000	3.21	90,100	6.57
Republic of the Congo	2,171,000	51.17	24,300	0.57	245,200	5.78
Guinea	5,607,000	52.89	22,000	0.21	95,000	0.90
Benin	5,033,000	53.97	127,100	1.36	200,100	2.15
Senegal	6,902,000	54.59	278,800	2.21	1,818,000	14.38
Namibia	1,217,000	56.67	142,100	6.62	127,500	5.94
Angola	8,109,000	60.79	303,200	2.27	606,700	4.55
Ghana	15,109,000	60.95	267,400	1.08	1,297,000	5.23
Côte d'Ivoire	13,346,000	62.06	282,100	1.31	967,300	4.50
Mauritania	2,182,000	66.49	74,500	2.27	75,000	2.29
Equatorial Guinea	445,000	66.59	10,000	1.50	14,400	2.15
Cape Verde	392,000	75.95	72,200	13.99	150,000	29.06
Gambia	1,433,000	79.71	49,000	2.73	130,100	7.24
Mauritius	1,087,000	83.38	379,100	29.08	290,000	22.24
Gabon	1,373,000	87.08	26,500	1.68	98,800	6.27
Botswana	1,874,000	90.73	144,200	6.98	120,000	5.81
South Africa	46,436,000	94.76	4,320,000	8.82	4,420,000	9.02
Seychelles	92,300	103.49	22,100	24.78	32,000	35.88



Source: CIA World Factbook



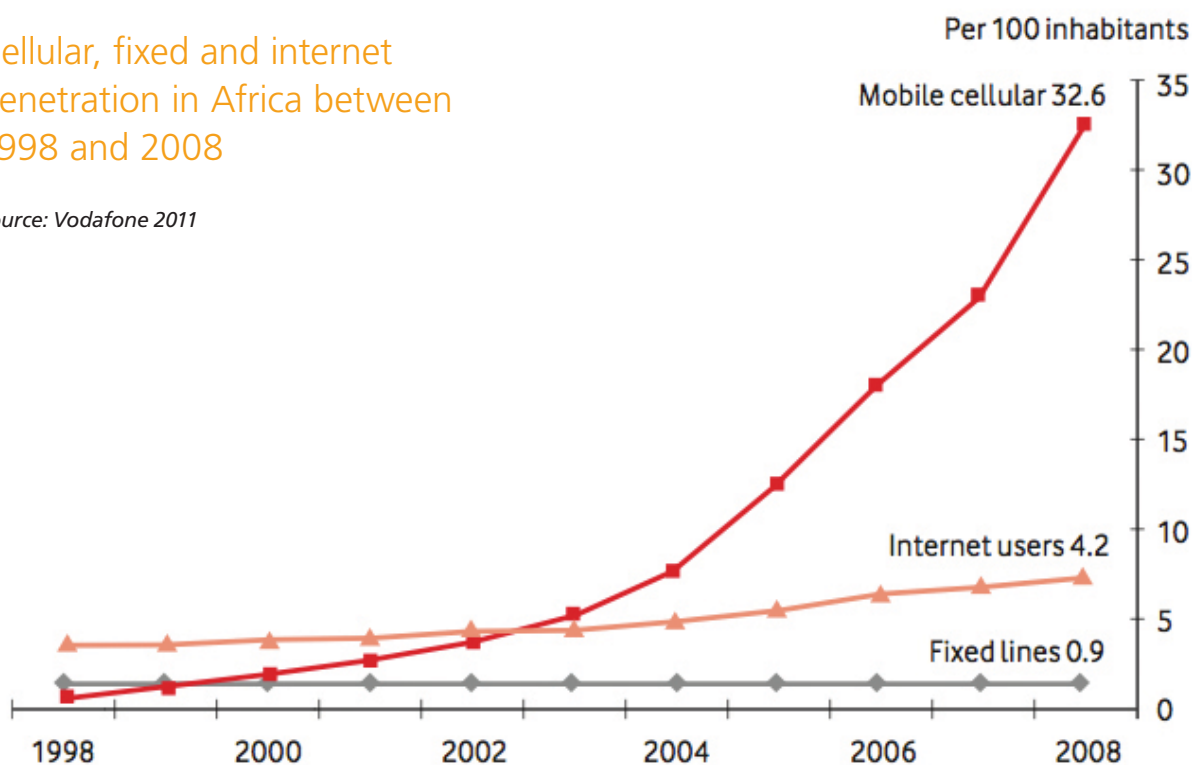
Reliable statistics or not – the mobile phone is however one of, if not the most widely available platform for information and communication in Africa. As an example, in 2008, nine percent of Kenyans were internet users, five percent had a computer at home and 0.7 percent had a fixed phone line. The mobile penetration rate was 42 percent in the same year (Hellström 2010). Internet users are few, and computers in households are rare. The fixed line sector has remained stagnant. (The graph below shows the same statistics for Sub-Saharan Africa.)

The network operators in East Africa have taken a world lead role by abolishing international mobile roaming surcharges and sharing of infrastructure including airtime vouchers. For example, MTN Uganda is partnering with Safaricom Kenya, Vodacom Tanzania and MTN Rwanda, which means in practice that there are no additional charges to call a friend in one of the neighbouring countries than in your own (Hellström 2010).

The mobile network providers in the region are all struggling with declining average revenue per

### Cellular, fixed and internet penetration in Africa between 1998 and 2008

Source: Vodafone 2011







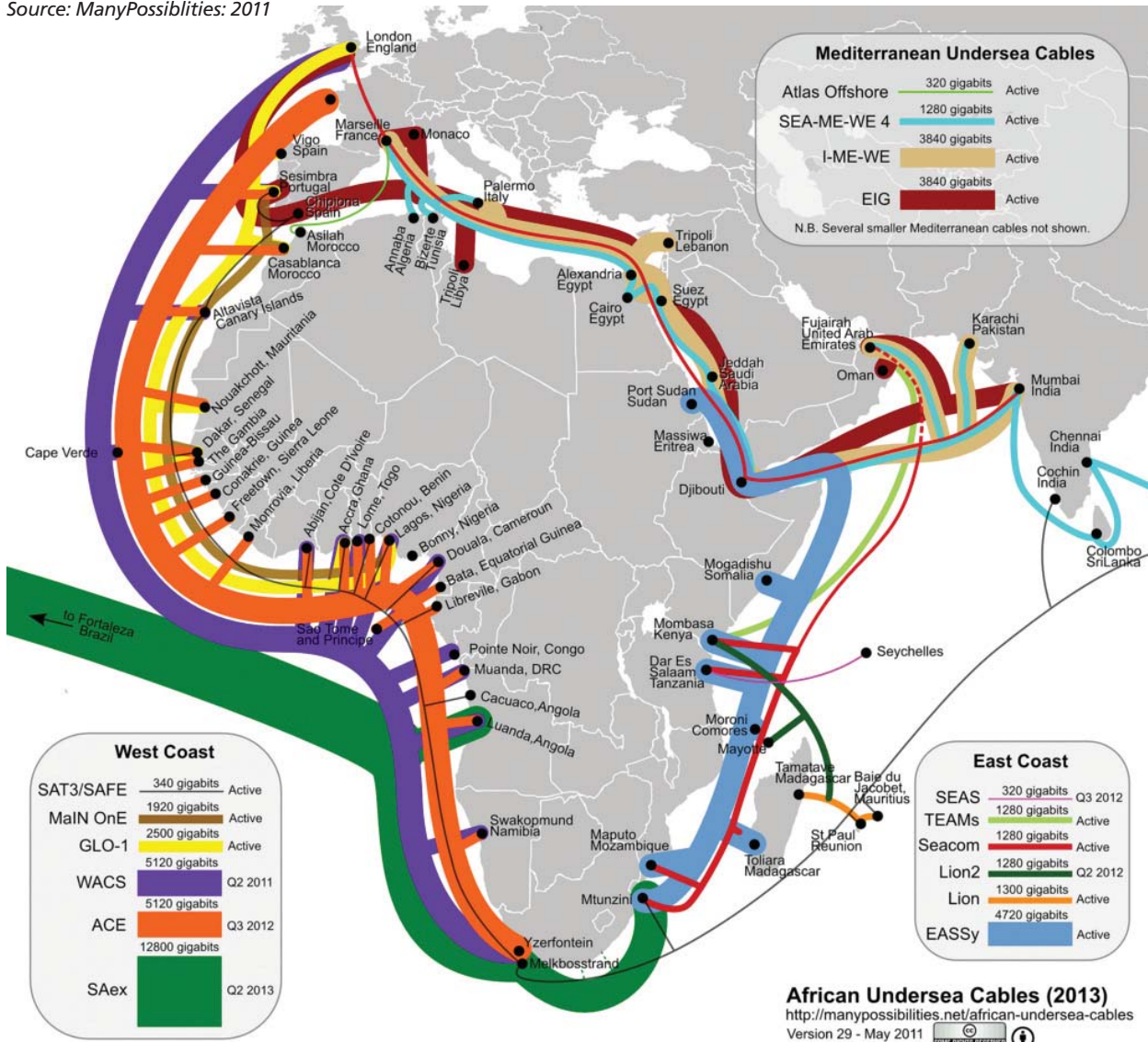
user (ARPU), as a result of the increasing mobile penetration into the mass market. They want to build their own customer loyalty and offer premium rate services built in to the SIM cards at purchase (SIM Tool Kit (STK)/portal) as well as working with mobile money transaction services. The majority of handsets in circulation in East Africa are still the more basic models. Therefore, most of the existing services are SMS-based and designed to work with low-end devices in order to reach the broadest possible audience or all within the target group, but the smartphone segment is growing fast, particularly on the secondhand market, and estimates are that

*To counter the need for multiple phones, some phones in Uganda have been adapted to allow up to four SIM cards to be installed at the same time.*

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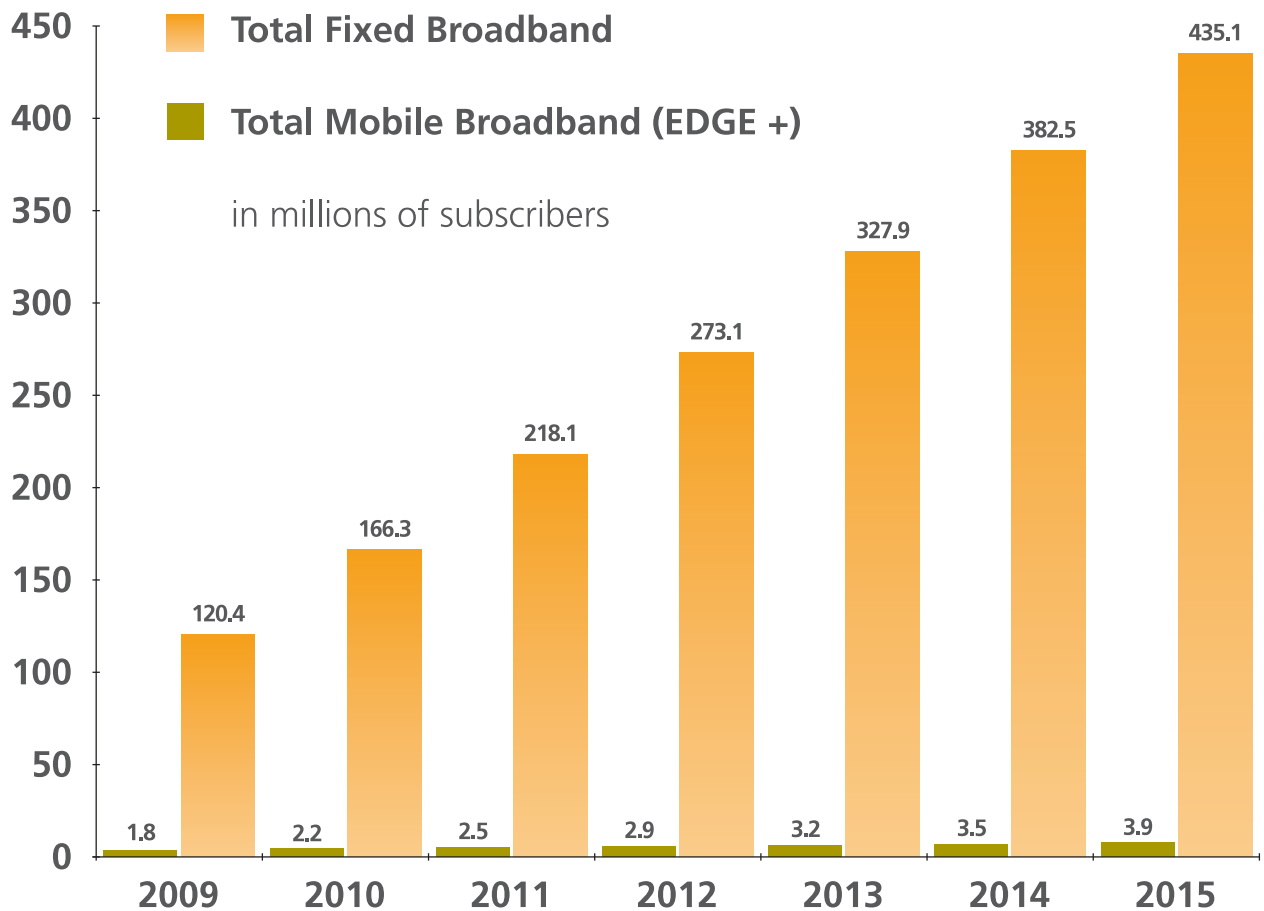
## Undersea fibre-optic cables to provide broadband internet access to Africa by 2013

Source: ManyPossibilities: 2011



## Mobile (2G/EDGE+) vs. fixed-line broadband internet access in Sub-Saharan Africa

Source: Vodafone



in a few years the smartphones will dominate in this region.

Most new models are IP (Internet Protocol) enabled and can function as an internet access point for email, social media and browsing. With the great growth of mobile money transactions here, mobiles have begun to replace wallets as well. And of course this opens up the possibilities for future mobile media services, both on the service concept and business model side. The mobile market also includes mobile phones with broadcast TV antennas and built-in receivers, such of which are not seen in the European markets.

In terms of internet connectivity, Sub-Saharan Africa has been among the worst places in the world. However, in 2009, international undersea fibre optic cables finally arrived in East Africa. With this arrival, several competing wireless broadband networks and national fibre backbones were rolled out, and the cables have improved internet capacity in terms of bandwidth, speed and reliability, and it is perceived

that the cost of communication will drastically reduce as competition heats up. However, there is still a long way to go, and the price of internet connectivity remains high; most internet service providers have kept the same prices even though bandwidth capacity has doubled. This is unfortunate since lower prices are what the region needs considering the fact that internet still remains out of reach of the majority of East Africans, especially in rural areas.

In the absence of fixed-line broadband, mobile has become the internet access point of choice for Africans wanting to get online. Mobile internet access now far outstrips fixed-line access; mobile network provider Vodafone currently estimates the total number of mobile broadband users with access to at least 2G/EDGE internet and faster to be 218.1 million, compared to just 2.5 million fixed-line broadband users. This is predicted to almost double by 2015 to 435.1 million, with fixed-line access remaining at 3.9 million users.

## 2.2 Access points for mobile content

The most used mobile access point in Sub-Saharan Africa is still voice. However, SMS is growing quickly. Data traffic in East Africa is not yet widespread, but it is growing strongly and is predicted to surpass the importance of SMS in a few years' time. Below is a description of the available options.

### SMS

In Sub-Saharan Africa, high prices for SMS and per-second billing of mobile calls has affected the landscape. Per-second billing makes it more expensive to talk for a whole minute but much cheaper if you stay brief. A quick call can give greater value for money than using SMS – if you hang up in time, that is. This is one explanation to why the SMS culture is not deeply rooted in the region. For example, in Uganda the minimum charge is 120 UGX (0.05 USD) for a call, plus additional per second billing. A text is 220 UGX (0.09 USD), so a call can be cheaper.

Premium SMS services – SMS with an additional charge for content – are quite commonly used. There are two different versions of Premium SMS: MT (Mobile Terminated) and MO (Mobile Originated),

suggesting that payments are done either when an SMS is sent or when it is received depending on whether it is a subscribed service or a one-off purchase. Premium SMS can be problematic in a prepaid SIM card environment. Usually, many people top up only when they need to make a phone call or SMS, which means that rest of the time credit is low or next to zero. Value-added services (VAS) providers in East Africa talk of a completion rate of less than 20 percent. Media companies in the region have had similar success. (See more in the case study about the Nation Media group in chapter 3.2 for more information on how this issue has been handled.) However, with the growing usage of mobile money, more cash seems to be stored on many SIM cards than a few years ago.



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### MMS

Multimedia messaging services – where pictures, audio or video is added to a message, are not widely used in the region owing to the low-tech nature of many mobile handsets and the prohibitive costs

involved. Often the settings to get started are not preinstalled but have to be retained from one of the operators, also limiting the usage.



## Mobile Internet

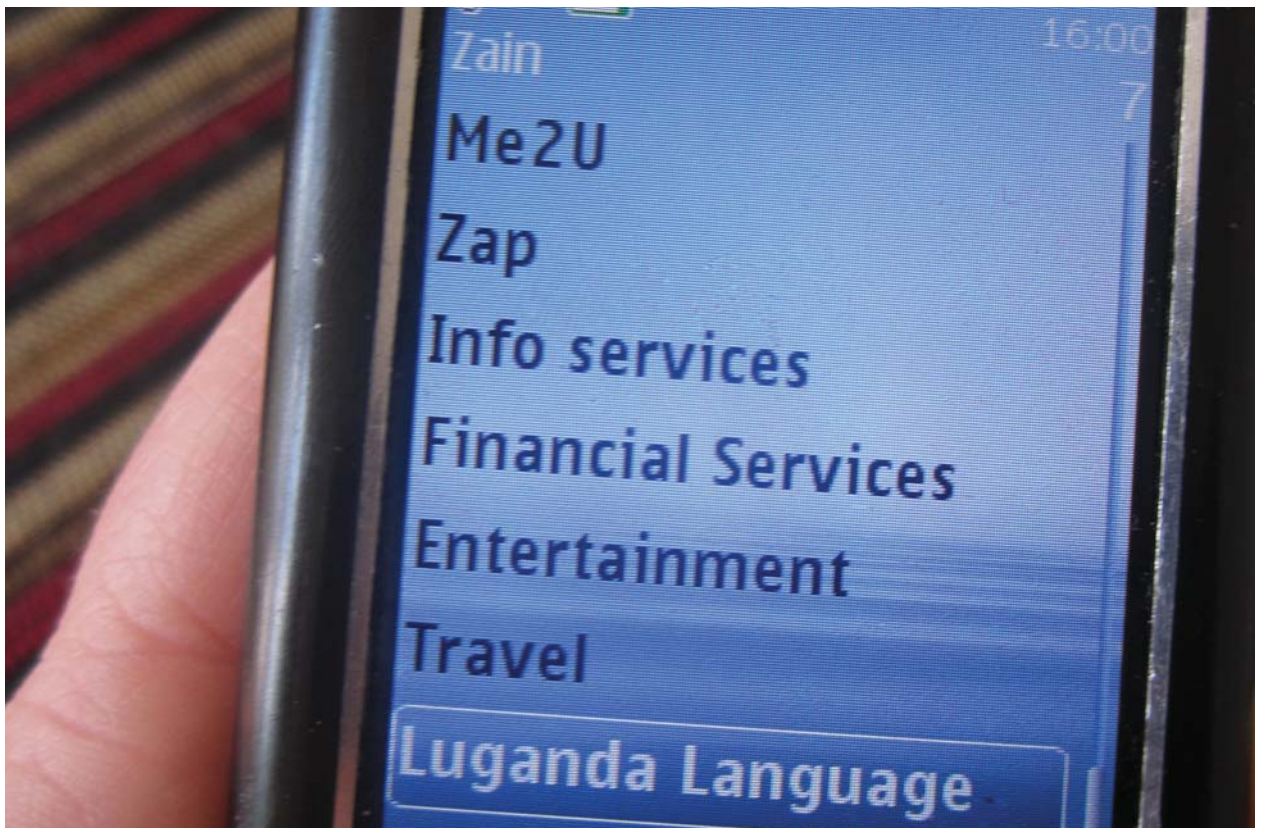
Mobile operators are becoming serious internet service providers and are rapidly making internet accessible to the masses. As a reference, the biggest operator in Kenya, Safaricom, saw a fivefold increase in data revenue in just one year (Hellström 2010). While a significant proportion of mobile phones in Sub-Saharan Africa are low-end units designed for voice and SMS functions only, the cost of mid-range and smartphones is expected to decrease significantly over the next few years. With more and more people acquiring web-enabled phones that support IM (instant messaging) and VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) and other internet-based applications, mobile phones are likely to remain the dominant access point to the internet. However, even though SMS will remain in use for media services for some years to come and would be even

more revolutionary if prices were lower, it is likely that the Sub-Saharan mobile future is IP-based, not SMS-based (Hellström 2010). Content providers will have to adjust and make their services accessible via mobile. Websites need to be configured, for example by setting up .mobi domains. Instant messaging services offers opportunities for end-users to communicate only at the cost of data instead of the additional costs of SMS. Delivering content via a data channel like this instead of SMS also opens up opportunities for content providers to limit costs of bulk SMS etc. One example of an **instant messaging (IM)** platform is MXit, developed in South Africa (more in chapter 3.3). MXit is now also available in Sub-Saharan countries such as Kenya, first offered via the mobile operator Safaricom (Hellström 2010).

## STK

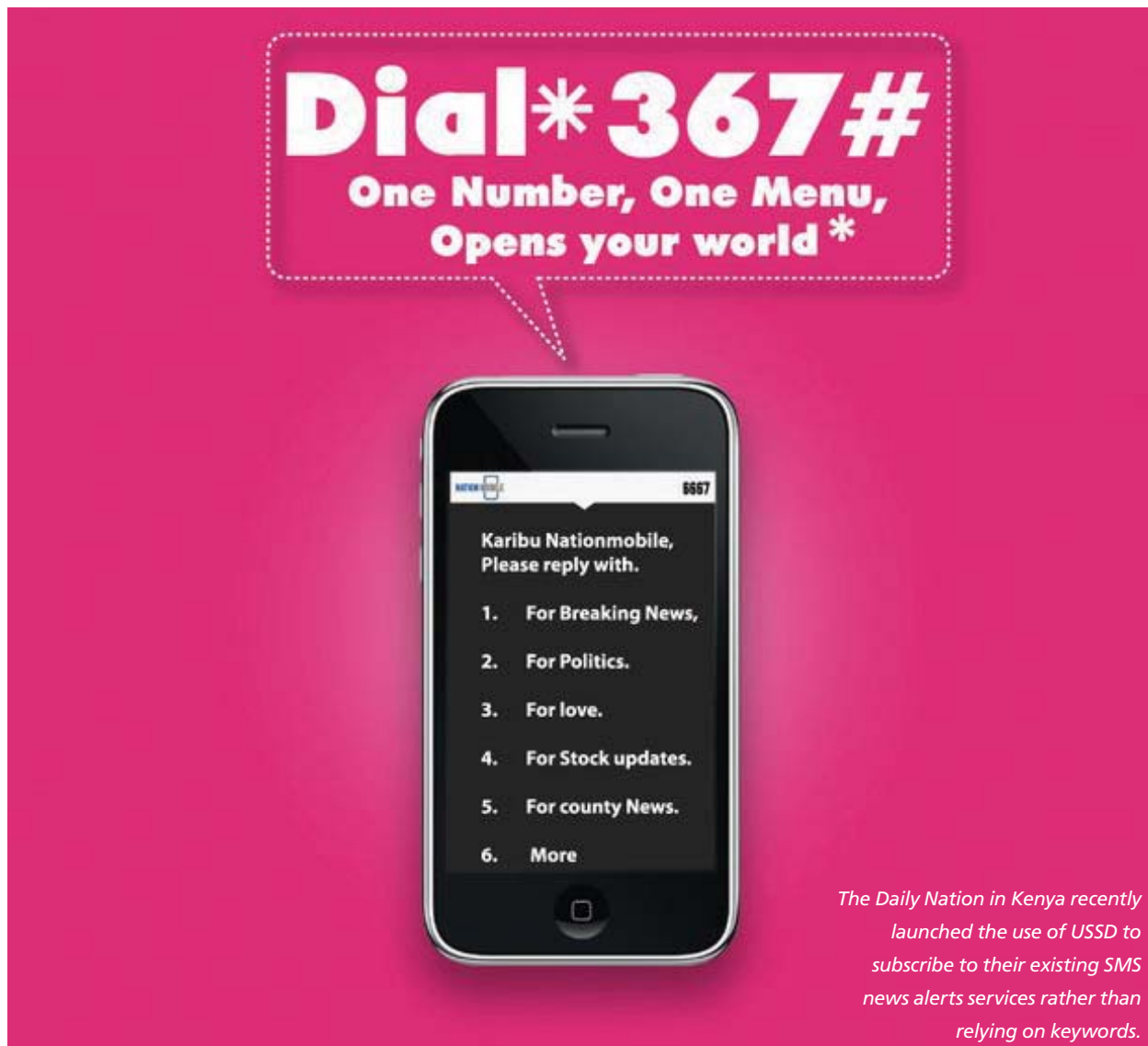
STK, SIM Tool Kit, is a built-in function/set of services on most SIM cards sold in Sub-Saharan Africa today. The offline menu looks similar to a web menu of services, but when you click on something, you order a text message with related content, at a small charge. It functions similar to a mobile network operator's own portal of content, but unlike the

web, it works also on low-end phones. End-users can scroll in offline mode between different types of content – for example: **Sports Results > Premier League > Arsenal**, or **Entertainment > Horoscopes > Leo** – before making their final selection for which they will then be charged.



*Like many operators in the region, Zain offers its Ugandan users a number of services, including news and ringtones through its SIM Tool Kit (STK). Browsing the menus is free; users are charged only after they subscribe to a service or download a track.*

© Louise Hallman



**Dial \*367#**  
**One Number, One Menu,**  
**Opens your world \***

Karibu Nationmobile,  
Please reply with.

1. For Breaking News,
2. For Politics.
3. For love.
4. For Stock updates.
5. For county News.
6. More

*The Daily Nation in Kenya recently launched the use of USSD to subscribe to their existing SMS news alerts services rather than relying on keywords.*

## USSD

Another message technology is USSD, Unstructured Supplementary Service Data. This technology establishes a two-way open channel between the user and application until the session is terminated. It works on any GSM phone, and no configuration is necessary. The user enters a short USSD service number, e.g., \*100# and presses call. The USSD service receives the request and responds by sending a menu to the user from which the user enters a character that corresponds with his or her selection of content. The USSD protocol is a preferred method for prepaid top-up or balance requests. Some m-transaction applications also use this protocol.

Reasons for why so few USSD applications have been rolled out is that they are not as flexible as SMS and the information cannot be shared or saved because USSD menus and texts are not stored on the handset or the SIM card. It could however be possible to deliver news via USSD. Benefits are that the costs are much lower for data via this platform than premium SMS, but it takes a lot of clicking through by the user. People recognise the form from their STK, which is quite well used today, but many of the media companies we spoke to still consider it to be too complicated for their users.

## Voice SMS/IVR – Interactive Voice Response

Voice SMS is an interesting innovation that addresses the illiteracy issue of most mobile content services. For example, the operator MTN has launched this service in a number of Sub-Saharan African countries. The number of applications that build on voice is still not many; however, taking illiteracy levels into

account and some users' resistance towards SMS, it could be an option to develop further. It would be interesting to see media companies testing the viability of delivering news via IVR. For example, a user could dial specific short codes to listen to news headlines and another code for sports, etc.

## 2.3 Conditions for mobile business in Africa

The overall conditions for mobile business in the region have already been touched upon in the previous section describing different technologies for mobile consumption. And the available technology is closely related to the business opportunities. Here follows a short description of mobile business conditions in the region. Read more about business models and how a media company can finance its mobile services in chapter four.

### Premium SMS

Premium SMS – messages with an added premium charge for the end-user – is quite common in the region today. You can use it either to charge for content that you send out – like a newsflash – or to charge for content you receive – like a greeting sent in to be published on your website. What you need to be able to do is team up with a system supplier, either one that has connections to all or several mobile network operators, or with one operator to distribute your content only to that operator's customers.

All parties involved in this take their share. In the case studies in chapter three you can read more about how this can look in certain cases. Overall, about one-quarter of what the end-user pays for a service reaches the content provider – such as a newspaper delivering the service. Approximately 10 percent is taxes. The network operators take 60 to 65 percent of the rest, and then the content provider and system supplier will share the remainder. This

revenue sharing model has been proven problematic – as the content provider receives so little of the revenue. Many content providers have developed their own systems to avoid involving a third party in order to keep more of the revenues.

The mobile operators which take the largest share have not yet been approached by content providers in the region regarding reducing the networks' share, perhaps because the content providers cannot deliver the services without the networks. However, it has been done in other parts of the world; in Sweden, newspapers teamed up and initiated negotiations with the mobile operators that later gave results and reduced the operators' share with 10 to 15 percent.

The revenue share model between content providers and mobile network operators looks very different in other parts of the world. For example, in Japan the operators had an entirely different approach and decided to take no more than nine percent of

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Financial Inclusion





the revenues. Their share has remained the same since they first launched mobile content services in 1999. A lot of innovative services quickly emerged in this market, and Japan has remained in the forefront of mobile service adoption ever since.

It has become evident through interviews conducted for this report that some newspapers/media companies in Africa avoid working with premium services and developing the premium business because of the unfruitful agreements, and instead

they have looked for other payment mechanisms and financing models. However, it is not clear if the mobile operators have realised this development yet. In Uganda for example, we met with the mobile network operator MTN that recently elevated their share from 50 percent to 60 percent and said that they could see this share increasing even further. That is part of their response to the declining ARPU, but they may find that they are shooting themselves in the foot in the process.

## Mobile money as an alternative

The environment for mobile money transferrals is fruitful in the region, and mobile money could be an opportunity for media companies to improve the conditions for mobile services. In 2007, at the time of the mobile deregulation in Kenya, mobile network operator Safaricom launched a service called M-PESA ("pesa" is Swahili for "money") in Kenya. It was initially planned to be used for repayments of micro loans, but it did not take long

until it was evident that it was the money transfer function itself people liked. You can transfer money to a friend or family living far away in a quick and easy manner. Since its launch, M-PESA has grown to 12 million users and 20,000 M-PESA points, where you can make withdrawals and cash deposits. This has been a great revolution, and Africa can be proud to be one of the front-runners in the area of mobile money. (In much of Europe, the service is still yet to



© Cesar Harada



Mobile money agents have spread across a number of African countries, including Kenya (where M-PESA was launched) and Uganda

be launched, and even talk of such a service focuses more on the possible rather than imminent launch of a similar payment scheme.) This development led to Safaricom seeing that the amount of money on Kenyans' SIM cards started growing, and soon they found themselves one of the greatest trustees of money in the country. It was not intended so, but some people have started saving in M-PESA instead of keeping cash in their mattress. A new service called M-KESHO ("kesho" is "tomorrow" in Swahili), a formal savings, insurance and micro-loan service,

was then launched. It is not yet clear if people will move to using this service instead of M-PESA for this purpose. M-PESA and similar services have emerged and reached different levels of acceptance in many African countries – but it is still in Kenya where it is the biggest. Media companies can make use of M-PESA as a payment system if they accept payments/money transferrals via this system instead of premium SMS for example. In Kenya, both the Standard and The Nation Media group are doing this. Read more in chapter 3.2.

## Mobile advertising

On the advertising side, the conditions are, as they often are in emerging markets, still challenging for media companies (see the graph on the next page for a comparison of the combined market of Africa and the Middle East and that of Western and Eastern Europe). Most advertisers/merchandisers need proof of usage, traffic etc., before they want to invest, thus getting a new service ad-financed can take time.

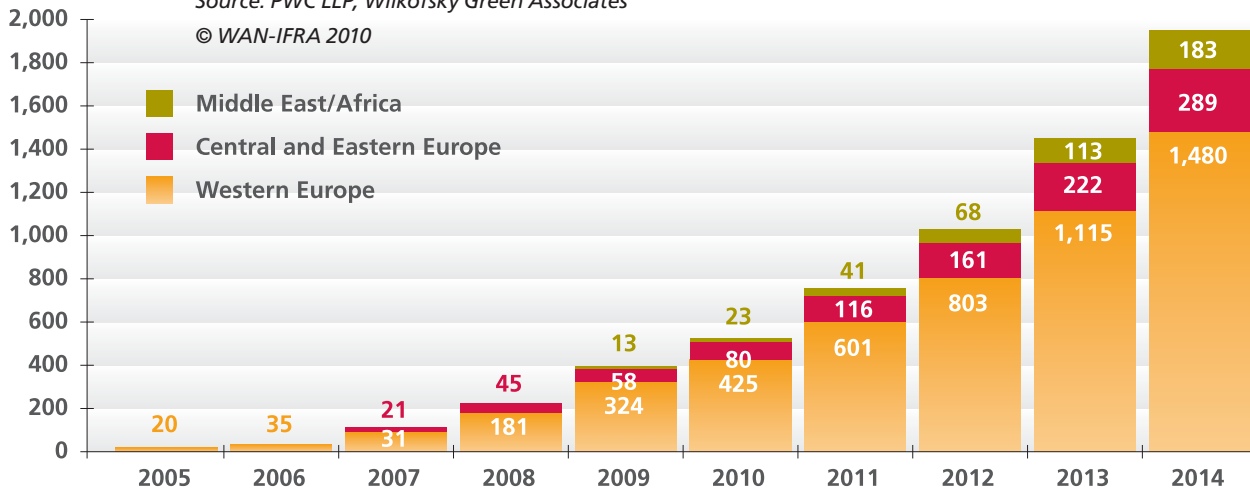
Also, not all content can easily be financed through advertising – here relevance is key. For the advertiser, the service offered needs to reach the right target audience, and the topics of the service need to correlate with their brand. And for the end-users, the advert needs to be relevant so that they see added value and not only get annoyed by the commercial content. In the case studies in chapter three, you can read more about what has worked for publishers on the mobile advertising side in Africa.



## Mobile Internet Advertising Market, Europe, the Middle East and Africa, 2005-2014

US\$ millions

Source: PWC LLP, Wilkofsky Green Associates  
© WAN-IFRA 2010



Looking at the global market and merchandiser’s interest in the mobile channel, we can really see mobile advertising taking off. In 2010, giants like Google and Apple invested heavily and showed us their belief in the market when they bought big mobile ad companies, and the global mobile ad spending is predicted to be near 12 percent of the total ad spending by 2014 (Berg Insight, 2010).

For media companies there is also an opportunity to rather than sell your own ads, collaborate with

advertising partners, such as Google Mobile Ads, AdMob, InMobi etc., who can provide your mobile site with advertisements. With these collaborations you do not have to do direct ad sales yourself; however, you will receive only a fraction of the advertising money. Advertising partners like these are attractive for the advertisers as they already today can prove traffic, and hence they are also big competitors for media companies that want to sell their own ads.

### 2.4 Mobile trends in Africa

In the interviews conducted with African media houses, mobile operators, service providers and experts for this report, some general trends in the mobile media market have become apparent.

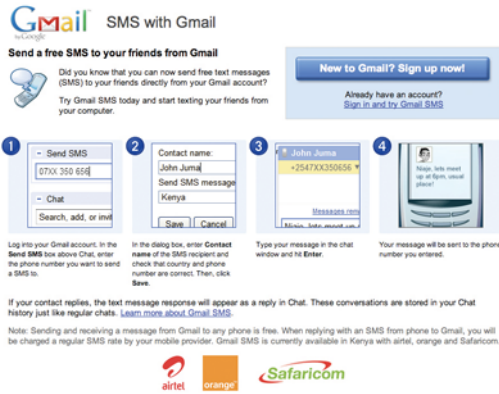
**Mobile money is one of the biggest growing trends**, as already mentioned in this chapter. And the opportunities with it are huge, especially as the market has a premium SMS revenue sharing model that is not beneficial to the content providers such as newspapers.

**Another strongly emerging trend is the growth of mobile web.** In South Africa we see some newspapers closing down their SMS services altogether, while others there have made the decision not to invest in SMS anymore and instead focus on mobile web. The rest of Sub-Saharan Africa is not yet there – but the Kenyan market is getting closer to it. The prediction many mention is that in Kenya, in two to three years, all mobile phone users will have internet-enabled phones. In most Sub-Saharan African countries, most mobile phone users do not yet have access to GPRS; in Uganda, only about 10 percent of the users have access according to MTN, and the users are generally not tech savvy

(MTN 2011). The reason for high expectation of growth in the mobile web market is pricing; the cost for SMS is still high – internet-enabled phone users will be able to receive much more data for the same price as SMS. SMS will then struggle to compete as a mass-market information platform.

Looking at statistics from Opera Mini and Nielsen Online, among others, we see that the most popular websites visited via mobile in each country in the region, with few or no exceptions, are Facebook and Google. Facebook has subsidised usage in many parts of Africa, meaning that the end-user can access the service for free, which can go a long way to explaining the high figure. And Google is available via various portals, such as Opera Mini, which is likely to have contributed to its high showing in the ratings. And similar to Facebook, Google also has employed a strategy of offering free services in several places in Africa: Ghana and Senegal first, then Kenya, Uganda, Malawi and





Gmail users can send free SMS messages to other users in Kenya

Tanzania, with more to come. One example of this free access to Google services is via their web-based email service "Gmail": users can send free SMS messages to their Gmail Chat contacts. Speaking to WAN-IFRA, Google has explained their strategy in Africa thus: "Our goal in Africa is to get more users online by developing an accessible, relevant and sustainable internet ecosystem. SMS in Gmail Chat was specifically designed with the African consumer in mind and brings a new level of flexibility and mobility to Gmail Chat, given that mobile is such an important means of communication on the continent. We've seen a very positive response and users have been very excited about it."

**Another prominent trend in the region is the expansion of social media.** All the people interviewed for this handbook agreed that social media is gaining in importance and growing rapidly in the region – not least as a result of Facebook's zero-rated availability in many African countries. Facebook's free version (0.facebook.com) is, however, a scaled down version without any multimedia content. In interviews with

African media, we were told that Africans want to contribute, that they want platforms where they can discuss and be heard. When building a mobile service, it could be of interest to think about whether you can offer means of interaction. Also in interviews and discussions on-site with young mobile users in Kenya (aged 20-25 years – a key market with 60 percent of the Kenyan population under 25 years old), social media stood out as one of the most attractive features of the internet. Some of the content and features our young interviewees said they were interested in are not what the media companies are currently offering, despite many media companies insisting that their target market for mobile is 18- to 25-year-olds. Instead, this age group finds much of their mobile content needs (information and news) via social media. For example many of the young people claim to be tired of political news and would rather read about stories about what is in, what is out and what is happening now, as well as cinema listings, music, fashion, and even wedding information and advice (for girls). Especially since print magazines are not big in Kenya, newspapers could help fill this niche – and why not via mobile? We also found that the BBC's mobile-optimised website proved to be the most popular news website with the 18- to 25-year-old group. They said this was because it carried less local politics but more international news, more international sport, and more entertainment, etc. The BBC's mobile site is also easily accessible thanks to its deal with Opera Mini, which makes it preinstalled on many mobile internet-enabled handsets. Why cannot African news media be preinstalled like this? South Africa's News24 works in this way (more in chapter 3.3).



The Nation Media Group's Daily Nation Facebook page is one of the most popular in Kenya



### 3. Case studies

## Mobile media services

When researching mobile in Africa for this report, three different markets, all in different stages of mobile development, were examined. The markets were Uganda, Kenya and South Africa, where a number of media companies were visited and interviewed about their experiences, lessons learnt and future plans in mobile. In the end of each interview an array of potential mobile service concepts were presented to the newspapers for evaluation. In chapter 4.4 of this report, suggestions of mobile services an African media house could opt to adopt are presented. The comments and evaluations by the interviewed newspapers have contributed to the selection of services that is included in that chapter.



## 3.1 Uganda

In Uganda's capital, Kampala, there are several newspapers and tabloids. The biggest is the government-owned New Vision with a circulation of 31,000, followed by The Monitor with a circulation of approximately 22,000 (WAN-IFRA, 2010). The analysis-heavy bi-weekly Observer has a circulation of about 10,000-12,000 (publisher's own claim). In addition there are also a number of tabloid newspapers such as The Red Pepper and The Onion, and a number of vernacular newspapers produced by The New Vision group, of which Bukedde, the Luganda newspaper, has the biggest circulation. For this report two of the Kampala titles have been interviewed: The Monitor and The Observer.

In 1999, Uganda became the first country on the African continent where the number of mobile subscribers surpassed the number of fixed-line users (Hellström 2010). There are very few fixed-lines in

place. The telecommunications sector transformed when the market opened up, with no less than seven operators now active and more coming. First out was Uganda Telecom Ltd in 2001, followed by Warid Telecom in 2008. Orange entered in 2009. Despite the fact that the market is consistently growing, the penetration rate is still well below the Sub-Saharan African average of 36 percent (CIA World Factbook 2009). This could mean that SIM cards and handsets still remain beyond the reach of the masses in terms of affordability. In order to address this, Uganda became one of the first countries in Africa to develop a policy on universal access and set up a Rural Communications Development Fund (RCDF) in 2001. Operators in Uganda have to pay a one percent levy on revenues – money that is later used to implement internet cafés and public pay phones in rural areas (Hellström 2010).

### The Observer

*Interview with: James Tumusiime, Managing Editor; Pius Katunzi, Business Development Manager; Frank Kisakye, Web/SMS Administrator/Reporter.*

#### The Observer's mobile experiences

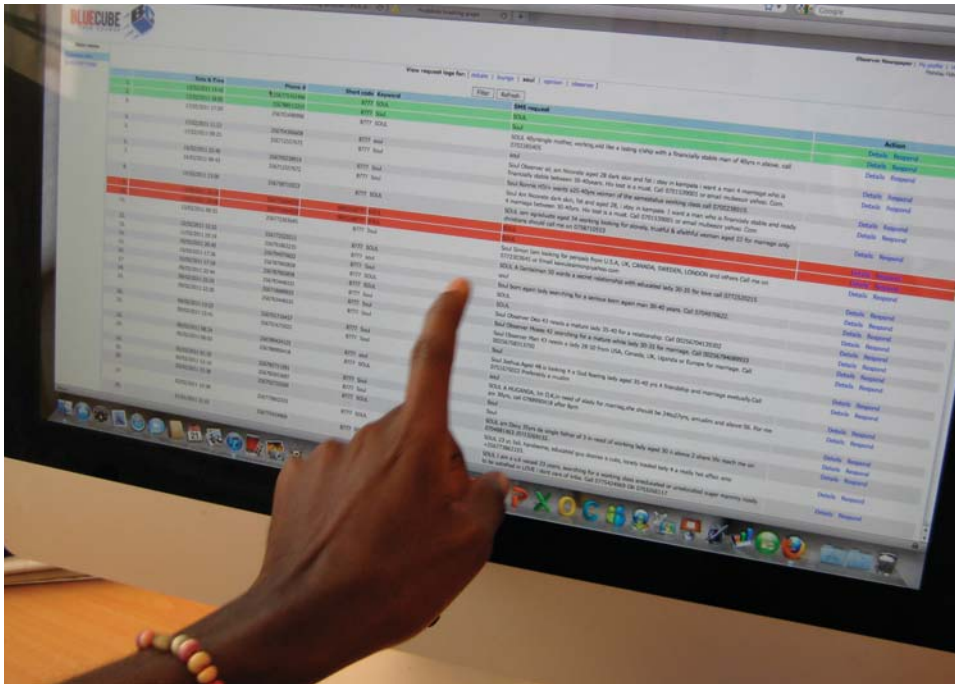
The Observer's mobile experiences so far are not extensive; they send out "tomorrow's headlines" via SMS, but they do not yet have a mobile website. After an aborted pilot SMS service in 2004, where neither revenue (as the service was free) nor customer data (as all numbers were kept by the third party service provider) were generated, the Observer was encouraged to approach mobile once again in

September 2010 as part of a pilot project for the larger WAN-IFRA/SIDA Mobile News for Africa project. The Observer and its service provider BlueCube share the revenue (after the mobile network provider/operator has taken its part); there is no fixed fee for the Observer's usage of the system. The end-user pays 150 UGX (0.06 USD) per received message; of that, 30 percent is government tax, then the network supplier takes 60 percent and the SMS provider and Observer share the rest. The model is so far not profitable – for one message the Observer would in this agreement be entitled to 21 UGX (0.009 USD), and when we met in February 2011, they had so far not received their commission since the launch of service.

The Observer sends out messages via its own short code, 8777. In February 2011, the Observer had just over 900 registered subscribers to their mobile SMS service. All of these users/contacts initially came from the service provider's database. The system is web-based, and the Observer send out messages themselves via the system and can also monitor responses sent in. The number of responses (comments, unsubscriptions, answers to the weekly question, etc.) is not very big – approximately 15 messages per week. However, they see that their users are struggling with understanding how to give feedback and how to send in messages, so there could be a need to "educate" the end-user.

THE OBSERVER	
FACTBOX:	
<b>Founded:</b>	2004
<b>Publisher:</b>	The Observer Media Limited
<b>Published:</b>	Twice a week
<b>Circulation:</b>	10,000-12,000 per issue
<b>Readership:</b>	100,000 per issue
<b>Website:</b>	www.observer.ug 261,000 unique visitors per month
<b>Mobile services:</b>	Bi-weekly SMS news alerts with the next issue's headlines (since 2010)
<b>SMS subscribers:</b>	900+
<b>Mobile website:</b>	N/A
<b>Mobile staff:</b>	One, also responsible for website





*The Observer has 900 subscribers to its SMS headlines service, which is managed by one staff member who is also responsible for the website, as well as being a reporter*

**Lessons learnt so far**

Earning money from their mobile service is something that the Observer has decided to see as a potential bonus. The main incentive today is how to reach new readers, to promote the print paper and to build the brand. They see the “tomorrow’s headlines” SMS service as a marketing tool, to get the subscriber to want to buy the newspaper to read more the next day. It is common in Uganda today that you will receive mobile news messages from different newspaper titles that you have not signed up for. The Observer is worried that it could be the same for their service, and this could irritate potential readers, and, as one of the main incentives to work with mobile for them is building brand awareness, this is a concern.

The Observer has also learnt that a functioning technology system is essential. For them, technology and its stability is the biggest problem they are struggling with today. Sometimes there are congestions in the networks and messages get delayed. Fortunately enough – if a message arrives a day late, the system automatically transforms the headline from “Tomorrow’s headlines” into “Today’s headlines”. However, that does not always help; in the weeks before the Ugandan elections in February 2011, messages were not deliverable for an entire three weeks.

**The next steps and future plans**

The Observer has so far tried only one business model, namely charging the end consumer, but the next step would be looking for mobile advertisers. The sales team is eager to get started. But before they can offer their services to advertisers, there are some technical issues with the system that need

to be solved. They need to be able to guarantee delivery of the messages, which they cannot today. The network gets congested, and messages can get delayed. Once that is in place, they could work with selling “brought to you by” advertising at the end of each SMS newsflash.

As the Observer today is bi-weekly, there is no tradition of delivering fast news, preferring to instead build their reputation for considered analysis, which is why they have not yet tried working with breaking news SMS. But it is not unlikely that the Observer’s digital editions for online and mobile will have to start working more in a different phase than they do for the print, to be able to meet the public’s demands. Print journalists will have to become less protective of their material and not save everything for next print issue.

Convincing colleagues to work this way could be a challenge. At the Observer it is currently one person who manages the web and the mobile platforms, so any increased service could place a strain on their current staffing situation.

The most visited segments on their website is currently “soul searching” (love and inspirational quotes), and they believe that this could work on mobile. They also think they could provide more sports coverage in the mobile channel.

The Observer has not yet set up a mobile strategy or a strategy on how to integrate or develop the brand’s existence in the channel. However, where their route is headed is clear: looking a few years into the future, The Observer is determined that they will be working more with mobile. They do not see it as an option not to!

## The Daily Monitor

Interview with: Ronald Muyimba, Online Editor, The Daily Monitor, and comments from Dr. Gitahi Githinji, Managing Director, Monitor Publications

### The Monitor's mobile experiences

The Daily Monitor first tried working with SMS news in 2007, and launched their mobile website in 2008. Mobile has since then become an integrated part of the newspaper, with the digital team involved in the editorial meetings. Their workflow for breaking news is now "mobile first" per definition, then web and finally print. The digital team at the Daily Monitor consists of three people who work with both web and mobile. The Daily Monitor does not have a specific mobile strategy; however, they say that mobile is part of their digital strategy.

The 30,000 registered users of the SMS service, who subscribe to different topics of news flashes related to different keywords, such as "sports", "breaking news", etc., receive between three to four messages a day, depending on the topic and on what is happening in the world. The Monitor has a short code for SMS: 6933, which was chosen to be simple to remember (their radio channel has the frequency 93.3). The system supplier they currently work with is True African. All of the subscriber contacts came from this supplier. The end-user pays 220 UGX (0.09 USD) per received SMS, of which the

network provider receives 60 percent and the Daily Monitor and True African share the remainder after government taxes. The Daily Monitor's SMS business has been profitable since 2008.

One of the Daily Monitor's most popular and most profitable mobile features is their "Fantasy Football" service. Similar services can be found in European countries, such as the UK, but whereas in the UK the competition is run online (having previously been run by post and print), in Uganda, it's all done through mobile. Subscribers take on the role of a football manager and have to "buy" a team of players within a predetermined imaginary budget. All the players are in the English Premier League, and they are scored each week according to their performances in real games. During the course of a season, fantasy football managers can buy and sell players, and their teams compete with others in a fantasy football league. The league is published in the paper, and a review article reports each month on the top managers. Managers send SMS messages to buy and sell players. They receive an SMS to tell them how many points that week each player has scored, what their team's total score is, and what their position is in the league. To be able to set this up successfully, you will need a system that allows end-users to set up teams and buy and sell players in just a few simple SMS messages, the system needs to be simple and stable enough for the IT system to cope, and you need to publish tables in the paper to encourage the competition.

The Monitor also allows readers to send in "shout outs" i.e., greetings and gossip to be published, especially in the youth section/pullout and online in a separate SMS section. And they have worked with publishing SMS greetings for Mother's Day and Valentine's Day in 2009. Then they offered the person who submitted the best greeting a

## DAILY MONITOR TRUTH EVERY DAY

### FACTBOX:



<b>Founded:</b>	1992
<b>Publisher:</b>	The Nation Media Group
<b>Other media in the group:</b>	Sunday Monitor, 93.3 KFM radio station, NTV television station (in Uganda – see Daily Nation for further information)
<b>Published:</b>	Daily
<b>Circulation:</b>	20,000-23,000 per issue
<b>Readership:</b>	One million per issue
<b>Website:</b>	www.monitor.co.ug
<b>Mobile services:</b>	SMS alerts (since 2007); mobile website (since 2008), mobile fantasy football (300-500 subscribers per season)
<b>SMS subscribers:</b>	30,000
<b>Mobile website:</b>	mobile.monitor.co.ug, 10,000 unique visitors per month
<b>Mobile staff:</b>	Three editorial staff, who are also responsible for online, plus marketing staff

The Daily Monitor's website carries a small banner advert at the top of its home page

Africa Review Mobile  
http://mobile.africareview.com

Sunday, July 3, 2011

**DAILY MONITOR**

**Daily Monitor Mobile**

**Away with the wig and Willy Mutunga's walk to freedom**

For a long time I wondered why judges and lawyers in Africa wear white wigs on their heads when in court. It looked like a movie depicting a lifestyle of some past centuries, and indeed a quick glance through the history of wigs, also known as perukes, reveals that this tradition began even before the 17th century.

**Her greatest fear is waking up in the morning without a job**

What do you consider your greatest achievement? Building my first house at 30.

dinner for two at a restaurant. They receive some of the job adverts via SMS (ads can also be sent in via other channels). The end-user pays only the standard 220 UGX to send in an ad, hence so far no additional premium charge has been added to this, but they see that as an opportunity. They could then also work more with receiving personal ads and classifieds this manner.

The mobile website is automatically generated from the main website but stripped of most photos, multimedia content and advertising as too many pictures would make the site too data heavy. They do however have allocated ad space on the mobile website with top and bottom banners. This space is currently filled with information about their own offerings, as they have not yet started selling the space to advertisers.

#### **Lessons learnt so far**

The Daily Monitor's main reasons for going into mobile were to bring the readers closer to them and to make money. The online editor we interviewed explained that as an editor his strongest incentive to work with mobile is the readers' benefits, but the managers look at the potential money-making opportunity.

In Uganda, as internet usage is low and costs are high, mobile is seen as the cheaper alternative for end-users, which is partly why the Daily Monitor see big potential in the medium. Training of the staff to understand and use mobile is a challenge for them. Most people in the newsroom do not know how mobile (or social media) works. They will need a lot of training to be able to fully adopt mobile as a platform.

They see some challenges with mobile news content in Uganda today. The infrastructure needs to be improved as the system often gets congested, causing delays in messages being sent, which is a problem not least when it comes to the business of breaking news. They also see a problem when it comes to standards for revenue shares as the different network operators takes different-sized shares, and it is complicated to get an overview of the business.

The mobile connectivity and internet penetration is another current challenge in the market they are working on. Not all Ugandans can currently be reached. Looking at the business opportunities in mobile, the Daily Monitor feel that it is a problem that many Ugandans are not used to paying for news (newspapers are shared by many readers). However, they also see the contradiction as they have 30,000 subscribers to their SMS services who are paying. They have learnt that sports can be profitable; the

general thought about sports is that people are fanatical about their teams – and hence willing to pay. If you are really committed to something, you will pay much more than for general news.

#### **The next steps and future plans**

With the SMS services, the Daily Monitor has decided to go in the direction of setting up their own system. The main reason for that is that they will make sure they can earn more money by cutting out the third party. Important for them is that this system has variable tariff billing functionality. In February, the plan was to have this system up and running by March 2011. They have realised the revenue potential by being a third-party supplier and are exploring whether they themselves could offer their system to other content providers or advertisers as a third-party supplier.

Adverts on mobile and user-generated content on mobile are their next big priorities. They see the potential in mobile advertising and would want to offer advertisers the opportunity to have ads published at peak hours (midday and late at night when expats in the US are logging on) – both on web and mobile web. They have an idea that reporters and citizen-journalists across the country could send in stories via SMS to a short code, and work more with citizen blogs on the website (which are also sometimes reprinted in the newspaper).

They see potential in mobile news tips – via SMS or with pictures via MMS – and would be interested to work more with this. The Daily Monitor may be a national paper, but they have their strongest focus on the capital, Kampala, and see news tips as an opportunity to gain further content from outside the city. Because of their Kampala focus, and as that is where most of their readers are based, collaboration with local shops for advertising could be a potential business opportunity for the newspaper. The idea of putting together an updated and “hip” mobile city guide over Kampala was well received; this could perhaps be build into their existing youth supplement “Sqoop”. They have not yet talked about turning this youth supplement mobile yet, but they say that it is likely that they will look into it.

Ronald Muyimba, online editor, understands the importance of integrating all channels. At the newspaper, they want to use the channel that is the most suitable, whether it is internet, social media, mobile or print. Gitahi Githinji, Managing Director of the Daily Monitor, says that he is willing to invest in mobile now, and would if the infrastructure was in place and working in Uganda. When it is – mobile will be prioritised.



# The role of **mobile technology** in Uganda's **elections**

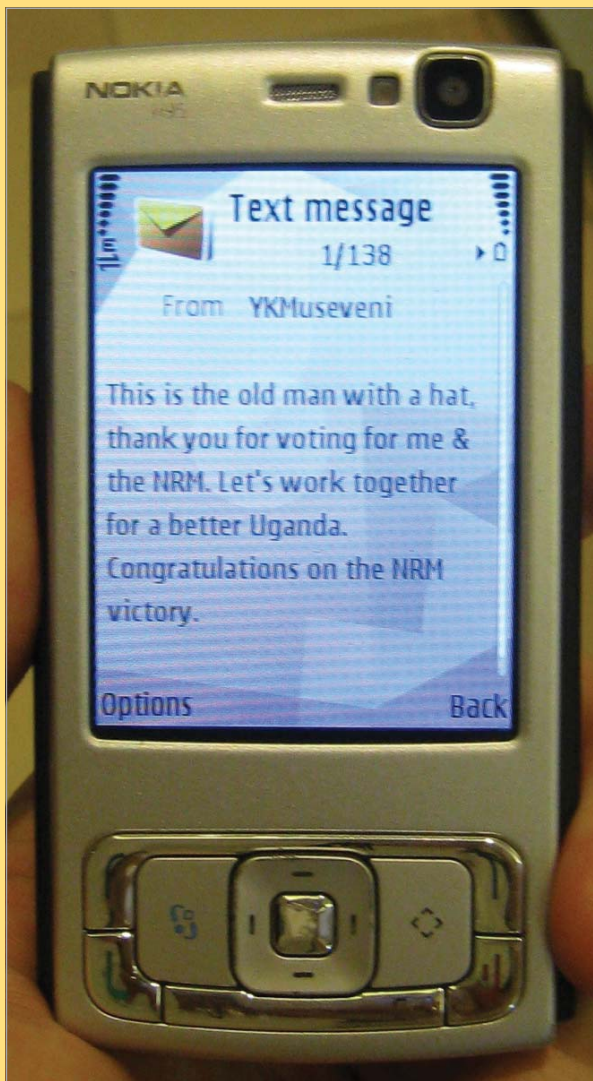
Author: **Sam Rich**, Media Development Consultant, Uganda/UK

When asked what was different about Uganda's 2011 elections, James Tumusiime, editor of The Observer, looked up from his Blackberry and said, "This was the mobile election". It spawned a range of services for government, parties and NGOs that could be used by media houses in the future. From SMS help-lines to Facebook and YouTube, active strategic use of multimedia this year moved from being novel to being normal.

Most memorable of all was the use of "robocalls", after all, it's not every day you get a call from the president. Uganda's Yoweri Museveni has a man-of-the-people image, assisted by his iconic rancher's Stetson, and a few days before the election, he was able to give his campaigning a personal touch

by calling voters and asking them to: "Please vote for the man in the hat." Using Voiceover Internet Protocol (VoIP), a recorded message from the 25-year serving president was relayed to tens of thousands of phones across the country, leading to many delighted recipients rushing out to tell their friends they'd just received a personal call from the president. It's doubtful whether these robocalls would be allowed from other parties, as unsolicited calls and SMSs are against government regulations.

The Electoral Commission published the voters' register online, allowing individual Ugandans to check their own listing, and others' too, making it easier for people to identify "ghosts" on the register. And for the first time voters could text



*Incumbent president Yoweri Museveni sent a "personal" text message to voters*

## The Dark Side of the Mobile

Mobile technology is sometimes seen as a silver bullet for Africa's problems, but it poses threats as well as opportunities. If you can use mobiles to provide information, you can use them to provide disinformation too.

The anonymity of mobile information services makes them good tools for manipulation. One could send out information that purports to be from a government office, a political party or a candidate. You can use this channel either to send out misinformation or to collect data on users by asking them to text you back information. Some of these dirty tricks have already been used in the US.

Before the Kenyan election in 2008, mobiles were used to coordinate groups of supporters, but afterwards they became tools for organising violence. Yet this was also the event that sparked the development of Ushahidi, an application that allows citizens to report about riots and abuses via mobile phone, and the results are mapped on a website that shows what's happening and where. The African software has since been used to track crises around the world from the Haiti earthquake to the US oil spills off Florida.



their voting registration numbers to the EC's helpline and receive a message telling them the location of their polling stations. Mass SMS broadcasts were widely deployed as a tool of public information and political campaigning and coordination of supporters. NGOs used SMS hotlines to gather data from thousands of election observers and to collect results from polling stations. UgandaWatch, a public hotline that allows users to report election abuses by SMS, received over 10,000 messages and helped bring to light the role of bribery and vote buying. The reports were followed up by volunteers and mapped on a website showing which abuses were happening in which parts of the country.

The technology to do this was developed in neighbouring Kenya when riots broke out after the 2008 elections. But whereas there it was used to map an unfolding crisis, in Uganda the same technology acted as an early warning system to highlight issues and hotspots throughout the campaign. But using these new applications is not

without its problems. One issue the organisers had to deal with early on was the threat of legal action, which led them to decide controversially not to publish any message in which a perpetrator was named unless they could prove it.

Facebook (which is now free to access on a mobile phone in Uganda), YouTube and Twitter were all used by parties and candidates to get their campaign messages across. Again 68-year-old Museveni led the pack, recording a rap song that was broadcast on YouTube and promoted on Facebook, all part of a campaign to reach out to the massive youth vote.

While newspapers used mobile services to run polls of their readers and collect data from journalists on the day of the election itself, there's potential for them to do a lot more in the future. There's nothing to stop a newspaper collecting the Electoral Commission's data and providing that as a service to their readers, or of teaming up with an NGO to develop a service like UgandaWatch.



# Freedom of Speech = Freedom of SMS?

Author: **Sam Rich**, Media Development Consultant, Uganda/UK

Free speech is protected in the Ugandan constitution, and the country has a comparatively free press, but more-recent laws against “sedition” (which make it an offence to abuse the president or to incite violence) mean that editors daily exercise self-censorship in order to stay on the right side of the law. And when they don’t, the government issues a quick reminder. So when the government objected to some reporting of the September 2010 Kampala riots, it used these laws to detain 12 journalists and force the closure of a radio station. But media analysts wondered, while the government was successful in exercising some control over the traditional media, would it also try to control new media, and if so, how?

The only limit on mobile services had been a ban on unsolicited SMSs. There was no sign the government would go any further until the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt a few weeks before the 2011 Ugandan presidential election. By then, the new ability of SMS, Twitter and Facebook to organise opposition groups became only too clear, and it tried to clamp down, although in a slightly haphazard fashion. The Uganda Communications

Commission warned SMS service providers not to let their services be used to incite violence and then declared it would block SMSs containing the words “bullet”, “Egypt”, “police” or “people power”. But a few days later, when the main opposition party sent out a bulk SMS to its activists saying: “First Muhammed of Tunisia, then Mubarak of Egypt, will Museveni of Uganda be next?”, the government did as it had promised and blocked the message from reaching more than a few hundred people. And it wasn’t just parties that had their services cut off. On the day of the election an NGO observers’ hotline was shut down for a few hours at the exact time that results were being declared at polling stations. They had been attempting to build their own tallies of results using mobiles, but this made that impossible.

The lesson learnt? Government can block individual messages going out and stop messages coming in to specific numbers. Yes, mobile can be used for organising civil society, but time needs to be spent building up mailing lists and monitoring. From now on, self-censorship is for the new media as well as the old.

## Declaration of Table Mountain:

### Abolishing insult and criminal defamation laws in Africa and setting a free press higher on the agenda.

Author: **Alison Meston**, Deputy Director, Press Freedom and Media Development, WAN-IFRA

In country after country, the African press is crippled by a panoply of repressive measures, from the jailing and persecution of journalists to the widespread scourge of ‘insult laws’ and criminal defamation. As the start of an intensive campaign to improve this appalling situation, the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) adopted the Declaration of Table Mountain on 3 June 2007 in Cape Town, South Africa, during its annual meeting.

Through this Declaration, WAN-IFRA has stated its conviction that Africa urgently needs a strong, free and independent press to act as a watchdog over public institutions, a crucial role that the press is hindered from and punished for playing by the widespread resort to ‘insult laws’ and criminal

defamation in particular.

Major African and international non-governmental organisations that, day after day, defend and promote freedom of expression and freedom of the press have now endorsed the declaration and expressed their readiness to contribute to this campaign. Together, with determination, we will now aggressively press our case in the hope for a better future for African media freedom.

We invite you and your newspaper or media institution to join our campaign and ensure a free press is accessible to all, not just a few.

Visit: [www.declarationoftablemountain.org](http://www.declarationoftablemountain.org) or email [alison.meston@wan-ifra.org](mailto:alison.meston@wan-ifra.org)



## 3.2 Kenya

In Kenya, the mobile network providers market was deregulated in 2008, when Kenya’s two original operators – Safaricom and Kencell (today Zain Kenya) – faced competition from Orange Kenya and Yu. Combined, the total subscriber base is over 19.9 million users out of a population of approximately 41 million (Communications Commission of Kenya [CCK] 2010). The increased competition has led to lower prices for mobile calls and SMS, which has in turn opened up mobile communications to the mass market, including people with fewer financial resources. The Kenyan operators’ overall revenues are still high and increasing, but the Average Revenue Per User (ARPU) has because of this declined. Statistics from the Kenyan regulator on mobile traffic reveal that on average a Kenyan subscriber talks for only 48 minutes per month and sends just 16 SMS messages (CCK 2009). It was in Kenya that mobile money, M-PESA, first evolved,

which has since then revolutionised payments and banking in the region and also inspired operators outside of Africa.

Kenya enjoys a more diverse and liberalised print media landscape than many other countries in Africa, with a large middle class providing a base for substantial advertising revenue. The print media sector is dominated by two media groups: the Nation Media Group – which publishes the Daily Nation, the Business Daily and the weekly, the East African (among others) – and the Standard Group, publisher of the oldest independent newspaper in Kenya, the Standard. The Star and the People Daily are the two other English-language national newspapers that are trying to compete in the near-duopolistic market. There is also a national paper published in Swahili by the Nation Group, Taifa Leo. For this report, we spoke to the two largest daily newspapers – the Daily Nation and the Standard.

### The Standard

*Interview with: Fred Mbugua, Deputy Managing Editor (Responsible for Media Convergence) and comments from John Bundotich, Group Chief Editor and Paul Melly, Deputy Chairman and Chief Strategist.*

#### The Standard’s mobile experiences

The Standard has worked with mobile since 2005 when it launched its SMS news alert service,

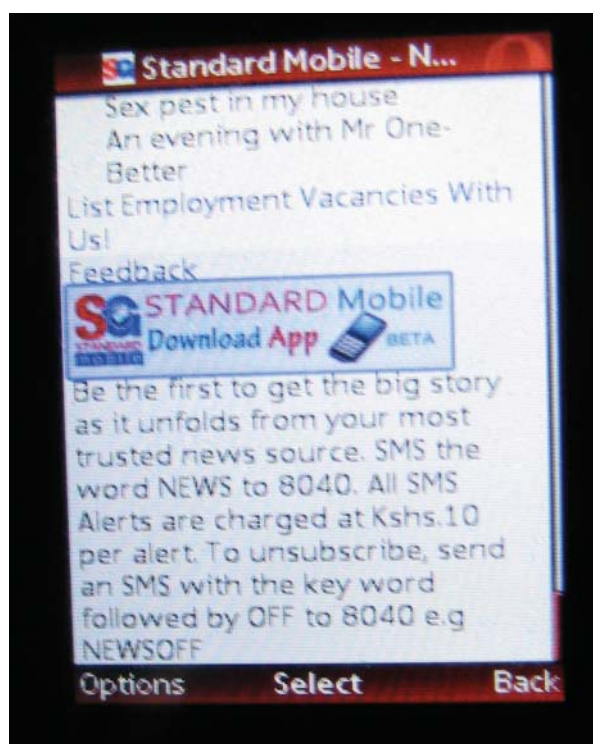
followed a few years later by the mobile website. They currently have one short code for all SMS services: 8040, but they want to get more short codes for different uses and for their different channels. The end-user subscribes to content via keywords such as “sports”, “business” and “entertainment”. The most popular keywords are:



#### FACTBOX:



<b>Founded:</b>	1902 (oldest independent newspaper in Kenya)
<b>Publisher:</b>	The Standard Group
<b>Other media in group:</b>	TV station KTN and radio station Radio Maisha
<b>Published:</b>	Daily
<b>Circulation:</b>	54,000 per issue
<b>Website:</b>	www.standardmedia.co.ke
<b>Mobile services:</b>	SMS alerts (since 2005); mobile website; mobile web bookmarking application
<b>SMS subscribers:</b>	10,000
<b>Mobile website:</b>	m.standardmedia.co.ke
<b>Mobile web traffic:</b>	200,000-300,000 hits per month
<b>Mobile staff:</b>	12 editorial staff, who are also responsible for all digital offerings, plus marketing staff



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ected to receive sufficient  
ng the long rain season  
between March and May.  
s will be hoping the con-  
arrives on time for plant-  
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f Agriculture is imple-  
Fertiliser Strategy and Ac-

able solution to high costs of fertilis-  
er in the country.

At least three attempts by Kenya

For the latest updates  
SMS the word  
**BUSINESS to 8040**  
[www.standardmedia.co.ke](http://www.standardmedia.co.ke)

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## Technical support deal with Trademark

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breaking news, politics, and sports (English Premier League). The end-user pays a small premium for each received message of approximately 10 KES (0.11 USD) per message and receives four to five messages per category, per day; however, the amount can vary. In each message they include a URL for further reading to encourage the end-user to visit the mobile website.

For their mobile website, they currently work with an open-source system provider, but they want to find a CMS system in which all channels can be integrated, where all content – whether pictures, text or video – would be available in one system and to all editors. The mobile website is an automatically generated copy of the website, stripped from the regular website's multimedia and advertising content, with no unique material published. There is some advertising on the mobile website; however, this is provided by Google Ads. They receive a small revenue from the Google Ads; however, this is not enough to make the website profitable yet. They have not yet attempted to sell the mobile ad space themselves. They have recently launched a beta version of a Standard Group mobile application. This is a simple application that takes you to the mobile website's start page, to make it easier to reach, designed for mid-range mobile phone handsets rather than smartphones.

They encourage their subscribers contribute via SMS,

for example to vote on hot topics (this is particularly used for TV shows, but it can also be for questions in the print paper), and they can send in "shout outs", which are usually published in a rolling bar on the TV channel. The TV station also has a service for youngsters who want to contribute their own photos and videos, to possibly appear on TV, called "Minute of Fame". Contributions are received via web, through the Facebook page for KTN or mobile web. This is quite popular, so they have learnt that the target group wants to participate, interact and be seen and heard – an insight they could build more on in the mobile channel.

### Mobile lessons learnt so far

The Standard has realised that there has been a shift in how news is consumed today. Ten years back, people waited for tomorrow's paper – today, people want news now. The Standard went into mobile for a number of reasons: firstly, new channels were needed to meet the changing demands of consumers; secondly, the deregulation of the mobile market had contributed to better pricings and a wider audience, thus providing a potential revenue stream; and thirdly, they wanted to position themselves in this market early and ensure their market share. With the mobile website, the Standard targets an audience of 18- to 34-year-olds (the same target group as they have for Facebook and Twitter). For SMS, they target a much broader market –

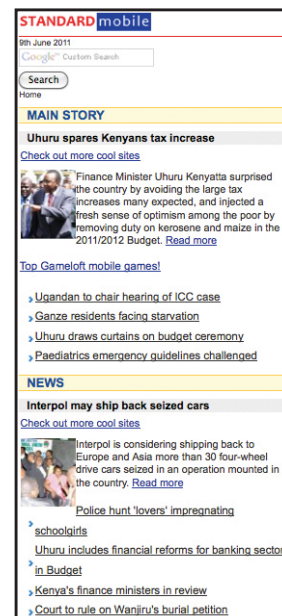
similar to that of the print paper. The SMS market is however a little bit problematic for the Standard when it comes to the business model, as the broad mass market is not an attractive or specific enough target group for advertisers. Also, in Kenya, many mobile users top up only the amount necessary to make a call and do not keep extra credit, which makes it difficult to charge end-users for their SMS news updates.

### The next steps and future plans

In order to work around the unfavourable revenue sharing agreement with both the mobile network operator and their SMS service provider, Interactive Media Services, the Standard is looking into using M-PESA to retain more of their premium rate; this would need to be in place before they could possibly implement SMS for the submission of job adverts, personals and classifieds. In February 2011, the Standard was still working with Interactive Media Services but with the plan to start working with

their own system within the coming weeks – a system which would cut off third-party costs as well as offer variable premium tariffs.

The Standard has not set up a mobile strategy yet, but they are working on it. They know already that cross-group promotion will be a big part of this strategy, as will be promoting of the mobile services more. Convergence is a big trend in their newsroom – they aim to find synergies within and across all channels. They want their journalists to be able to handle more than one medium.



## The Nation

Interview with: Ian Fernandes, Managing Director – Digital Media Division and Agastee Khante, General Manager, Digital Media Division

### The Nation Media Group’s mobile experiences

NMG first decided to start working with mobile for one simple reason: it seemed like an easy way to earn money. And today, their services are profitable. In 2006 they started offering “breaking news” via SMS. Their short code is 6667, and for this code they have in total 22 separate keywords, where the most popular are breaking news, football (again, English Premier League), and horoscopes/love quotes. During one month they estimate that they will send out between 1.5-2 million messages to their subscribers. They also offer a mobile service in Swahili (an alert service called Habari, which is Swahili for “news”).

For the Nation Media Group, as for all other media houses interviewed, the revenue sharing deal with the mobile network providers is causing problems. After tax, the network operators’ share, and the service provider’s shares are deducted, NMG gets to keep 2.74 KES (0.03 USD) of the 10 KES the end-user pays. Despite this, the SMS services are profitable for NMG. However, now that the volumes have grown so big, the revenue share is becoming increasingly problematic. For this reason they are looking into alternative payment models to premium SMS, such as a subscription model where users pay a fixed fee for one month, via M-PESA, similar to the arrangement for their e-paper registration (which is aimed at the diaspora, who can also pay via

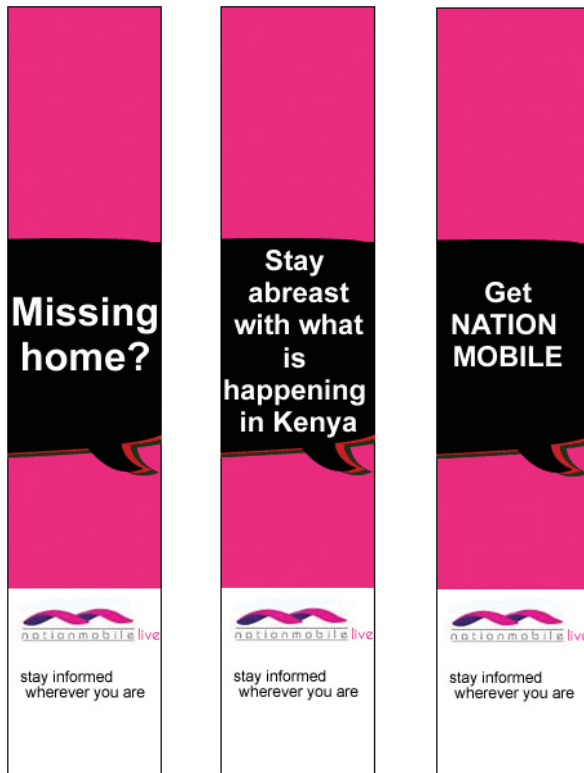
# DAILY NATION

## FACTBOX:



<b>Founded:</b>	1960
<b>Publisher:</b>	The Nation Media Group (NMG)
<b>Other media in the group:</b>	Newspapers - weekly The East African, business daily The Business Daily, Swahili language daily Taifa Leo and the Ugandan daily The Daily Monitor. Plus television station NTV and radio station Easy FM
<b>Published:</b>	Daily
<b>Circulation:</b>	205,000 per issue
<b>Readership:</b>	One million per issue
<b>Website:</b>	www.nation.co.ke
<b>Web traffic:</b>	One million unique users per month
<b>Mobile services:</b>	SMS alerts (since 2006); mobile website (since 2008, relaunched in 2011); Nokia Ovi bookmark app; iPhone/iPad application in development
<b>SMS subscribers:</b>	110,000
<b>Mobile website:</b>	m.nation.co.ke
<b>Mobile web traffic:</b>	1.6 million page views per week.
<b>Mobile staff:</b>	NMG digital division – 34 people, including 12 editors, responsible for all digital offerings.





credit card), so that the network operators will not take such a large revenue share. (For an M-PESA transaction there is only a single fixed fee).

All of the mobile websites in the group (m.nation.co.ke, m.bdafrica.com, m.africareview.com and mobile.monitor.co.ug), independent of country, share the same mobile website publishing platform system. The SMS solutions/systems are however not the same for the group; this is because they have found that the titles have different needs when it comes to their systems and also that they operate in three different countries/markets. The content for the mobile site is pulled automatically from the online site but stripped of multimedia content and advertising to make it less data heavy. They collaborate with AdMob and InMobi to fill the mobile sites' ad space. They are however evaluating the feasibility of selling this ad space in-house, but they will face difficulties; Agastee Khante says that there is one major agency on the market which controls approximately 75 percent of the market and has partnerships with big international agencies, and as such they can set many of the prices themselves, making it difficult for NMG to compete.

The Nation's mobile site is one of the 10 most visited in East Africa. Their bookmark app, available from Nokia's Ovi store, had had 36,000 downloads by February 2011. The Nation has not yet found a profitable business models for the mobile website. For this reason they have chosen not to promote it to advertisers or users yet – because they fear it could potentially cannibalise their now quite



↑ The Daily Nation's SMS service has a total of 110,000 subscribers for its many different keywords

← 40% of the Nation's web traffic comes from the Kenyan diaspora overseas; the Nation are now trying to direct this traffic to their mobile website

profitable SMS news business.

NMG has experimented also with mobile music downloads, but they found that the Kenyan mobile usage culture, whereby people have very little credit on their phones at any given time, does not support this very well billing-wise. In an attempt to solve this problem, NMG has set up a function that divided the billing of a song in four instalments, with 10 KES deducted over four days to improve the success rate. NMG's overall billing success rate for all its premium services is approximately 31 percent.

The group also works with interactivity via mobile. They have tried a mobile game show called Wingo – bingo via mobile – which worked well for a while until several other lotteries, that were stretching the existing regulations, were launched, which initially caused competition and eventually caused Wingo and all similar games to be shut down by regulators. They also tried an SMS quiz, but that was also stopped by regulations due to the tightening of Kenyan betting laws. Another integrative feature allows people to send in shout outs that are published as a rolling ticker on NTV.

#### Mobile lessons learnt so far

One of NMG's aims is to make money from mobile, and another is to reach as many as possible and be present in all markets. To be able to reach their maximum audience, they know they will have to offer services for free to a target group not attractive to advertisers. So the two aims are not fully compatible. They also see an opportunity where they could improve the margin they could get

from SMS messages if they would set up their own system instead of working with a third-party bulk SMS provider.

Other challenges are that they need greater access to customer data – both to be able to offer relevant services and also targeted advertising. Today the data stays with the network operators and/or service providers. They will also need to control the mobile revenues better by selling their own mobile advertising and getting a bigger revenue share. Measuring usage from online and mobile is another challenge. As this is done only every quarter in Kenya, that is not often enough to be able to evaluate a new service.

One realisation is that NMG could improve the business side of SMS by adding advertising, which they do not have at all today. But they feel that the 160 characters available in an SMS are too few to include a commercial message. However, their bulk SMS service provider offers them a “free” reply text to each SMS sent in to the system. In this reply message of 160 characters they could not only include a “thank you for your contribution/subscription” message but also a commercial message.

#### Discussion of the next steps and future plans

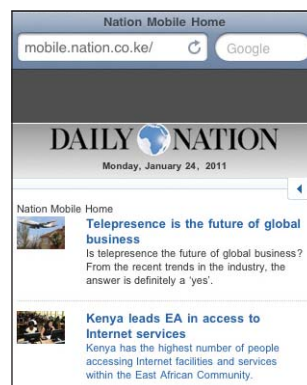
In addition to their SMS services, NMG are evaluating whether USSD would be an option. USSD would make it easier for the end-user to find the services, but at the same time the end-user will have to spend many clicks finding the content.

They believe mobile citizen journalism content combined with a print product has great potential, and there is a lot of importance of integrating mobile into the channel mix: they believe people want to be appreciated in both print and online even if mobile is the “in” channel. The Nation has already tried quite a few services on mobile and recognizes that they already have concepts, services and sections in their existing portfolio that could be translated into mobile. One example is their print pullout and website Zuqka (“be famous” in Swahili). Through the website and print product readers can contribute photos and stories (primarily about social events and entertainment) as well as music and video – the best of which are then played on NMG’s radio and TV stations, providing further opportunity to cross-promote their group’s various platforms. The user-generated content is combined with some journalistic content and has proven popular. Making Zuqka mobile would be one of the next steps, and combining concepts like this with mobile is something NMG really believe in, says Ian Fernandes. The group is also considering setting up a team of “MoJos” or mobile journalists to provide and deliver content via mobile.

Receiving classifieds via mobile would be another possible future option. However, payments via premium SMS for this would not be possible for two reasons: they currently charge the end-user per word in classifieds and they do not want to limit the amount of characters to 160, and secondly, the revenue sharing model with network operators is not advantageous. They do already accept payments for classifieds with M-PESA.

They also plan to launch a city guide for Nairobi in collaboration with yellow.co.ke (the Kenyan version of the Yellow Pages), which could be translated to mobile.

An iPhone/iPad app is also in planning; however, this will not be tied to the Nation title; instead, the application will function as a “gateway to Africa”, with the working name “the media of Africa for Africa” where you would find bookmarked links to all NMG-owned mobile websites across Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. NMG plan to charge for the application; they believe that although people may not want to pay for content, they will pay for the system that delivers the content. The iPhone and iPad apps will be targeted mostly at the diaspora and high-earning Kenyans.



Ian Fernandes describes that the Nation Group has a convergence strategy where everyone in the media organisation is encouraged to think in multimedia manner. They want to deliver what the readers want, when they

want it, in the way they want it. Part of this strategy requires that the newsroom staff become multi-skilled, and are thus able to work for all channels. They consider their various platforms thus: mobile: when, radio: what, tv: how, print: why, online: as it unfolds; therefore using the different media at different stages in the news cycle. Their prediction is that online and mobile will grow together and will soon become one and the same.

Today, the Nation spends equal time, effort, focus and money on developing mobile as they do online. Their current mobile strategy is however mostly trial and error, and they are not afraid to test new things. They do not think it would be possible to formulate a dedicated mobile strategy in the ever-changing mobile landscape, as the developments and conditions are changing too fast; they believe they need to be flexible and able to act and test when necessary.



*Instant messaging (IM) service MXit is hugely popular in South Africa with the youth market; News24.com's "newsbot" has over 800,000 subscribers*

© Global.finland.fi/Marja-Leena Kultanen

### 3.3 South Africa

In Uganda and Kenya, mobile usage and mobile services are growing fast. However, most mobile news services implemented are still at entry level, and even though mobile phone usage is high in these countries, the usage of mobile media services is still low. For that reason we looked into South Africa in hopes of finding some services that had already proven to work and had been accepted by larger audiences. Even though the South African mobile market is in many ways different from that of Sub-Saharan Africa, lessons can still be learnt from these case studies.

The online audience in South Africa is approximately five million, and there are 10 million web-enabled phones. Facebook has about four million South African users, of which three million access the site via mobile. The mobile penetration rate is close to

95 percent (CIA World Factbook, 2009). The mobile operator situation in South Africa is less beneficial compared to Sub-Saharan Africa. Here there is a near-cartel situation. For this reason, prices in South Africa for calls, data and texts are high. Fixed-price subscriptions for calls and messages and data bundles can be as high as 3500 ZAR (515 USD) per month.

As a result of the expensive SMS rates in the country, the chat platform/service MXit has become a great success – especially among the young. With this application installed on a phone, all users can text each other at the cost only of the data charge instead of SMS, which costs only a fraction of the price. MXit has approximately 27 million subscribers across Africa. Here the content is available in a similar fashion to an USSD menu (see chapter



2.2 for more information on USSD). Blackberries are becoming very popular not least because for Blackberry users, mobile data is free. The in-built Blackberry Messenger system (BBM), which enables free BBM-to-BBM messaging, is also credited with the increasing popularity of the initially business-aimed smartphone among a younger market.

M-PESA has just been launched in South Africa but has not yet gained much ground.

The print media landscape in South Africa is dominated by Media24 (72 newspaper titles and 89 magazine titles), Avusa (20 newspapers and

32 magazines), Independent Newspapers (28 newspapers), Caxton (130 newspapers – mostly community freesheets with heavy advertising and 39 magazines), as well as the Mail and Guardian Group. (Source: Media Diversity and Development Agency/WAN-IFRA 2009: 984). For the purposes of this report, we spoke with the independent local paper Grocott’s Mail, the Mail and Guardian, representatives from a number of national Avusa titles and their digital division, and the mobile manager at the online news-site News24.com – South Africa’s most-read news source.

## Grocott’s Mail

*Interviews with: Professor Harry Dugmore, MTN Chair of Media and Mobile Communications, School of Journalism and Media Studies, Rhodes University and Michael Salzwedel, Online Editor, Grocott’s Mail and Grahamstown NOW – GTN; and comments from Steven Lang, Editor, Grocott’s Mail*

### Grocott’s Mail’s mobile experiences

In February 2011, Grocott’s Mail launched a mobile-optimised website – the city guide Grahamstown NOW (part of the Iindaba Ziyafika – “the news is coming” in Xhosa – project funded by the Knight Foundation). In addition to this they have also tried SMS news alerts services. However, as the news alerts are free, this case study description will focus

primarily on the revenue-generating Grahamstown NOW.

Grahamstown NOW is text-based and simple in design, but the concept is well thought through. As the name indicates, they focus on the “nowness” of the business model – i.e., a tool to use right now. The site is topped with commercial offerings under a headline called “On now”, where current, time-limited offerings are listed (usually for a few hours). It has been decided that all offerings should have a time dimension, and that it should be really good offers (at least 50 percent off). The theory is that if the offers are on only for a limited time there is no problem with the discounts being high. All specials should be sharable via SMS and email.

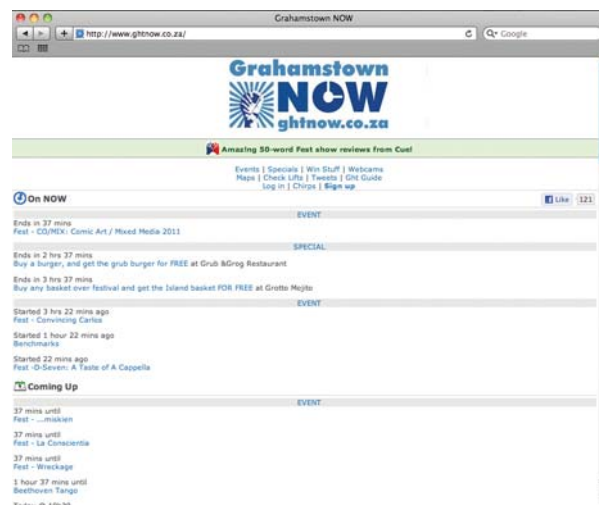
Grahamstown NOW help the local advertisers and merchandisers to devise and write the offers so that



### FACTBOX:



<b>Founded:</b>	1870 (Oldest independent paper in South Africa)
<b>Owner:</b>	Rhodes University/ David Rabkin Project for Experimental Journalism
<b>Other media in the group:</b>	N/A
<b>Published:</b>	Bi-weekly
<b>Circulation:</b>	2000 per issue
<b>Readership:</b>	12,200 per issue
<b>Website:</b>	www.grocotts.co.za
<b>Web traffic:</b>	not available
<b>Mobile services:</b>	Free SMS alerts (since 2009); Grahamstown NOW – ad-supported city guide/mobile website (since 2011)
<b>SMS subscribers:</b>	30,000
<b>Mobile website:</b>	www.ghnow.co.za
<b>Mobile web traffic:</b>	10,000 unique visitors per month
<b>Mobile staff:</b>	One editor, responsible for all online and mobile services; one marketing member of staff, with responsibility for print too



*Grahamstown NOW is a mobile-optimised-only website and thus looks very stark and bare when viewed on a computer screen. Grocott’s Mail say they have no plan to launch a PC-based version of the site as they want to keep the site primarily for mobile.*



they are appealing to the audience and preferably somewhat original, although advertisers can upload their own offers. They are not working with coupons or a verification system for the offerings, as that is difficult to put in place with smaller merchandisers, so measuring the effectiveness and success of the offers is not simple or secure. Grocott's Mail have decided not to work with banner adverts (except for a commercial text banner at the top of the page) on Grahamstown NOW, and instead focus on these timely offerings. In the first three months after the launch in February, the advertising was offered for free; about half of the original 30 advertisers have chosen to stay on and pay for the service. Grocott's Mail is currently charging per offer published, but they plan to sell offers in bulk – e.g., 10 offers for 10 ZAR (1.50 USD).

After the commercial offerings on the page follows headlines such as: events in Grahamstown, headlines from Grocott's Mail Online, movie and radio listings, weather forecasts and webcams from the town (one of the most popular features). They also include Twitter feeds, maps (automated from Google, mapping all local businesses) and a search box for the site. They also have a feature called "chirp" – i.e., comment. The style of the page and language is informal; the site is intended to be light and fun.

The service is now targeted at all who live in Grahamstown but was initially aimed at students, given Rhodes University's large presence in the town, and launched in the first week of the new university year. As a result, most users are still students. So far, Grahamstown NOW does not have

**Grocott's Mail**  
ONLINE

South Africa's oldest independent newspaper – the heart and soul of Grahamstown





a large penetration in the poorer, predominately black areas as they do not yet have commercial offerings suitable for this target group.

**Mobile lessons learnt so far**

Unexpectedly, the majority of Grahamstown NOW users actually visit the page from a computer and not from a mobile device despite the site being optimised primarily for mobile; Grocott's Mail do not plan to create a made-for-web-only page as they want to push people to mobile. When we met the team at the end of March 2011, the site so far had just less than 500 subscribers (however, the offers are viewable without registration); their subscriber target number is 6000.

Grocott's Mail have recognised that monetising Grahamstown NOW is the greatest challenge. You have to give the advertisers something for free first to lure them in, and you have to show them value before they will become interested. They also advise not to opt for banner advertisements – instead create offerings with a time component. When you create mobile services, you have to think that people are mobile and to focus on what works where and when.

**The next steps and future plans**

The new version to be launched in April 2011 will include push notifications (via email, SMS, IM or MXit), where users can opt-in for different feeds based on the types of offers they're interested in and the area they live/work in, enabling more targeted offers, as well as greater on-screen customisation. Another potential next step could be creating a downloadable application for Grahamstown NOW, or adding a Groupon-like feature, meaning some offers will have to be purchased in advance by a certain number of people before they become valid in-store.

The funding for Lindaba Ziyafika from the Knight Foundation will end in December 2011; after that, a fully functional business model has to be in place. For that reason the Rhodes University is looking into possibly selling the "NOW" concept to other small-town media who want to set up something similar to Grahamstown NOW in their own town. The coding will be available "in the cloud", but they could licence the usage and offer support for which they could charge. They want to put together a short advice/users' manual about the NOW concept to be used in new cities.

One element of the NOW concept that they are keen to promote is that of the journalism featured; they expect all new NOW services to have some amount of journalism in them. Many South African towns lack "proper" newspapers, with many papers offering primarily advertising and coupons with just one page of local news. In these towns, the Grahamstown NOW team believe citizen journalism could be an option to fill the gap and ensure that every NOW export still carries some local journalism.

In the future, they plan to look at partnerships with mobile phone network operators to zero-rate the usage of the NOW sites, just for local users in a particular area. Popular social networking site Facebook has done this in some parts of central Africa and as operators do with content on their own mobile portals. The Grahamstown NOW believe this would be "a great opportunity for the concept and adaption of the concept to grow".

*Grocott's Mail's mobile web-based service, Grahamstown NOW*



## Mail & Guardian

Interview with: Chris Roper, Online Editor and Alistair Fairweather, Digital Platforms Manager

### The Mail & Guardian's mobile experiences

In February 2011, the Mail & Guardian took the decision to cancel their SMS alerts services completely – services that had been running since 2005. The SMS services had provided mainly breaking news and top stories. The main reason stated for the final termination of SMS was: "it did not do the brand any service". In more detail the reasons were described as thus:

- The service didn't have a large enough audience – only few hundred subscribers, even though it had been marketed on the website since launch.
- The Mail & Guardian is a weekly paper, with strengths such as analysis rather than breaking news. Also, the long-form style of journalism at Mail & Guardian didn't suit 160-character SMS texts.
- "What you do on mobile should reflect your audiences", and the Mail & Guardian sees that their audience prefers to access their content via computer- and tablet-based web browsing, not SMS alerts.
- And finally, the business model/revenue split with operators was not beneficial. In South Africa, the mobile network operators take 65 percent, and then there are taxes and third parties involved. A service charge of 3 ZAR (0.45 USD) gave the Mail & Guardian just 0.09 ZAR (0.01 USD) revenue.

Today the Mail & Guardian's mobile offerings include a mobile website, an iPhone app, and a Kindle edition, with Android and iPad applications to be launched later this year. The mobile website has existed since at least 2000 and has 200,000 unique visitors per month. It is a RSS feed-driven, atomised mobile website. But they have however found that you cannot have mobile website which is only feed-driven – you have to offer specific mobile content. They do some direct ad sales for the mobile site but find it difficult to sell to a small audience and do not sell enough advertising to cover the costs. Instead they are looking for a third-party service provider for ad sales.

The iPhone app is partly feed driven, with extra features, including cartoons and multimedia content, plus more long-form journalism, all the mobile web content and a blogging platform. The price for the application is 1.99 USD, and they believe that this is currently the only paid-for news app in South Africa. They have no in-app billing yet

but see it as a possibility for future development. There is, however, no commercial content/ads in the application. As it is paid for, they don't want to irritate readers who have already paid for it with additional commercial content. However, they are looking for a sponsor for the app – to be visible as pages are loading. When we met in March, they had initiated only a soft launch (i.e., no marketing), whilst they fixed all the initial bugs. In the first six weeks of the iPhone app launch, despite no advertising, over 100 apps were downloaded, deemed a success and a good indication of the potential take-up rate once the application is fully launched later in the year. The app works on iPad too, but they plan to launch an iPad specific app in the latter half of 2011.

The Mail & Guardian also launched a Kindle edition (e-reader version) in February 2011.

The Mail & Guardian's newsroom is completely separated between paper and digital; however, they do have a "super desk" and mediators who communicate across platforms. The Digital Platform Manager, Alistair Fairweather, leads all mobile publishing and development; however, the actual app development is outsourced. Fairweather says that he spends about one-tenth of his time on mobile, hence their mobile activities are handled

**Mail & Guardian**online

### FACTBOX:



<b>Founded:</b>	1985
<b>Publisher:</b>	M&G Media
<b>Other media in the group:</b>	N/A
<b>Published:</b>	Weekly
<b>Circulation:</b>	50,000 per issue
<b>Readership:</b>	100,000 per issue
<b>Website:</b>	www.mg.co.za
<b>Web traffic:</b>	700,000 unique visitors per month
<b>Mobile services:</b>	SMS alerts (since 2005, discontinued in 2011); mobile website (since 2000); iPhone app (since 2011); Android and iPad apps in development
<b>SMS subscribers:</b>	N/A
<b>Mobile website:</b>	m.mg.co.za
<b>Mobile web traffic:</b>	10,000 unique visitors per month
<b>Mobile staff:</b>	Three editorial staff who are also responsible for online, plus marketing staff



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with a minimum of resources. Mobile is part of the Mail & Guardian overall digital strategy. However, the method mostly used is trial and error when developing new concepts, with soft launches used to test the audience's reaction and uptake before spending money on a wider launch, which they would recommend to any other would-be mobile content providers.

#### Mobile lessons learnt so far

The Mail & Guardian has learnt to adapt their mobile offerings to their actual audience – the higher end of the market, which was why they recently stopped working with SMS services. They have also decided that it is important for them to develop only for platforms they really believe in, which so far focuses on iPhone and Android. This however stands in contradiction with their strategy to provide journalism on every available platform, to “get the brand out there”. In line with this strategy is

however that they have made an agreement with Samsung to include a link to the Mail & Guardian mobile website on new phones.

They have also realised that mobile has unique features and gives the readers a chance to choose which stories they want to read, whenever they want, wherever they are. Ideally they want to create different content for different users on different platforms – but there are constraints on budgets,

time and resources to manage this.

Monetising mobile is a challenge, and they feel that there needs



*The Mail and Guardian's iPhone app includes multimedia features such as cartoon galleries from famous cartoonist Zapiro*

to be volume to make money. However, today for the Mail & Guardian, mobile is not a direct revenue exercise – it offers other values. For example they see mobile as the only channel if they want to reach a mass market, as paper reach and internet penetration is not as high as mobile penetration, particularly outside of South Africa, where they have many readers.

### The next steps and future plans

They want to develop their use of mobile to promote the brand, up-sell their print product, advertise events they organise (such as their upcoming literary festival) and sell tickets to these events via their iPhone application or on mobile web, making use of in-app charging or mobile money.

The Mail & Guardian's prediction is that tablets and applications will be huge, which is why they are developing for Kindle and iPad, Android and iPhone. They will likely launch an additional paid-for iPad application, showcasing the work of the famous political cartoonist Zapiro, with whom the newspaper has a long-standing relationship.

They want to use mobile to get people to submit their tips and pictures, but currently they do not have a system that gathers this kind of information.

However, unlike many other newspapers in the country and wider region, they do not plan to offer any kind of financial incentive to their readers for their tips, as this does not fit in with the highly ethical stance on which they pride themselves.

They have just launched job listings and a property sites online only, and they see that jobs could potentially be next to move into mobile, although there are no concrete plans yet. (Nor are there any plans to move small ads, whether submitted via mobile or not, in the print edition, as this, again, would not fit with their brand.)

The Mail & Guardian also have another big project planned: the launch of a Pan-African news network, of which mobile will play a large part, in an effort to spread their well-trusted brand across the rest of Africa. They will use mobile not just as a delivery system for consumers but also as a means of submission from correspondents and sources in other countries across the continent. The mobile platform is easier for many Africans to use than web due to the lack of access to fixed-line broadband internet, and this will prove considerably easier than attempting to distribute the print paper across the vast continent. Mobile delivery would enable both elite and broad-based consumer access.

## Avusa Group

*Interviews with: Marius Marai, Group Digital Executive and Elan Lohmann, General Manager, Avusa Digital for the Avusa Limited; Juliette Saunders, Online Editor, Razia Pilla, Web Producer and Bongwiwe Khumalo, Online Reporter at the Sowetan LIVE and Sunday World LIVE; Paddi Clay, Online Editor at Times LIVE and Sunday Times LIVE.*

### Avusa's overall mobile experiences

Avusa has changed the way they coordinate mobile recently. For two years they had a dedicated mobile manager who worked across all titles in the group – with an aim to develop the group's mobile activities and find synergies. When no killer applications had been launched and the anticipated effects did not appear, this position was terminated.

Today, the Avusa group's digital focus is on online, not mobile. The status of mobile developments is currently "on hold", as they need to first find a way to make mobile economically feasible. So far, mobile has not been making money for Avusa, although it also has very limited costs. They have seen difficulties in mobile ad sales, as they still have so few mobile web users that they cannot attract the advertisers. They find that advertisers would rather go to bigger players such as AdMob, who can ensure volumes.

Their number-one mobile priority at present is to have functioning mobile websites for all titles in the





group. They also want all mobile websites to run on the same publishing system; currently, a number of different systems are in use. They have teamed up with a Norwegian mobile partner, Boost, for some of their websites. Eventually they want to develop or find an integrated CMS for print, web and mobile. With their brand TimesLIVE, they have partnered up with network operator Vodacom to provide a news service on via their web portal.



Avusa Limited has worked with premium SMS services for several years, but now they are avoiding this as much as possible because of prohibitive costs such as high bulk SMS prices and non-beneficial profit sharing arrangements with operators. One example is their popular monthly horoscope service. The regulations in South Africa say that as a content provider you have to alert the subscribers once a month to give them the opportunity to unsubscribe. To do so they have to send out an SMS, and with the number of subscribers they have, that means a bulk SMS cost for Avusa of at least 25,000 ZAR (3700 USD) per month. For other SMS services they have few users and hence small revenues.

**Avusa titles:  
Sowetan LIVE and Sunday World LIVE**

The Sowetan were early adopters of mobile, with a basic mobile-optimised website launched about at the same time as the regular website over 15 years ago. On the mobile website they have sections such as: headlines, main news stories, sport, entertainment news, exchange rates and weather. They take pride in the fact that their average user spends approximately 10 minutes on their website, which is the longest duration for web users of news sites in the country. The Sowetan have learnt that their mobile audience is the same as the online audience. So they see mobile as a complementary channel for after office hours, during lunch hours and weekends and on the move.

The online team also work with the mobile websites Sowetan LIVE and Sunday World LIVE; the two sites currently run on two separate publishing systems, but there are plans to move them into one system. Besides the feed-driven mobile site, they have tried adding some mobile-specific content to the website, for example photo and audio galleries. They have done this twice in honour of famous individuals who had passed away. The memorabilia gallery was available for download for 1 ZAR (0.15 USD). Despite the very low price, they had only about 500 downloads, which they consider low compared to their target audiences of 40,000 monthly average unique mobile web users.

Up until quite recently the Sowetan offered SMS services, but they abandoned that after 10 years as it did not generate revenue nor did their audience prove to have a high enough appetite for the service. For five years they had a partnership with mobile network operator MTN, delivering sports scores to their subscribers, but this collaboration ended in 2009. The costs for end-users were quite high, and the increased staff costs for the newspaper and meagre revenue share with the operator meant that the service was not financially

**FACTBOX:**



<b>Media in the group:</b>	the Sunday Times, the Times, the Sowetan, the Sunday World, the Financial Mail, Business Day, The Herald, The Daily, Sunday Dispatch, numerous small community titles (paid for and free), various radio and TV stations.
<b>The Sunday Times and The Times</b>	
<b>Founded:</b>	Sunday Times – 1906; The Times – 2007
<b>Circulation:</b>	Sunday Times – 462,370; The Times – 127,000
<b>Readership:</b>	Sunday Times – 3,800,000; The Times – 331,000
<b>Website:</b>	www.TimesLIVE.co.za 1,280,000 unique visitors per month
<b>Mobile services:</b>	mobile website (since 2008)
<b>SMS subscribers:</b>	N/A
<b>Mobile website:</b>	m.TimesLIVE.co.za
<b>Mobile staff:</b>	Online team covers mobile, but there is no one person responsible for mobile as website is automated
<b>The Sowetan and The Sunday World</b>	
<b>Founded:</b>	Sowetan – 1981; Sunday World – 1999
<b>Circulation:</b>	Sowetan – 125,490; Sunday World – 151,720
<b>Readership:</b>	Sowetan – 1,522,000; Sunday World – 1,680,000
<b>Website:</b>	www.SowetanLIVE.co.za www.SundayWorld.co.za
<b>Mobile services:</b>	SMS alerts (discontinued in 2009); mobile website (Sowetan – since c. 1996; both titles re-launched 2010)
<b>Mobile website:</b>	m.SowetanLIVE.co.za (45,000 unique visitors per month, Sowetan’s own estimate) m.SundayWorldLIVE.co.za
<b>Mobile staff:</b>	Three online staff (an editor and two reporters-cum-online producers) cover mobile; team is separate from print editorial staff – they do not attend editorial meetings



sustainable.

The main barriers the Sowetan/Sunday World online team see to mobile taking off in Avusa are the current lack of research and collaboration. To be able to realise some of their ideas and potential concepts, they would need to know more about usage, what people want and what is possible when it comes to technology. They believe that, despite the original failure of the set-up, a return to the structure with one overall technical expert/mobile media manager could be the solution to improved mobile development; however, better research would have to be undertaken to ensure the same issues as the group faced previously did not reoccur.

Some ideas they have discussed are developing better functionality and more interactivity. They would like to create a live chat forum and more commentary functions. One popular blog they have today online is Kasi Slang, featuring a township slang word of the day, which they would like to provide on the mobile platform too. As the readers of the Sowetan and the Sunday World can already send in dedications, shout outs and greetings, another service the online team would like to see offered is a service so that the person for whom the dedication or shout out is intended would receive a notification about his or her greeting. They also have serious plans of offering a party/event mobile map, helping readers find events in their local areas, but this would necessitate implementing a geo-tagging feature for which they do not yet have the

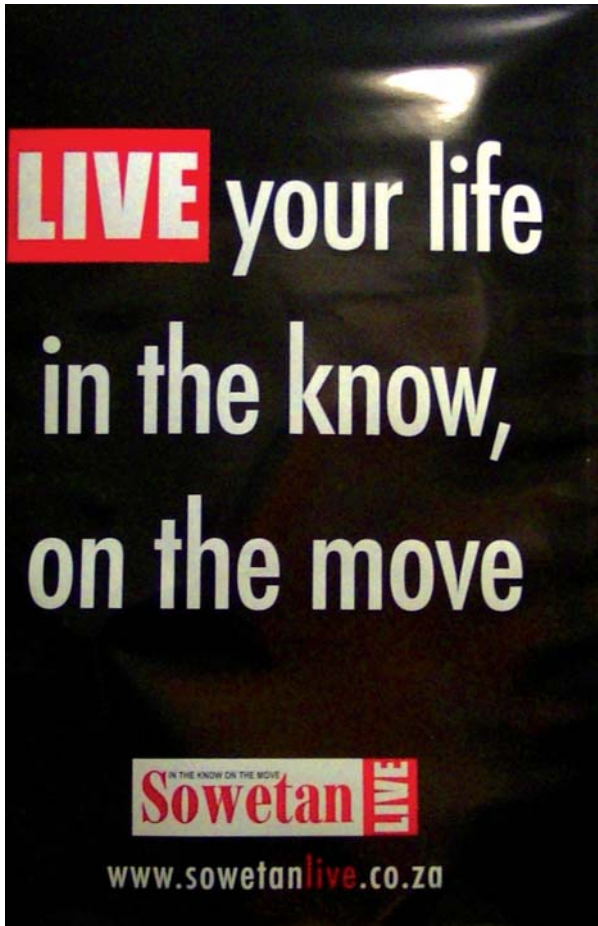
expertise. Of the content they already offer online, they see potential for expanding their wedding and baby blogs with more social content on mobile, as these are already widely read on the mobile web. They would also like to further develop mobile video clips as well as mobile-based services centred on recipes (with shopping lists included), fashion advice and particularly traffic alerts, having seen the proven popularity of the controversial Twitter account [@pigspotter](#).

#### **Avusa titles: Times LIVE, Sunday Times LIVE**

For the Times LIVE and the Sunday Times LIVE, the online editor Paddi Clay describes that there is very little mobile focus in their day-to-day business and that they put a lot of trust into the automated feeds from online to mobile. The mobile-optimised sites were launched two to three years ago. At the launch of the mobile site, over the Christmas/summer holidays, they published some mobile-only content; however, since then, almost all content has been via automated feeds.

The Times mobile feed focuses solely on news, and they are not looking to expand the brand beyond news, with additional services such as information or entertainment. No individual member of staff at either the Times or Sunday Times specialises in mobile, and the online/editorial team is not currently carrying out any mobile development or attempting to pitch any mobile products to the digital management, as their Sowetan colleagues wish to





- ← The website for all the Avusa titles in Johannesburg has been relaunched under the "LIVE" umbrella brand
- ↓ The Times advertise their mobile services on their website, with some cross-promotion in the print paper



do. They do however do some cross-referencing/promoting of their mobile websites in the print editions of the Times and Sunday Times papers.

Similar to the Sowetan, the Times feel that they do not have enough knowledge on what the audience wants from mobile. But a dedicated resource in-house that could provide them with this knowledge would be key to start thinking of more innovative mobile concepts. They realise that mobile opens up possibilities to reach their audience throughout their day and not just during office hours or once a

morning with their paper.

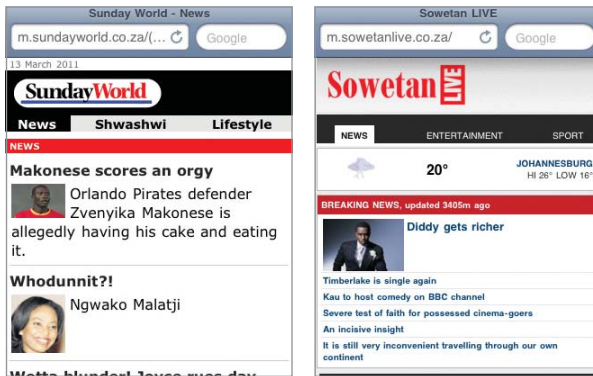
**Mobile lessons learnt so far**

Avusa Limited realise that in order to improve their mobile offerings, they need to package content specifically for mobile, which they are not yet doing. They have also realised that they will need an application strategy soon. There are so many different handsets and different computer languages in use, which are raising questions about for what types of platforms they should develop services. They do not yet have an iPhone application,



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but they feel that if they were to create one, it has to be something that can fit into people's lives and days.

According to the digital team at Avusa, unlike the rest of the continent, South Africa's web access is primarily computer-based; mobile is second. During office hours of 8am-5pm people access the internet via their computers; mobile usage is highest during the midday/lunch period and "out-of hours", as is social media. They see mobile as "content snacking" – not a "main consumption" media. For them mobile is a marketing channel, not a business. And they see potential in mobile as a communications tool as it was first intended. They ask themselves: can we offer some kind of communications platform for our readers?

#### The next steps and future plans

They have realised that they are not where they had originally wanted to be by now and have acknowledged that they've already lost the "first user advantage" by not being more proactive on the mobile market. However, they still do not see

the business value in developing services right now. There are several hurdles which the mobile market currently faces and which they feel need to be developed further before mobile can fully take off in South Africa: browser-friendly phones need to become more common; many sites are not yet optimised for mobile, which makes browsing slow and expensive; and better payment mechanisms and better revenue sharing agreements for the media need to come into place. They also see a need for education because they do not think that the mass market fully understands how to use mobile services.

Although the Avusa Group is putting most of its mobile developments on hold whilst the managers wait on improvements in the mobile market, there are still ideas for services and developments popping up within the individual titles (as seen above). Avusa is also looking at ways to improve mobile and micro payments. They are looking into different options for micro-transactions in mobile and online to find a payment mechanism outside of mobile network operators in order to retain a greater share of the revenue.

Outside of its legacy print titles, Avusa launched Zappon in March, an online service similar to California-based Groupon, offering discounts on local products, services and events to subscribers. More than just a marketing exercise, they hope that Zappon will prove profitable for the group. They plan to launch Zappon on mobile too, but this will be possible only when the group can keep a higher share of revenue for payments.

## News24.com

*Interview with: Marian van der Linden, Mobile Manager, News24.com*

### News24's mobile experiences

The mobile site is South Africa's most visited mobile website and has seen a recent jump in unique visitors (700,000 in March, up from 200,000 in January 2011). The site is available in three versions, optimised to meet the disparate South African mobile market, with users' mobile phones ranging from basic 10 USD Chinese models to iPhones. News24's overall strategy is to put content everywhere.

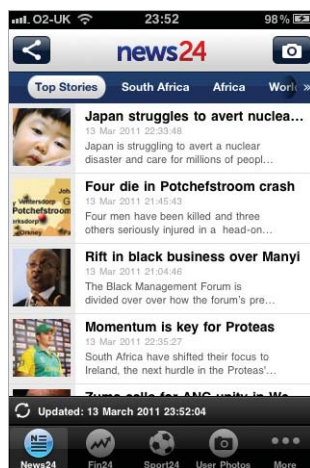
One explanation for the recent large growth in usage is a few strategic deals, including that with mobile web browser Opera Mini – which now includes the News24 site in their mobile portal for a fee, driving traffic to the News24 site, but it does not generate direct income, only higher page views. (Note: for smaller news organisations it would not be an option to make such a deal both because of

pricing and because if the target audience is very limited/local/niche, there is no point in promoting it to the broad mass market on such a portal.) They also made deals with Vodacom and MTN to become visible on their portals, and they were also the first news website to be present in "MXit" (a multi-platform IM and social network).

As described in the introduction to chapter 3.3, MXit is a tool that emerged on the market because of the high South African SMS tariffs, so that text communication could be cheaper. It is primarily used by 18- to 25-year-olds, which is the same target audience as that of News24. News24.com's "bot" in MXit has 800,000 subscribers. Here the content is available in a similar fashion to an USSD menu (see chapter 2.2 for more information on USSD). News24 makes some profit from MXit. The end-user can read one article for free and is then charged 0.05

news24	
FACTBOX:	
<b>Publisher:</b>	Media24/Nasper
<b>Other media in the group:</b>	Newspapers including English-language City Press and Daily Sun, and Afrikaans-language papers Beeld, Die Burger and Volksblad. Websites include: Women24, Health24, Sport24, Food24 and Fin[ance]24.
<b>Published:</b>	Constantly
<b>Circulation:</b>	N/A – online only
<b>Readership:</b>	N/A – online only
<b>Website:</b>	www.news24.com
<b>Web traffic:</b>	2,840,000 unique visitors
<b>Mobile services:</b>	mobile website (since 2006), Free and premium SMS alerts (since 2007); MXit Bot (since 2008); iPhone application (since 2010)
<b>SMS subscribers:</b>	15,000 for free service; 2000 for premium rates
<b>Mobile website:</b>	m.News24.com
<b>Mobile web traffic:</b>	700,000
<b>Mobile staff:</b>	Two dedicated mobile managers, plus marketing staff (all editorial staff are automatically published on mobile as well as online)

ZAR (0.007 USD) for each article accessed thereafter. Some articles and content are charged at a premium, such as horoscopes and weather, where the price is about 0.20-0.30 ZAR (0.03-0.04 USD). Payments in the system are made with internal currency “moola” bought in bulk, and which can be used across the MXit platform in various other services such as games. News24 keeps half of the revenue generated; the other half is kept by MXit.



*In addition to its mobile website, News24.com also has a free iPhone application*

News24.com’s online and mobile revenue is generated primarily through advertising, and the brand is profitable. In their strategy they claim they do not separate mobile from online in terms of investments; they see mobile as part of their digital division and strategy. Their strategy is more focused than simply trial and error; however, they claim “not being scared to try things”.

Mobile is a priority at News24. They sell their own banner adverts, but uptake has been slow. They have also profitably collaborated with Google’s AdMob. Additional revenue for News24 is generated through a number of additional mobile offerings such as SMS news alerts. About 15,000 users subscribe to the free breaking news service, and they also have paid-for SMS-services, such as horoscopes, etc. For this they have fewer subscribers: about 2000 users paying approximately 5 ZAR (0.70 USD) per received SMS. They do not include any commercial offerings in the mobile SMS services but always include a link to their mobile website for further reading and as a marketing tool. However, News24 believes their main mobile market is mobile web and they do not see a future in premium SMS, partly because of the near-cartel situation of the two major mobile phone operators which has kept the SMS prices very high, as well as the unfavourable revenue sharing model. The operators also hold on very tightly to the customer data – another reason for why they do not see bright future in this area. Despite this, there are no plans to discontinue the SMS services in the near future.

The mobile website is primarily feed driven and basically publishes and runs itself – they do not write specifically for mobile. For some of the specific lifestyle mobile websites they have more manual work when adding content, such as video, galleries, polls, etc. Data charges are still high in South Africa,

but they are becoming increasingly more affordable. For some platforms, such as the Blackberry, data usage is unlimited on certain network plans, which explains why as much as 55 percent of News24’s mobile traffic comes via Blackberries.

Even though the iPhone penetration in South Africa is still very low (estimated to be 150,000 units in the whole nation of 49 million people), News24 has also initiated application development for iPhone, iPad and Android. Applications developed are so far mainly for the targeted lifestyle brands such as Food24 and finance management application Fin24. Like so many news outlets across the world, News24.com also believes that tablets will be “next big thing”.



News24 have a small team working with mobile; one person is responsible entirely for mobile, another for applications and iPad. In addition they have sales, marketing, tech and editorial staff, all of whom work for all channels. They have plans to hire mobile application developers so that they will be able to write and own their own code.

#### Mobile lessons learnt so far

News24 strongly believe in mobile as a news medium and that all news media will have to realise that you have to get into this market to be able to reach people throughout the day, as print and online do not cover the full day. This was their main reason for starting to work with mobile.

Another lesson was learnt the hard way: during the migration of all mobile websites onto one CMS in 2010, the new pages were found to be too data heavy, resulting in a drop in access as users saw their data plan charges go up. This was quickly remedied, and they now recommend that pages should not be more than 20-30KB to suit the lowest-end phones and all wallets.

News24 has been able to pinpoint some services

that they know work in their market: football, local news, horoscopes and weather. In general though, they see that making money from mobile has a slow uptake so far, but they also see that there is a lot of interest from advertisers, so their prediction is that they could be near a tipping point in South Africa for mobile advertising.

#### The next steps and future plans

News24.com's mobile future, according to its mobile manager Marian van der Linden, lies in continuing with having the mobile site as an extension of the main site in addition to taking the Afrikaans newspapers in the group onto mobile. They also have plans to translate the main site into South Africa's 11 national languages. It is currently available in three: English, Afrikaans and Zulu.

All of the staff is involved in social media, blogs and twitter and encouraged to be so, without much editorial control or input. Social media features, integration and commenting functionality will become increasingly important for their mobile business. They also plan to offer greater personalisation of their services for readers.





# Mobile Youth in Africa

Authors: **Ivor Price**, Media Consultant, South Africa and **Aralynn McMane**, Executive Director, Young Readership Development, WAN-IFRA, Paris.

WAN-IFRA has been working with youth and newspapers in education for many years, and as the Sub-Saharan region shows an extraordinary demographic with nearly 50 percent of the population being under the age of 24, we have gathered some examples of mobile case studies for the young – as an inspiration.

Although up to 43 percent of the Africa's five billion mobile phone users are under the age of 24, service charges remain prohibitive to many young would-be mobile users in Sub-Saharan Africa. But that doesn't mean there aren't opportunities for newspapers in this sector as both a commercial and educational activity. Newspapers everywhere on the continent have the prospect of helping young people, and their parents and teachers, make effective use of mobile phones and learn about professional journalism in the process.

Such guidance is needed; a 2009 study of 427 high school students in South Africa found that of the 84 percent who owned a phone, nearly half had never received an information service via their mobile phone. When asked why this was, half of them indicated they didn't know how. For the newspaper sector – with its culture of innovative educational tie-ins and classroom projects – this points to a significant opportunity. What could be a better partner to help children make responsible and optimal use of the powerful information and educational tool that a mobile phone can be, than newspapers?

The following examples show what some African newspapers are already doing; the examples begin with those which almost any newspaper could try and progress in level of difficulty, including some actions from elsewhere in the world that could be adapted for the African market.

## 1. Getting support for newspapers in education (NIE) programmes

Mobile phone service operators often include helping education as part of their "corporate social responsibility" efforts and have helped newspapers in education (NIE) programmes in Africa and elsewhere. In Liberia, Celcom helped pay for an insert that appeared simultaneously in all the country's newspapers (total circulation approximately 20,000) about how to use newspapers as an educational tool. In Argentina,

Telcom supported the creation and distribution of an "Internet in the Family" guide in Clarín, the country's largest newspaper. In Jordan, Zain provides support for the national NIE programme run by the Center for Defending the Freedom of Journalists.

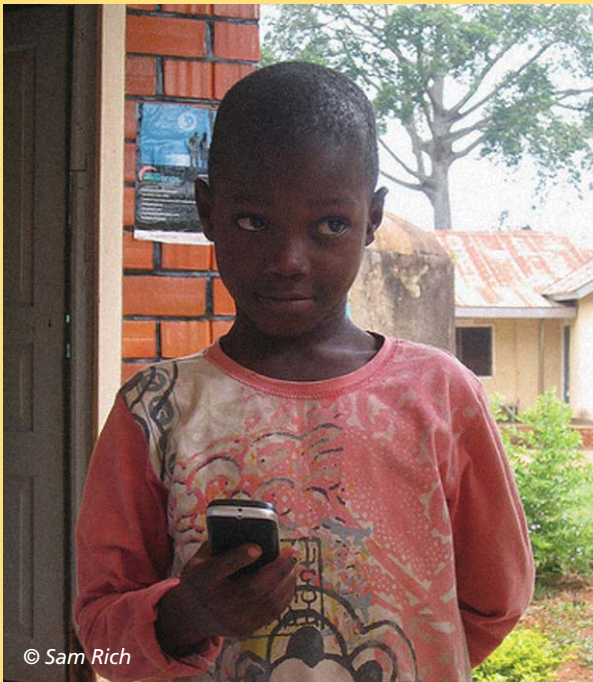
## 2. Teaching journalism with mobile phones

Newspapers can become an ally for parents and teachers in media literacy by using the newspaper's journalistic expertise to help schools guide mobile phone use while building an interest in news among students.

- The Brazilian daily *Jornal da Manhã* (circulation 109,000) created a simple photojournalism workshop for children using mobile phones as cameras to teach them about the role of journalists. During the workshop, the primary school students learnt how to use their mobile phones to take pictures to tell a story and to record and share information. The workshop has become part of a larger project to train teachers how to use mobile phones in the classroom, use blogs and create school newspapers.
- The South African bi-weekly *Grocott's Mail* (circulation 2000 per issue) is the oldest independent newspaper in the country and is now owned by Rhodes University. A multi-faceted grant for its *lindaba Ziyafika* (The News Is Coming) project from the Knight Foundation included support for a course teaching citizen journalism using mobile phones to add photo, video and audio content to user-written reports. The grant was intended to foster internal dialogue in the community. Further details can be found at [www.grocotts.co.za/cj](http://www.grocotts.co.za/cj)

## 3. Linkages for newspaper youth supplements

*Straight Talk* in Uganda (monthly circulation 90,000) is a newspaper for young people founded in 1993 to promote safer sex, life skills and child and adolescent rights. The editor sends an SMS to teachers before each edition to let them know it is coming out and to highlight key content. The paper made use of the knowledge it had acquired from its young staff and readers to prepare 1000 automated SMS responses for health questions sent to Google with the support of a local telecom company. These tips are now being used in India and Brazil.



#### 4. Creating a job-seeking service for youth

The Limpopo Mirror of South Africa (weekly circulation 8000) has created “Small Jobs Marketplace”, an SMS application linked to its youth section. Many young unemployed people in the region do not have recognised qualifications, but they do have certain desirable skills (e.g., building, painting, basic admin skills etc); Small Jobs Marketplace invites them to send their skills and contact details to the paper via SMS. These text messages are then stored on a database and published in the paper (about 10 per edition). Each SMS costs 2 ZAR (0.03 USD), making the feature cheap and accessible; regular vacancy ads cost upwards of 100 ZAR (15 USD).

Editor Pieter Jooste notes: “A further benefit is that the [users] can be anywhere in the region they do not have to come in to our offices at all, or have even have access to electricity, faxes, computers, etc. We publish all the SMS messages ‘as is’, because potential employers can then deduce the calibre of the candidates (by assessing their grammar abilities, spelling mistakes, etc.). We do not offer an employment service at all, and do not assist in setting up job seekers with employers. We only publish their details, and the rest is up to them.”

#### 5. Marketing and revenue-making schemes that engage the young through mobile telephones

Malayala Manorama of India (daily circulation 1.8

million) owes its growing circulation partly to the success of its youth platform, YUVA, in luring young readers back to the paper. An added benefit of its youth mobile activities is the revenue created by the messages, with the income split with the service provider. The paper won the 2010 World Young Reader Prize for mobile phone youth engagement.

Some examples are:

- A “Haiku” micro-film competition received 483 entries of films that had to be shot on a mobile phone and have a socially relevant theme. Visitors to Malayalaonline.com were asked to vote for the best film. The goal was to provide a platform for young people to be creative without the financial constraints of traditional filmmaking.
- An “Express your love” Valentine’s Day contest invited readers to leave voice messages of no longer than two minutes expressing their love in the form of narrations, poems, jokes, etc. The competition has run since 2009, with more than 25,000 messages received in 2010. The competition is announced in the printed product and online and runs for two weeks prior to February 14, with the best entries are rewarded.

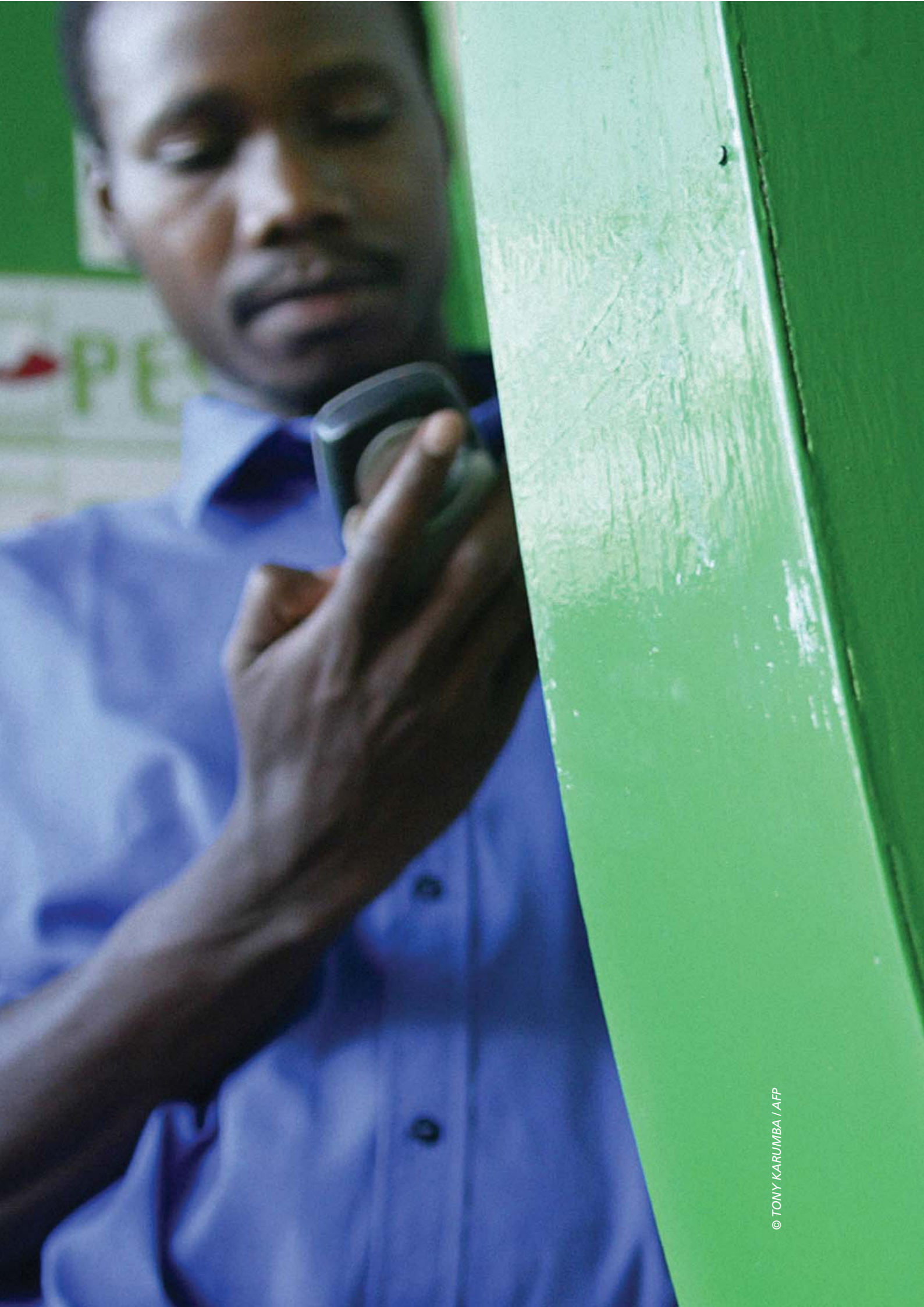
Other actions connect to India’s intensive film celebrity culture, such as asking readers to vote for the year’s best actors, movies and movie songs.

#### 6. Finally, an idea from Kenya that could inspire a newspaper

Information Convergence Technologies, a Kenyan company that provides text-messaging services to clients such as the Kenya National Examination Council and mainstream media houses, recently launched MwananchiSMS, an SMS-based service delivering local information to those usually unable to access the Internet in rural areas of Kenya. The idea is to recruit “youth leaders” to collect “bio data” and mobile phone numbers (with users’ consent) for 1000 to 3000 users in their rural villages; these youth leaders will then act as self-employed “micro-journalists”. The micro-journalists will then run their business as a franchise, retaining 30 percent of any revenues generated. The scheme fulfils two social aims – keeping the rural population informed and providing employment to otherwise jobless young people, as well as providing the service provider with valuable marketing data.

WAN-IFRA is preparing materials that will be available free of charge for any African newspaper that wishes to publish a guide for parents and teachers for the mobile phone use of children. The guide, modelled on an earlier publication “Internet in the Family”, offers some basic background and ideas for setting up a family and classroom code for use with mobile phones. The materials will be available soon at [www.wan-ifra.org/youngreaders](http://www.wan-ifra.org/youngreaders)







# 4. Important decisions when entering mobile

When you are planning to integrate an additional channel or product into your media house's portfolio, there are several important questions you will have to consider. This chapter is dedicated to these questions – questions that could well be used when introducing any new channel into your media house, not just mobile. Please note that there could be additional questions that could be of equal importance to your organisation and your market too.

To get started, it is usually not a bad idea to just test something to see and learn from the response you get from your readers. Trial and error is not a model to be completely discarded, but doing your homework will help you quickly improve your offerings. In an ideal situation there are time and resources to implement a full-blown mobile strategy. In this chapter, this is not what we strive to do. We merely describe some of the important issues to address, knowing the answers could help you along the way.

A mobile strategy will have to be tailored to your existing channels, your overall media offerings and your target audience.

## 4.1 Who is your audience?

The first thing to consider when you are thinking about entering mobile, is whom do you want to reach? For whom will you develop services? Knowing your audience is of highest importance. Will you try to reach the same people as those who read your print paper? Or others? Try to pinpoint your potential mobile audience: what is their age, sex, social standing, financial status, etc.? What does their day look like? What are their interests? What is

their daily media consumption? What do you offer them today with your existing channels? How do they use mobile today, and what kind of handsets do they have?

It is not unlikely that you will find that you might have several different groups of potential users within your reach – all with different needs.

## 4.2 What are your audiences' needs?

Once you have gotten to know your audience, then consider your audience's needs with which you could help them. Ask yourself: in what situation can we provide our readers value through the mobile channel? The content will always become less relevant if you ignore the context of the viewer. In chapter 5.4 we will look at a few examples of this – having the mobile's unique features in mind.

Consider: when is mobile important – when you are on the go or at home? At what time of day? When are the golden hours for mobile usage? If you look at how your target audience live, you can figure out what kind of information you could provide

them with – and if mobile would be the best way to deliver that information to them. And is mobile the best medium for them to communicate with you? For example, if you arrange a competition, where submissions can be sent in via SMS and regular mail, SMS will likely be the easier, faster and cheaper option for the end-user, so then mobile would make sense. If mobile does not offer additional value for a specific service – you should probably not offer it via that channel, and of course, it makes no sense offering them something they already get well-packaged elsewhere.

## 4.3 What do you want to achieve with mobile?

It is important to know why you are looking at mobile and what your goal is, as that will affect what you should offer. It is also important to have realistic expectations on what you can achieve – all this depends on your audience’s needs, its size, maturity, and existing competition of your market.

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### Loyalty and relationship building

Investing in building a strong relationship with the readers is very important, and the opportunity for interactivity is one of the mobile phone’s greatest strengths. As many people see the mobile as a communicative tool and not necessarily as a consumption tool, this is something of which should be taken advantage. Encouraging the readers to

Some reasons for going into mobile could be:

- Loyalty and relationship building
  - Reaching new readers
  - Market positioning
  - Revenue generation
- 

send their opinions to the editor or sending in their own news pictures are a couple of things that can be done to create interactivity. When readers see their own picture or opinion published, the relationship is strengthened, and they are then less likely to switch to a competitor.

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### Reaching new readers

Mobile can be a way of reaching new readers by meeting them in a channel that is convenient and accessible for them. It is also important to market your mobile services or mobile site to make sure people find them. It is not uncommon to hear of examples of services that has been launched and not marketed and considered to be useless because of lack of uptake, when it was in fact simply that the reader had simply not found the service yet. By taking the time to write about the services in print or online, you can reach new mobile users. Mobile, in combination with online and print, can bring positive synergy effects. By cross-referencing between your own channels it is possible to steer the audience towards more of your platforms and/or titles. Many media companies lack the routine of this. When you cross-reference – be aware of the various channels’ strengths when you formulate these cross-references. If you send a newsflash via SMS about

a major news event, you can refer readers onwards by ending the SMS message with a reference to the website or newspaper: “follow the story as it unfolds online” or “read more in tomorrow’s newspaper”. But be careful to phrase the reference correctly – do not write: “read more online” unless you have had the time to upload more information. Timesharing studies of when different media channels are used throughout the day can be very interesting to conduct – as these will give you an idea of that you need different channels to keep the attention of one of your readers during the day, as well as let you see at what times of day for example the mobile channel is used the most – so you can adapt your services accordingly. When you know the time, then you can consider the situation where your potential user probably is at that moment so you can better know what services to offer.

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### Market positioning

There is a lot to be gained by being “early” with the mobile channel. It is possible to draw parallels with the development of the internet in Europe, for example. Many of the media companies that chose to wait to see how the new medium would develop, found themselves helplessly behind and it took many years for them to catch up, if they ever will. Those newspapers that were on the internet early have, in many cases, become biggest in the field – simply because they created a relationship with the readers early on. Please keep in mind that even if you may have lost the “first mover’s advantage”,

that the longer you wait it is likely that you will find it difficult to compete with those who already have an established relationship with the users. And we are not only talking about competition from other newspaper titles, as many might describe that the competitors in the local market is not active in mobile either. We can be sure that if media companies do not deliver news to mobile phones, other players will do so – and then take some of your potential readers and revenue. Major global players such as Google are investing seriously in mobile.

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## Revenue generation

Many media companies that are currently in the starting blocks for mobile services are hesitating because they are unsure how to finance their services. We see the same hesitation all over the world, and how to make money from mobile is one of the key issues to find the answer to. In general we see that it is the biggest players that are making money from mobile today, the ones with volumes big enough to attract advertisers or big enough to

get high premium income. Frankly, today in Africa in 2011, as a media company you should probably not go into mobile with the strongest incitement to make money. There is definitely revenue potential, but it is not to be considered easy money. Many of those who start up are doing so in order to position themselves on the market, expand their offering and broaden their readership base, for example. Read more about business models in chapter 4.5.

## 4.4 What services could you offer?

Knowing the answers to all of the above, it is time to start thinking about what services to offer. Do you want to offer a mobile website that publishes breaking news? Or a community with a commenting function about local news for a certain target group? Gossip for teens so that they will send you their pictures to publish in your entertainment section? The opportunities are many, and only you can find out what your audience would benefit from in your mobile offerings. Is there an available niche? Services in local languages could be one opportunity and a niche market to explore. Ericsson made a study 2008 in Uganda and in India, where the lack of services in local languages was seen as the main barrier to use mobile services overall.

Another hint on what to offer could be to look at what you are already offering. If you have a successful blog online – perhaps you would want that to go mobile? Or if you have a popular print pullout once a week for the young – can you build a community around that? Or do you want to create something new? It all depends on your audience and your market. Think of the unique features of the mobile channel; mobile is a personal device, designed for communication/interaction, portable, always (or at least often) with you. Keep this in mind when you are going through ideas of what to offer.

Through our interviews with media companies in Uganda and Kenya, we learnt that the services that have worked best in the region and have the most users are, in this order: breaking news, sports (English Premier League), politics, and entertainment. That breaking news is the most popular feature today can also be explained by the fact that this is one of the most commonly offered services by media houses today – and one of the services that have been running for the longest time and reached a mature audience. It is not necessarily that it is a “killer application”, though it could be. Electronics and mobile phone manufacturer Ericsson completed a study in 2008 in Uganda and in India, looking for future trends in mobile use and content; the services

listed then as the top-ranking services for future use in Uganda were: 1. Advice on healthcare and healthcare products, 2. Finding jobs, advertising your CV, 3. Watching TV, 4. Sharing pictures and 5. News headlines and clippings. In that study 60 Ugandans were interviewed, and 96 percent were positive to the use of mobile content (Ericsson 2008). Ultimately, when launching a new mobile service, media houses should be aware of the importance of market research to ensure that the products they are providing are the products that their target audience want.

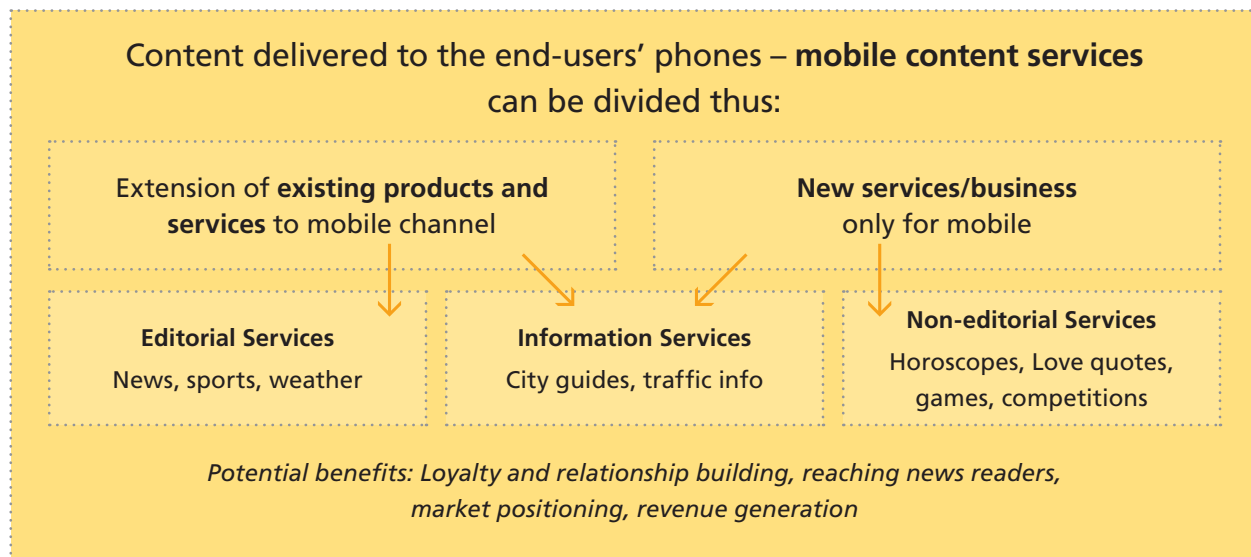
The mobile operator MTN, interviewed in Uganda, which offers a wide array of services from news to music, says that their most widely accessed mobile service is their sports offering, which primarily focuses on English Premier League football; 50 percent of their Value Added Services (VAS) income comes from this service. (In total for the operator, 10 percent of the income currently comes from VAS.) They explain that sports fans are by their nature fanatical and hence a good target audience – they are not likely to stop subscribing to a service about their favourite team. This in turn supports the argument in this report: if there’s something you are really interested in, you are willing to pay for it. After sports content, for MTN in popularity come entertainment such as ringtones, ring-back tones, cinema listings, gossip, love quotes etc. Only after all that comes politics. Africa also offers some quite unique services such as Bible quotes, which has a smaller market share.

What seems to work in Africa today can also be put into an international perspective. There are some similarities – sports and weather has worked well internationally. Local news has worked better than international in the mobile channel. In general, entertainment has worked well – especially immediately after the launch of a service. As the mobile market matures it seems that services that offer the reader unique information, or information that one might need when you are actually mobile and on the go, have proven to be the most popular and have the highest revenue generation.

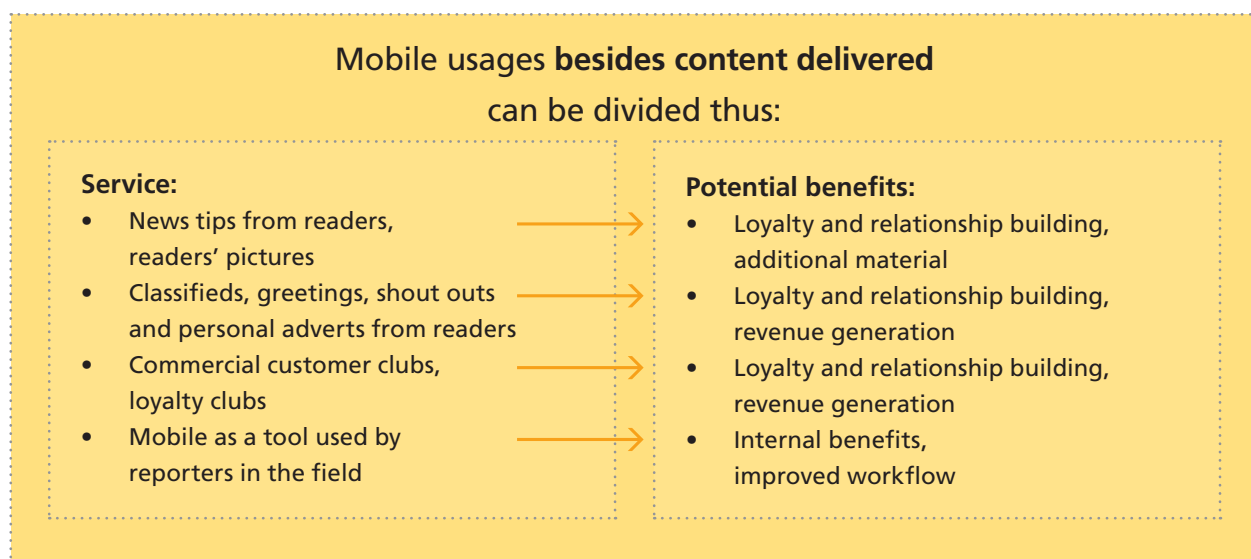


## Classification of mobile services

There are a wide variety of possible mobile services to potentially be offered by media houses, which can be categorised in many different ways. Here is one example of categorisation that could help you decide what kind of services you could offer, depending on what it is you want to achieve with mobile.



Mobile content services can be delivered to the end-user's phone – either as a message (SMS) or on a mobile website, etc., as the first table shows. The second table shows additional examples of where mobile has been used in other ways – to receive content, to charge for content, for commercial offerings and for internal workflows.



## Mobile content services with potential for African media

During each interview conducted for the research for this report, some mobile services and publishing and business concepts were presented to the media companies and then discussed. The aim was to find some consensus of services that could be accepted as possible good solutions at several interviewed media houses – either as a direct copy or with alteration. The concepts presented during interviews are existing services that have worked in other places of the world, all based on technology that could be applicable and adapted by a developing market if the concept itself was deemed interesting and worthwhile. Below you will find some ideas that you might be able to use and adapt to your own market. This selection is based partly on the outcome of the interviews conducted. Please note these ideas do not constitute a uniform recipe for success. The success will emerge only if the ideas are correctly combined with your target audience's needs and if adapted to existing market conditions.



## SMS content services for news, sports, entertainment, etc

Let's begin with a variety of content services delivered via SMS (or possibly on USSD format). As some of the mobile content services that have worked the best worldwide are sports and weather, examples of services like these were presented to and discussed during the interviews with African media. Message-based content can also be breaking news, celebrity gossip or horoscopes – whatever is appropriate for your audience's needs. All participants interviewed agreed sports would work well, while weather was not considered a very useful service in central Africa due to the unchanging climate. As some of the network operators already offer sports results, it might not be a good idea for a local newspaper to set up a similar service and compete. Offer sports only if you can provide something better or unique compared to what is already out there. If not, you would be better to find something your target audience is not already getting from elsewhere.

### Key points to remember:

- Choose an appropriate time to push messages out. If your paper is bought mostly in the morning or

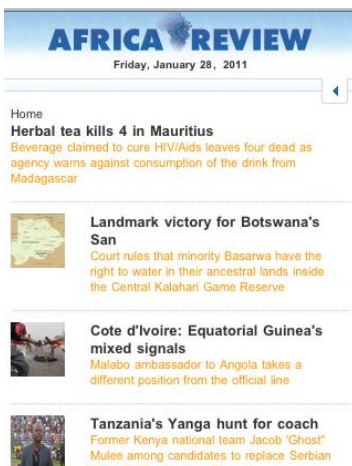
early evening, make sure your news alerts with the latest headlines go out in time. This also brings commercial opportunities – for example you can push a message out when the receiver is likely to be at a supermarket etc. Make use of this benefit and send them out at a time of day when it is of most use.

- One key rule on the financial side – you can charge for niche content and unique material that the user cannot be without. Investigate potential advertisers in your market to finance other kinds of content.
- Messages have a limited number of characters. You will not be able to fit a full story in these 160 characters. Instead, make the most out of the future internet options, and always include an URL for more reading.
- Cross reference to your other channels in your messages and promote your mobile news service online and in the print newspaper to make sure people see it.

## A mobile news website

When you want to offer a mobile website – a mobile version of your existing website – make sure you consider the context of when the service

will be used. The needs of the mobile user are likely not the same as a user sitting in front of his or her office computer. You will likely not want to



handle publishing on mobile manually, so RSS feeds from your website are a good option for a slim organisation. But you will need to consider which sections of the website should be incorporated – what will a user on the move be interested in? It’s likely not to be all content available online. Less information with a good overview is often important than long, data-heavy features and articles. You will see more in-depth information about how to set up and design features of a mobile site in chapter 4.5. And also, made-for-mobile and unique content is advisable to add on – see the next example.

**Key points to remember:**

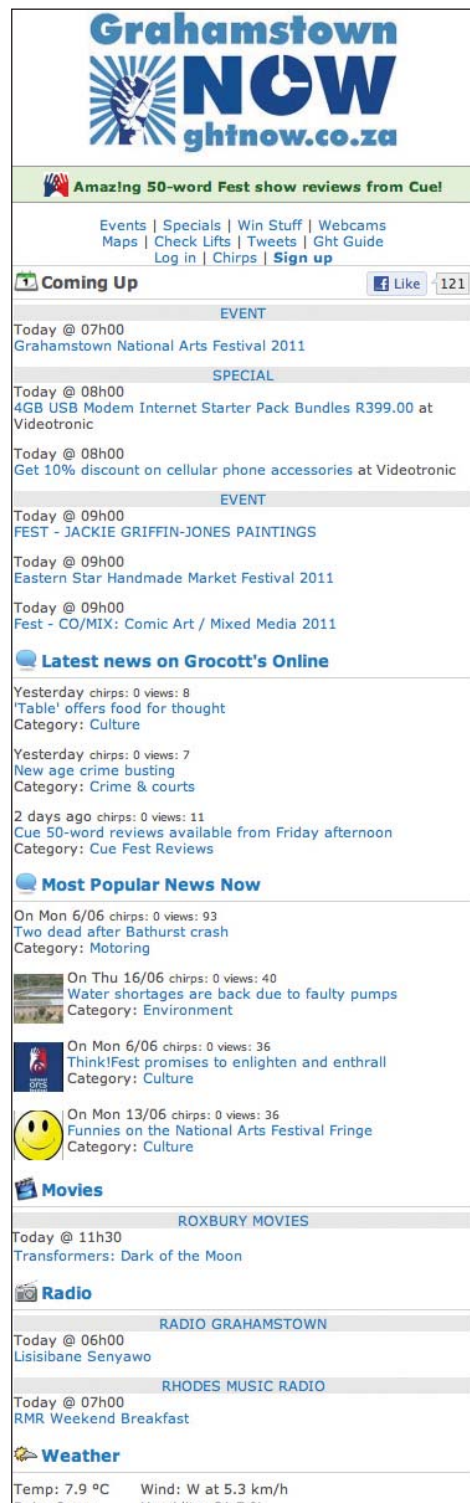
- Keep the page light so it will not take too much time to load or be too expensive for the end-user to load (cost of data).
- Don’t include too much. What information will a reader on the go want to have?
- Set up an automated or semi-automated publishing flow. Too much manual work will be too time-consuming to keep up. And you cannot have a static page – visitors will not come back if they see that the content is not regularly updated.

**A mobile city guide**

This is an example of a very specific mobile website, which can be offered as a unique feature or a sub-category of a media company’s mobile website. This has worked well in several local markets globally. The mobile site (or application) would offer, for example, lists of current events in the local area, movie listings, opening hours of shops, restaurants, bars or hospitals, traffic information, price listings of petrol/gasoline etc. You can also set the page up with “open now” function, so that your user, at any time of day, can see what is open at that hour. And if you already have content such as restaurant reviews in your paper, then you can link your restaurant guide to that content. And of course you can include commercial offerings by selling ad space in banner format to local merchandisers, or, even better, set up a section of the page with “today’s offers” with number of partners – or do like “Grahamstown NOW” (see section 3.3) and publish commercial offerings with even shorter time components. A guide like this can be very extensive or contain less information. You decide on how extensive you want the service to be, depending on how advanced your market is and your resources. A city guide like this could be offered also in USSD format – for a non-GPRS based market.

**Key points to remember:**

- Best manageable in a local environment – where you can make close deals with local merchandisers – rather than on a large metropolitan, regional or national scale
- What information will your target audience need about the local area? Start with a few features you do well and then add on.
- Don’t forget the commercial opportunities – such as a sponsored section with today’s best offers.





## Additional uses of mobile for African media

In addition to offering your readers potentially revenue-generating services via mobile, the growth in mobile phone usage across Africa also has the potential to improve your means of gathering news, both from your reporters and your readers. The list provided below is by no means exhaustive but should hopefully provide you with some ideas.

### Mobile as an in-channel for personal ads, shout outs, etc.



Mobile can quite conveniently be used as an in-channel for classifieds, personal ads or greetings. The limitation of 160 characters of an SMS can here be seen as a positive or negative aspect. If you charge per word, it will be negative. If you charge per listing and want manageable and uniform content, then it will be positive. The “built-in” charging function of premium SMS can also be seen as a negative or

positive – negative because such a small share of the income stays with the newspaper, or positive because it is convenient. And also there is the opportunity of mobile money charging – via platforms such as M-PESA etc. MMS is not heavily adopted in the region; however, if MMS is used, you can also send in pictures of the object you would like to sell, etc.

#### Key points to remember:

- Could be a simple way to receive advertisements, paid for in one go and in the right format, if you use a proper tool to gather them.
- Consider mobile money as a payment system instead of premium SMS. If you have profitable classifieds already, you might not want to give away a large chunk of your income to the mobile operators by charging for adverts via premium SMS.
- Consider: is your target audience ready for this? Do they have the mobile skills?

### Commercial SMS club

Offering your loyal readers or the subscribers of your paper extra benefits in the form of a premium club can be a good idea. Benefits could either be access to unique editorial material – or commercial offerings. There are existing newspaper clubs set up to offer the end-user really good discounts or exclusive products or services in local/national stores or with local/national services. Your sales team would need to be heavily involved to find appropriate partners for your audience. The end-user could either get access to the club if he or she subscribes to another mobile service, if he or she subscribes to the print paper, or has bought a certain number of copies, etc. A service like this builds on the relationship with the customer as well as with the advertisers.

Keskisoumalinen, a local newspaper in a university-dominated small town in Finland, encouraged the local students to take out a year-long subscription

by offering massive discounts and special offers for subscribers at local cafes and bars. It was important for the newspaper to realise who formed their key or target audience so that the offers would be appealing and in keeping with the newspaper’s overall brand. If your audience is primarily young readers, they are going to want very different offers than an older audience.

#### Key points to remember:

- Make sure you have really good offers to make sure your messages will not be considered spam – i.e., 50 percent off, etc.
- Works best with an audience that love discounts – students, young, poor... Is this your market?
- Make sure the offers fit your newspaper’s brand and are suitable to your readership.
- Works best in a local environment where local shops want to sign up

## Mobile contributions from the readers

More and more mobiles on the African market are mid-range or even smartphones with built-in cameras. And with the mobile phone always on and always in everyone's pocket, the likelihood of one of your readers being at the right place at the right time to be able to capture an event increases dramatically. Mobile is increasingly playing a part in information gathering. It does not need to be

limited to simple news tips for one-off newsworthy events, but has proven to be of great use at other events such as mapping the aftermath of natural disasters and elections. Using the "power of the crowd" you can gather a large amount of information in a reasonably short amount of time without having to rely solely on your reporters.



## Pictures and news tips from readers

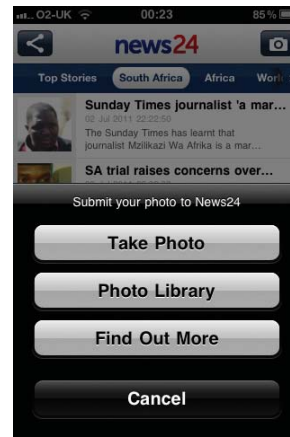
Pictures from the readers are gaining greater importance all over the world. Both the Standard and the Nation in Kenya report that they are using reader pictures and that they are interested in developing this further. And news tips sent in via SMS, without pictures, is another important channel you could build. In Europe, news tips and pictures from readers' mobiles had an explosive development in 2004-2005; for example, in the UK, the breakthrough came following with the London bombings in July 2005. The BBC received thousands of mobile images in connection with the terrorist attack, which changed the BBC's view of news reporting. The trend has continued since then, and mobile tips pictures are used more and more extensively in the media. One important issue here is – how do you get the readers to send the material to you and not to your competitors?

### Key points to remember:

- Set up an easy-to-remember number. If your audience remembers the number when he or she sees something worth submitting, the likelihood that he or she will send it to you is in greater. We have seen different examples of how this can be done. For example, in Sweden many local newspapers have chosen numbers that incorporate the same numbers as the area access code of the town or region. And in Uganda we saw that the Daily Monitor has chosen the short code 6933 because their radio station's frequency is 93.3 FM (and all short code start with 6).
- Promote the number and use it in all possible ways. Use your existing channels: paper and online, and TV and radio if these are part of your group, to promote that you would like to receive pictures or tips. Really try to work the

number in. For example, the Swedish national evening paper Aftonbladet, which uses the short code number 71000, reinforces the number by offering 7100 SEK (1140 USD) to the person who sent in the week's best picture and 71000 (11,400 USD) to the best picture of the year. If the reader wants to send a tip or photo via email, the address is [71000@aftonbladet.se](mailto:71000@aftonbladet.se).

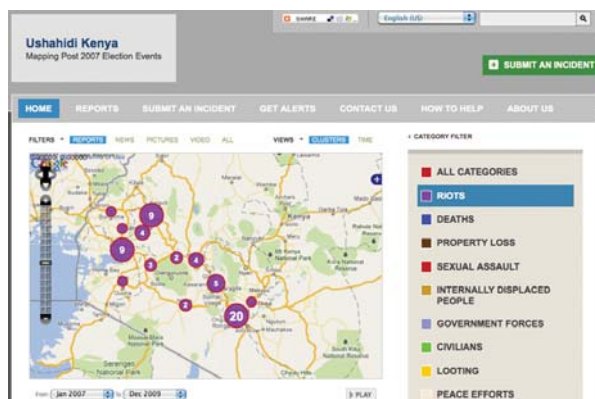
- Make sure you use the number when it matters. For example, if there is a big news story that you are updating online, such as a large warehouse fire, ask the readers for their pictures on the website. "Are you there? Send us your pictures!" This will also provide you with content for the next day's newspapers.
- Give credit to the readers' photographs. Whenever you use a reader-submitted picture in print or online, make sure you mark it so that all readers can see that it is a reader picture. It will explain to the reader why the quality of the picture might be poor, and the publishing itself will likely promote the services even further. People like to see their contributions published. You can create a logo that is always published next to a reader picture – where the tips number is included – to make sure it is even better promoted.
- Make sure you give feedback to the readers. With most short code SMS systems, you will have a return SMS to send back to the person who sent in something. Make sure you always use that to confirm receipt of the contribution and thank the contributors so that they know that it has been submitted successfully.



- And last but not least – to make sure they choose you: give them a reward. This works differently in different cultures; from what we've found in interviews, some media houses in the region would be happy to give out a reward, while others would not. In Europe it is the same. The standard in Sweden, for example, is to give out quite a substantial reward if a picture is used in print or online. But in Austria, the paper Kleine Zeitung has had great success with readers' pictures – with the policy of never giving any kind of reward. Online, the BBC in the UK regularly features galleries of readers' photos on a wide range of different topics (from news events such as a protest to a weekly feature on Scotland), but again, they do not offer any money for such photographs. They see that the readers want to get published, and the recognition of seeing their pictures in print is enough, without need for a further monetary reward. In a market without competition this could very well be true also in Africa. What would work best in your market?

## Crowdsourcing – getting the audience to contribute to a specific project

Many media houses have tried doing polls, asking today's question etc., to get the readers to start contributing information. Not a bad idea as the audience has to learn that they can communicate with the media in this way, and how to do so. And



there are many more opportunities available – encouraging reader engagement and contributions of content and data will not only give you the content you need but at the same time give the readers a chance to feel involved.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, several NGOs have tried gathering information from the public using technology that newspapers could also make use of in their own newsgathering, such as the enterprising African-built crowdsourcing and crowdmapping platform Ushahidi ("witness" or "testimony" in Swahili). Launched during the post-election violence in Kenya after the presidential elections in 2007, the platform collected information, mostly sent in via SMS, to map the unrest as it unfolded, alerting people to potential trouble spots and assisting



emergency services find those injured. This platform has now been used by numerous different NGOs and news organisations for a whole host of projects (see text box).

Chapter 3.1 featured an article on how crowdsourcing was used in Uganda during the presidential elections in February 2011. The purpose-built system managed by UgandaWatch.org used a complex code system so that the 160 characters in a text message were set to maximum use. By training numerous volunteers, a predefined set of criteria and responses were set up. For example, in response to two predetermined questions “Has there been an election violation in your area?” and “What violation are you reporting?”, an extremely short text message could be sent: “1.y, 2.c”, where “y” indicated “yes”, “c” would be a predefined response to question two meaning “ballot rigging”. Several more questions and answers were also used. Although the predetermined code meant that more information could be included in the 160 characters of a standard SMS, this did involve a significant amount of training of those responsible for submitting and interpreting the data. The biggest expenses UgandaWatch faced in this project were the cost of the website development, the cost of the training of people, and most of all – the cost of publicity. The latter can to a large extent

be minimised if a media house were to set up a crowdsourcing service – as media groups can use existing channels, such as the newspaper, radio station etc. that you might already have in your group to promote the projects. Costs relating to a crowdsourcing project’s website can also be mostly avoided by using an existing open-source free service instead of paying for the development of a bespoke platform.

**Key points to remember:**

- Have a clear concept for your project, and know why are you gathering this information and how will you use it. The clearer this is to your readers, the more likely they are to engage in it.
- Promote your project – if readers don’t know about it, they can’t engage.
- Ensure you have enough resources to monitor the incoming information. If the readers/ contributors do not see updates on a regular basis, they will be less likely to submit new information.
- Choose the most appropriate submission method for your readers; email is cheaper, but more people have access to SMS. Can both be used?
- Stick at it! Don’t do the project half-heartedly – the more enthusiastic your media outlet is, the more your readers will be too.

NOKIA  
N73



**Ushahidi**  
crowdsourcing crisis information

View Incidents

+ Add Incident

About Ushahidi

Quit



# The crowd **maps potholes** in Kampala

Author: **Sam Rich**, Media Development Consultant, Uganda/UK

Potholes are as much a part of today's Uganda as the smell of grilled pork and banana beer, and while the capital's better roads are smooth ribbons of tarmac scarred with just the occasional pothole, many more resemble very long thin potholes marked with just the occasional outcrop of tarmac.

Aside from the old jokes about going fishing in potholes or calling them poor-man's swimming pools, analysts say the state of Uganda's roads is a symptom of a wider malaise.

"Potholes have become a symbol of bad government in Africa," says Ole Tangen, editor of the monthly magazine Kampala Dispatch.

He came up with an idea to shine a new light on this old issue by drawing up a map of the city's potholes. He didn't have the money to develop it in-house but realised that technology could help them "crowd-source" the map. The map could feature on the website and in the magazine and show clearly which areas had the worst roads.

Tangen explains: "People could email us their photos of potholes, or just explain where they were, and we could put them on a map of the city."

"It didn't cost us anything as we didn't have to produce the content. We got the public, the readers involved; it became fun, and they felt like they had a stake in the story."

They did it using a free tool called Ushahidi, built by the nonprofit tech company of the same name that "develops free and open source software for information collection, visualisation and interactive mapping". Built to map the riots after Kenya's 2007 elections, Ushahidi is normally used to chart humanitarian crises such as the earthquakes in Haiti and Japan. More recently it's been used to chart the pro-democracy protests in the Middle East.

Web developer Ssozi Javie says he was able to build the page with Ushahidi integrated in just a few days.

"It didn't require special technical knowledge, but my experience of setting up sites using WordPress and Joomla [two popular web content management systems] was enough to figure it out. You don't need to do any coding."

However, despite the ease of set-up and a popular cause, the mapping exercise was not

the success that the staff at the Kampala Dispatch had hoped it would be.

According to Tangen: "That's the hardest thing: the marketing.

"We didn't have any budget, but we put it in the magazine, we used Twitter, and we set up a Facebook 'Friend a Pothole' page – we had an idea about people sponsoring potholes.

"But in the end, we didn't get enough contributions, and the magazine was still unknown at that time. Perhaps it was a good idea that we unveiled a bit too early."

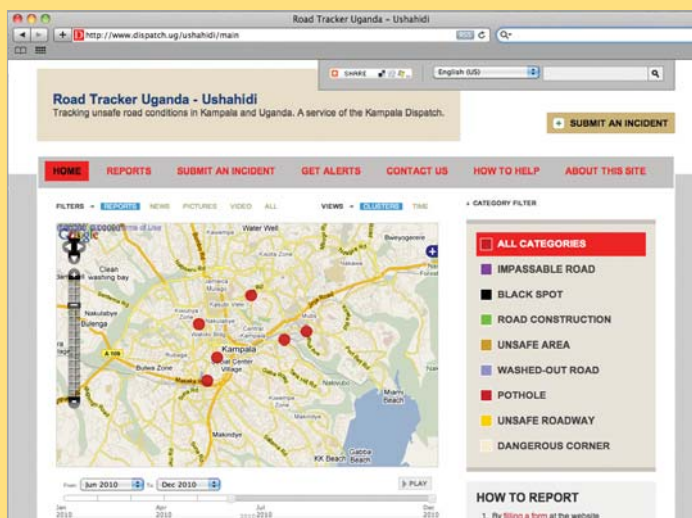
As readers become more used to interacting with newspapers – via comments sections and social media tools such as Twitter and Facebook – they'll also become more engaged with sites like Ushahidi that allow them to create content. As with many new features, persistent marketing can be key, repeatedly reminding readers of the project.

Although the project was not the success the Kampala Dispatch had hoped for, Tangen says he still sees a great use for the tool for both the media and NGOs.

"Ushahidi can also receive SMSs; if we did it again, we'd set that up so that anyone with a mobile phone can contribute.

"I think people will use it more and more for governance issues – like fixing potholes or teacher attendance. And NGOs will start partnering with newspapers and radio. We help get their message out, and they do the monitoring and follow-up.

"Ordinary people don't feel their voices are heard, and this is one way of putting those small voices together so that people just have to listen."





# Planning to crowdsource? Here's how!

By **Louise Hallman**, Project Manager, Mobile News for Africa, WAN-IFRA

The Ushahidi platform is one possible tool you could use to implement a crowdsourcing project. It is free to download, straightforward to use and can be applied to a host of different situations.

Do you want to try using Ushahidi? This is how you can do it:

- First download the free Ushahidi platform from [www.ushahidi.com/products/ushahidi-platform](http://www.ushahidi.com/products/ushahidi-platform).
- Then upload the files to a new directory on your site, and set up a new MySQL database via your web-host's control panel. You can access the Ushahidi set-up page through your browser and attach it to the database. Then you can customise it – adding your title, categories, colours, and centring the map wherever is appropriate.
- Messages which are sent – either via SMS or email – to your Ushahidi platform will not be added automatically to your map. You can create numerous users who can approve the messages. This will give you the opportunity to check for any duplicates and verify any information.

## Examples of Ushahidi in action:

- Uganda: Road Tracker Uganda, Dispatch.ug/ushahidi – mapped potholes in Kampala
- Uganda and Kenya: StopStockOuts.org – maps health clinics that are running out of key medicines like those for HIV and vaccinations
- Kenya: BuildingBridges.co.ke – maps peace and social change initiatives after the post-election violence
- Ushahidi has been used for election monitoring in several African countries, including Ivory Coast, Wonzomai.com and Nigeria, ReclaimNaija.net. In Egypt, five competing Ushahidi-based platforms monitored the 2010 elections – Ushahid.com/Egypt, Shahid2010.com, EgyptElections2010.crowdmap.com, EntkhabatShaab.crowdmap.com and AboBlash.crowdmap.com

Anyone can now set up Ushahidi in a few minutes with Crowdmap. It's a simpler version of Ushahidi hosted on their servers that's been used to map a wide range of different projects – not just natural disasters. Recent examples include: public transport strikes in London (TubeStrike.crowdmap.com), vacant properties in New York (VacantNYC), bicycle collisions in Canada (SaskatoonBikeMap) and even papal visits (PapalVisit). What could you use it for?



English (US)

**London Tube Strike Map - November 28th/29th 2010**  
Mapping the Tube Strike - with your help. Enquiries? Tweet @cward1e and @SteveKPhillips

**SUBMIT A REPORT**

HOME REPORTS SUBMIT A REPORT GET ALERTS CONTACT US ABOUT THIS PROJECT

Each red dot marks a different travel report. Most reports are from you, with some from BBC London reporters. If you click on a dot and then click on the text in the pop-up bubble, you will be able to see whether the report has been verified.

FILTERS → **REPORTS** NEWS PICTURES VIDEO ALL

FULL SCREEN MAP

Scale = 1 : 433K 0.00000, 0.00000 EPSG:900913 Map data ©2011 Tele Atlas - Terms of Use

CATEGORY FILTER [HIDE]

- ALL CATEGORIES**
- BUSES
- ROADS
- TRAINS
- TUBE
- BOATS
- STATION CLOSURES
- AUDIO REPORTS
- BORIS BIKES
- TIPS
- BBC LONDON REPORTERS

## Mobile as a tool for reporters

Besides encouraging your readers to share information with you via SMS, why not encourage your own staff to use mobile more? More and more phones on the market across Africa have cameras built in, which can be used for photo and video. Even without photo or video capabilities, mobile phones can ease communication between the reporter in the field and the editor in the office, as well as directly between the reporter or editor and the readers. And today there are quite reasonably priced camera phones on the market, and second-hand market, with a resolution of a couple of megapixels or more – the pictures they can submit are usable both in paper and online.

A reporter who is equipped with a camera phone could even become an eyewitness to a news event in his leisure time as well and then be able to report.

Besides photo and video functions, some phones also have audio recorders integrated, which can be used to capture additional sound for multimedia slideshows or podcasts which can be made available on your website. There is free online open-source software available, which makes editing and converting video and audio easy and affordable. Freeware for podcasting is also readily available.

We have also seen innovative examples of taking mobile reporting beyond your own staff; Grocott's Mail in Grahamstown, South Africa, has made use of a grant from the Knight Foundation to train several mobile citizen journalists. The initiative – part of their wider *lindaba Ziyafika* ("The News is Coming" in Xhosa) project – trains local high school pupils in basic news-gathering techniques, using their mobiles to capture content, providing both the newspaper with additional content and the local students with new skills.

Journalists equipped with mobile phones can also more easily interact with the readers in social media – such as Facebook or Twitter. A free version of Facebook is available in several African countries (0.facebook.com)

– and Twitter, accessible via SMS in Cameroon, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda and Sudan, and this can give you a direct route to your readers without the need to update your newspaper's website.

The newspapers we spoke to for this report already have a presence on Facebook and Twitter, but most are still using these platforms just as a headline listing service. But it can be used for much more: updating your newspaper's Twitter or Facebook account as you are on the scene provides the readers with live coverage – it provides your "followers" with a running commentary of an event, such as a football match, important press conference, concert or protest.

### Key points to remember:

- Encourage usage – test it at a certain event where clear guidelines are given beforehand and then follow up. It can be a town party or special reporting trip you do for the newspaper.
- It might not be a financially viable option to provide all reporters with mobile phones. But perhaps you can get one mobile phone dedicated to usage for live publishing from the field?
- If you are to encourage your reporters to do live tweeting, etc. make sure you have a routine to follow up. With the speed and ease of publishing these platforms offer, it is likely that you will need to quality check afterwards.
- Training is key! Don't assume just because your reporter has a mobile phone that he or she will know how to use its full potential as a news gathering tool.

These were a few examples of services that could potentially work in Sub-Saharan Africa. But we would advise you to do more research on your own and get to know your market to find out more about what could work for you. Once you have come up with a few ideas of what you want to do, it is time to start getting practical – and start thinking "how".



*Grocott's Mail have launched a programme whereby local teenagers are trained to report using their mobile phones and have use of a "citizen journalism newsroom" (see chapter 3.3)*

© Louise Hallman

## 4.5 How do you offer it? How to “mobilise” properly

The mobile definition is broad as it encompasses message-based services, mobile websites and applications. In general, you need to find out who your users are and how mature your market is. Is it a developed market, or do people still use low-end phones? SMS has the broadest reach in most of Africa, as the smartphone segment is still small but quickly growing. Mobile internet access is expected to grow at a staggering rate of 843 percent in Kenya for the year up to September 2011 (Vodafone, 2011), but if you want to offer services today, SMS is still a good choice. However, if you want to develop a service for tomorrow's users – websites or even applications could be the wise choice. Or if you are targeting an urban audience or a high-end or diaspora market, mobile web and applications may already be what the audience expects. If you are still hoping to reach the broad mass in a developing market – options besides SMS could be making your content available on a mobile network operator's portals/STK/USSD feeds instead of via a bulk SMS partner or your own bulk SMS system. There is a hype about mobile applications, but please be aware that the uptake of the most advanced devices is still low in most parts of Africa; however, this could be appropriate if you have a large diaspora audience in countries where smartphone uptake is more widespread. You should create services for your users in a format that they have access to.

A few very hands-on things to consider when you set up an SMS service is to remember that an SMS message is 160 characters long, so you need to make maximum use of those, including a link to your mobile website, if you have one. Most mobiles display a preview of a received message, so try to write a headline to fit this preview. And remember: you can likely charge for unique content; for broader content like general news, try to get that content ad financed to offer it to your end-user for free.

When we are talking about a mobile website, or how to “mobilise” your website, there are a few important things to consider along the way. Two of the most important are speed and cost. Your users will likely be on different networks with different data capabilities, so you need to set up a page that is light enough for all phones, to avoid high data charges and long load times. News24 in South Africa learnt the hard way (see chapter 3.3) and today estimate that a page should not weigh more than 35 kb to be able to be loadable at reasonable speeds in different kinds of networks – GPRS, EDGE, HSDPA. The weight of the page is also directly attributed

to the cost of using the data to be able to read the page. As the prepaid market is so big in Africa, users will directly see what it costs them to visit your site. Make sure you optimise your page appropriately and deliver only what they need or ask for. Not only has the “weight” in kb mattered, also the size – i.e., width and height. You will likely need to optimise for three screens if you are operating in a broad market. If you build your mobile website to cater for small screened phones, it is unusable on larger ones. And if you build for large screens it is very difficult to use on smaller. And if you design for the “average phone” it will not be an ideal experience for anyone else. This is especially valid if you work a lot with pictures. For text-based services you can get away with more setting up one or two versions. Consider who your users are and what devices they use if your resources are limited. It is important that the web publishing system you use has handset recognition, i.e., so that it “senses” if it is being visited by a mobile or a web browser – and sends out the appropriate version of the mobile site. It should be built with RSS feeds to it, so that it is all handled automatically. The simplest, smallest version can be text-based, the next contain smaller pictures, and the largest, full pictures and multimedia.

When you design a mobile website, look to the lowest common denominator of your audience. Make it easy to use (for those with limited mobile experience), make it intuitive (for those with limited literacy capabilities), make it “snacky” (for those who want an overview and fast information, rather than lots of long-form journalism) and make it expandable for those who have the advanced phones. In short: mobilise properly – just making your existing website smaller is not enough – you should “mobilise not miniaturise” (Bishop, 2010).

Another “how” question is: how do you do it? Alone or with others? Perhaps you already have a bulk SMS partner or have a system for web publishing that already supports mobile publishing? Or maybe you will have to start from the beginning and look for partners – or build your own system. Many newspapers in Africa we have met that already work with mobile, say that they are looking at developing their own mobile SMS systems with charging functionality, with the biggest reason being that the revenue sharing model for paid-for services does not allow much income for content providers such as newspapers. And as the mobile network supplier's revenue share is seen as non-negotiable, cutting out a middle man is considered the only option. Another



reason stated to have your own system is that you then ensure that you have access to all customer data, that is to say – you will build your own database and know who your users are instead of that information belonging to the supplier/network operator.

In general though, building such a system is not what would be generally recommended – unless you are a major player on the market with existing competence in-house. For small and midsize media companies partnering is recommended. However, be careful when choosing a partner and it is advisable to negotiate the conditions for both revenue share and insight/access to the user database.

And remember if you do not have access to your user data it will be very difficult for you if you are considering an advertising-financed model. The recommendation is based on the belief that a media company should do what they do best – delivering news and information – and not developing technology. Perhaps you have a sister newspaper who you can team up with? Also interviewed in Uganda was service provider Yo! Uganda, which has as well come to the realisation that, after first trying and then failing at it, they should not try to create content themselves. Their expertise is technology and should remain so.

Consider the options in your market. If you want to be able to charge for content, you will also need to consider what payment method you will use: will you offer a subscription with a monthly fee or charge per sent/received message? Remember that if you offer a subscription, in most countries there are regulations under which you must tell your subscribers of such information as repeated costs and how to unsubscribe, often on a repeated, regular basis. Adhering to these regulations may cost you money (i.e., in sending out SMS messages to each subscriber), so take this into consideration when determining how much, if anything, you are planning to charge for your service. Also you can consider using other payment mechanisms. We have seen examples of African news media for example offering monthly subscription of services with payment via mobile money to avoid the unfortunate revenue share for premium SMS.

You can also partner up with other content providers or entrepreneurs for services that could be useful for your services. There are several entrepreneurial and socially aware applications currently being developed across Africa. For example, we have seen various health and sexual health services available; one such service is Text To Change, a question and answer text message service, which is being run with the support of several overseas aid agencies and African mobile companies. In the mobile agriculture market several entrepreneurs are building services. Pamoja Media,

funded by Rockefeller foundation, is building an application that will allow farmers to communicate with each other, facilitating easier buying and selling of crops. They have dubbed the application “a Facebook for farmers”, with the ultimate goal of economically developing the farmers involved. The target group are rural farmers with internet-enabled phones. The iHub in Nairobi, a technology incubator for keen developers in online and mobile, saw the development of two separate services: “M-farm” – targeted at farmers in rural areas who need information on weather, prices for crops etc., and which works with interactive voice – and “iCow”, which maps the dairy cycle of the cow.



Both are paid-for services, with both now providing a profit for its developers.

A third important question is: how do we reach them? If we talk about messages, we’ve found that many of the service providers in the region can offer you audience/recipients of your service through their network. To expand or build your own network, advertising and using your own existing channels is important. Also with the right service you can create a “viral” effect, where people will talk about your service and spread the word for you. But for that to happen you need to deliver something unique that really fills an existing need in your target group. For the website, as well as the message-based services, you need to market your services, using your own channels, to see any results, or people will simply not discover them.

A common method of mobile web publishing today is RSS feeds that automatically publish material. This is the same in Africa as in many other parts of the world. However, experts still claim that creating content uniquely for mobile is important to really use the advantages of a mobile phone. So make sure you set up your feeds in a thought-through manner that presents the content to the end-users in a way they need it in their mobile context where they will read the page. And if you have the resources, add specific, made-for-mobile content.

# Choosing publishing systems – an overview

Author: **Professor Peter Wentworth**, Department of Computer Science, Rhodes University, South Africa

Venturing into bulk text messaging services and mobile web can be a confusing process for a newspaper or news organisation new to using mobile to deliver their news, but it needn't be. This article outlines what sort of systems you will need in place in order to deliver these mobile services, what technical and cost considerations you will need to take and – most important – how you can generate revenue from this new platform.

## Bulk SMS services

A bulk SMS service provider will typically send and receive SMS on your behalf and provide an email to SMS gateway, or integration into a package like Outlook, allowing you to manage your contacts and messaging from an already-familiar interface.

If you have in-house IT systems managing your subscribers, their interests, and your content, you'll want the service provider to expose an API (application programming interface) that lets your programmers link your system to the provider's gateway service. Alternatively, look for a provider that also provides a package to do it all for you.

Good analytics – being able find out how often subscribers respond to special offers or enter your SMS competitions – will help refine your business cases.

Cost is important. Two popular charging models exist: per SMS allows you to purchase SMS bundles with all destinations costing one SMS. Alternatively, you purchase fixed-price credits. The credit cost of each SMS varies by destination country and network. Also look for any fixed monthly subscription or hidden costs and whether there is a minimum monthly usage requirement, and if discounts are applicable to bigger bundles.

Inbound SMS messages usually cost about one-third of the outbound price, but not all networks accept messages from their competitors. Check which networks will or won't be able to reach your inbox. Explore your local options and compare their offerings. The website [www.developershome.com/sms/howToChooseSMSSGateway.asp](http://www.developershome.com/sms/howToChooseSMSSGateway.asp) might be helpful.

## Charging your users

Premium SMS numbers are one way to charge. A reader could place a small advertisement, enter a competition, vote in a poll, request a weather forecast, buy a ringtone, register for headlines, or express an opinion via premium SMS, thus

generating revenue for your newspaper. But networks typically take up to 50 percent of the revenue, and your gateway provider will also take their slice and demand minimum monthly volumes, thus reducing your potential income, so be aware of these revenue sharing agreements when considering providers. Prices are inflexible.

Newer, more flexible mechanisms make it easy to transfer money from one mobile phone to another. The success of M-PESA in Kenya is the poster-child example, with over four million subscribers. Besides money transfer, one can pay school fees, bills, and top up a savings account. Vodacom released M-PESA in South Africa in 2010, predicting 10 million users within three years. Subscribers keep an M-PESA wallet on their handset, and can send payments to another mobile phone, buy airtime, and manage their M-PESA accounts. Charges are cheaper than Premium SMS services – often between one and five percent of the transaction value. The receiver can redeem the value at a number of supermarkets, garage forecourts, retailers and stores.

However, this payment channel will not work for micro-payments of a few cents at a time. You could consider running your own system where users purchase credits in bulk and they're slowly consumed. Skype use this model when you phone a non-Skype phone. The Internet currently does not seem to offer good micro-payment options.

## Building a mobile website

We have basic phones that cannot browse at all, those with limited browsing (often using WAP), and full-browser smartphones, and tablets, e-book readers and PCs. Phones with poor resolution and slow data rates have fragmented the Internet and demand specially tailored mobile web sites. But a lack of standards and moving capabilities makes this a quagmire, often requiring different versions of the site for each target device. Additionally, you are less likely to generate revenue from users of lower-end handsets. The smartphone is outperforming sales of lower-end phones, with capabilities and screen resolutions that erode the need for a special mobile site. Prices are falling fast, and devices like the iPad are showing distinctly different patterns of consumer usage – they tend to be used in leisure time, when shopping and buying patterns are different.

At the high end, BlackBerry holds the largest market share (35 percent) followed by Apple's iPhone (28 percent). Apple exclude popular technologies like Flash from their devices because it can run games that would threaten their App Store business – another pitfall for website developers. Microsoft's Windows Mobile is being squeezed between Apple and Google's Android, and they've responded by partnering with Nokia, promising a much wider range of Windows-on-Nokia smartphones.

So, ask yourself: do I really want a separate website for mobile? What devices will it target? What resolution? Colour? Will the mobile website offer only a subset of my main website? Do I have long-term plans to keep both going, or is this just an interim solution until all devices can run a standard browser?

If you go this route, you're probably going to have to cater separately for each different category of mobile device, or you're going to have to design for the lowest common denominator if you want something that works across the spectrum.

The strategic question is whether basic handset users will leapfrog the limited browser devices in favour of full-browser devices. Observing young people on college campuses may provide early evidence

of any trends. If you think this is a likely scenario, a possible strategy is to aim for a single unified website, with concessions to your mobile customers by keeping navigation simple, keeping pages small, and ensuring the layout can work reasonably on a mid-range device. Then provide services to the marginalized handsets via SMS, text, and voice. By tracking how often the two services are used, you'll be able to fine-tune the balance and respond to the market volatility.

Readers can find more opinion at [www.cioupdate.com/trends/article.php/3884961/The-Mobile-Web-What-to-do-with-WAP-in-2010.htm](http://www.cioupdate.com/trends/article.php/3884961/The-Mobile-Web-What-to-do-with-WAP-in-2010.htm)

#### Where Next?

2008 was the year that mobile web access first exceeded fixed-line web access; the shift to mobile has been accelerating ever since. Vigorous competition from some of the world's largest corporations sees them jostling for market share in a game that is changing the way content is delivered and consumed. News and media organisations need to solve some tricky issues as they juggle the opportunities and the risks, refine their value propositions, understand their customers, establish their revenue and payment models, and enter the fast-moving world of mobile.



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## 4.6 How will you finance the services?

We have already touched upon the issue of financing and possible revenue generation. Making money from mobile is still a challenge for many media houses in the world. But as you have seen also by the case study in this report, some African media houses have found profitable solutions.

A broad division of two business models are:  
1. paid-for services and 2. advertising financed

### Paid-for

We see that in Africa, most message-based services, such as breaking news SMS or the day's horoscope, are offered as subscription at a premium rate. Some media groups offer the same services for free. When you consider charging for content, you have to think about what kind of content for which there is a willingness to pay. There is a conception that there is a general willingness to pay for mobile content because users are used to everything costing something via the telephone – making calls, sending SMS messages etc. Additionally, the mobile phone contains an inbuilt payments function (such as premium SMS) that makes it easy to charge the end-user. However, this conception has not been proven to be universally true in all parts of the world. Rather, it has been proven that the kind of content users are willing to pay for is necessary content, i.e., what you “need to know”, not what is “good to know”. Another matter to consider is: is the content unique or is it available for free elsewhere? In general it has been proven that the willingness to pay is higher for targeted and niche

models. There are many versions of each model, as well as combinations of the two. For the combined model, however, it is important to raise a warning flag; please consider that a reader who is paying for a service might get annoyed by also receiving copious amounts of advertising. For an introduction to the financial conditions in Africa – please see chapter 2.

content than broad and general. When meeting with the African media houses we found that there is some homework to be done by the African media on what to and what not to charge for. It is very common today to charge for all content delivered to an end-user, including very general information such as tomorrow's headlines, but you likely have greater success in charging for more original or niche content. Also, think about what amount you charge. Remember that SMS is a volume business – the money will not come from high prices paid by a low number of end-users but from a high number of end-users (more willingly) paying low prices.

Smartphone penetration is growing fast in Africa, but a majority of users still does not have such advanced phones. With advanced phones such as the iPhone or Android-based operating systems, applications are more common. Applications are small programmes that you install on your phone. Several of these applications offer “in-app sales” – i.e., you can charge for specific content or products within the app.

### Advertising

There are many different kinds of advertising-financed mobile services. For example: for mobile websites – banner advertising, for mobile applications – sponsored content, or for message based services – commercial messages at the end of news SMS. What the advertisers will ask for is that your users are in the right target group, that you

know who they are, and that you actually offer a service to a group that is attractive to advertisers. In most cases the advertisers will also request substantial volumes. This means that it can be difficult to have a new service ad-financed from launch before you can prove volumes.

### Message-based advertising

This could either be that you push commercial messages to your audience separately, or that you add a commercial message, for example in the “tail” of your 160-character SMS with content. You could include a “sponsored by...” or URL to a sponsor's website or your own mobile website. You could also take advantage of the “return SMS” most services

providers and operators include in bulk message deals. For example, if you have a competition where readers are to send in the correct answers to quiz questions, you would then use the free return SMS to say “thank you for your answer, the winner will be announced in tomorrow's paper”, and as a text has 160 characters, you would then have as many

characters left to for a commercial message. Please note that in many countries, legislation requires that the recipients have approved direct advertising to their mobile phones before a company is permitted to send them commercial messages.

Whenever you are working with adverts it is important to carefully consider the amount, frequency and disruptiveness so you that do not annoy your readers. Think about how often can you send commercial messages? How should advertising be designed to give results but not seem disruptive? Are the adverts relevant to the target group?

The ads that are the least disruptive are the relevant advertisements – i.e., adverts in which the target group is interested. In many cases mobile is a personal tool where you have the opportunity, with the used of an appropriate service, to build a database that monitors what services an individual uses. (Please note that legislation varies between different countries as regards what is permitted and what counts as registration of political opinions). After a while you will have data that will allow you to offer a person targeted advertising. These databases are one of the greatest benefits of mobile services – and they can be very valuable if you

choose to invest in mobile services financed through advertising, as you can then offer the advertisers a target group with a particular interest. However, what we found in Africa is that in many cases, the databases and customer data belongs to the network providers or system suppliers. In many rural areas a mobile phone is shared; however, it is still common that individuals have their own SIM card, and as it is the SIM card that is attributed to a mobile phone number, the argument of database building is still valid. However, the higher the mobile contract subscription rate is in your market, the easier to build this database as pay-as-you-go customers are not as likely to keep their SIM as long as those who have a contract subscription. In general, the contract subscription rate is however very low in the region.

An advantage with message-based advertising is that it can be time controlled. For example: in the print newspaper, an advert from a grocery shop states that the shop has a discount price on rice on a particular day; at 4 pm the newspaper can send out an SMS with this offer to a selected target group (as many people might at that hour be considering what to have for dinner). Also with an application you can time control adverts by using push notifications.

## Website

The effectiveness of mobile banner ads has been debated. However, it has been demonstrated that mobile banner advertising has a lot higher click-through rate than banner advertising online does. For example, mobile market leader AdMob states that the click-through rates are 10 times higher on mobile than online ([www.admob.com](http://www.admob.com)). There are alternative options to banner advertising on the mobile web, such as sponsorship agreements or creating offers with a time component like Grahamstown NOW (see chapter 3.3).

## Application

Several applications also have, in addition to banner advertising, push advertising notifications, or sponsored pages – for example when a page is loading, instead of the page going blank, a commercial message or logo appears.

What we have seen as mobile advertising first developed in the US and in Europe, at the start, news publishers looking for advertisers, found that they had to help the advertisers by setting up simple mobile enabled web pages for them – so that for example a banner ad could be clickable and you would land on the brands mobile site. It could be that smaller advertisers, in particular, which will be approached by newspapers with a local reach, could need this help too also in Africa.



## 4.7 Is your media house prepared?

Will your staff have the skills and the equipment they need to start working with mobile now? Do you need to offer the editorial or advertising team some training? Usually this is the case! It is not only about teaching the skills; it is also about convincing the staff of the importance of the new channel, the new workflow, etc. This chapter in the report is presented in the form of an article by Jackie Ventom, who describes the process of getting your media house prepared. Here we look at

one particular part of the media business – mobile ad sales.

# Advertising sales transition – going mobile

Author: **Jackie Ventom**, Marketing and Advertising Consultant and Trainer, UK

## The Context for Transition

It is common for senior management to assume that, because they have a sales team who sell newspaper advertising successfully, they will be able to readily adapt to selling an additional digital channel. There are two key interrelated reasons why this is rarely the case:

### 1. The advertiser's relationship with and understanding of the channel

Most businesspeople have "grown up" with newspapers and at least think that they understand them and how they work. This means that, 99 percent of the time, a salesperson has only to differentiate their newspaper from competitors' offerings and make recommendations on advertisement content and design – if even that.

A new channel brings a whole set of unknowns for the potential advertisers, most notably:

- Why do I need mobile as well as (or instead of) print?
- What am I getting for my money?
- How does it work?
- How should I use it?

The potential advertiser needs to be sufficiently positive about the answers to these questions before they will invest in the opportunity.

The task of the salesperson has immediately become a much bigger and more demanding one.

### 2. The salesperson's confidence and expertise

The expertise required by the salesperson is a corollary of the issues the advertiser needs to understand in order to be persuaded to part with his money. But providing this expertise is more complex than simply supplying the salesperson with knowledge.

Experience with selling new communication channels repeatedly shows that it is most often the most experienced (and consequently, in general terms, respected) salespeople who have the greatest problems adapting to selling a new channel. This is not necessarily just because they have cut their teeth on newspapers as salespeople and as consumers, and may be less comfortable with the mobile channel, but also, and more fundamentally, because their very experience makes them reluctant to, in their own eyes, show ignorance and therefore ask questions and accept their need to learn. Rather than recognise and deal with this obstacle to success, they will repeatedly find reasons other than themselves for not even attempting to do it.

What can the Head of Advertising do to address these obstacles?

The model below shows six areas that, prior to adopting a mobile strategy, the organisation is advised to evaluate:





Market, Goals, and to a lesser degree Offer and Process are not decisions and activities for advertising to handle in isolation – they are corporate or at least inter-departmental. These four areas should have been taken care of, or at least be in hand, by the time the mobile initiative, at operational level, reaches the advertising department.

The Head of Advertising should of course be a key

player in these four areas, but it is only in respect of Training and the Sales Team that he or she has total authority and so total accountability for results.

So, in practice, what does the Head of Advertising need to do in respect of Training and the Sales Team in order to deliver not just the expertise to sell the mobile offerings, but the environment and attitude to develop and use that expertise?

### Training

Making assumptions about what members of the advertising sales team do and do not know, or can and cannot do, is a common mistake that renders many training interventions largely ineffective.

The advertising management team need to carry out a comprehensive, accurate training needs analysis i.e., identification of the knowledge and skills each person in the team needs – they will differ – based on evidence, not opinion.

At the very least, each person who is expected to sell mobile or any other channel in addition to print products should be able demonstrate the competencies listed below:

- I can explain to an advertiser how and why a multimedia advertising campaign will work better than a single medium execution
- I can explain to an advertiser the unique role that each medium and product plays within the advertising campaign
- I can make recommendations on how each medium should be used and what business objectives they will help to achieve

- I can advise on advertisement design and content for each different channel that I am selling
- I can explain the audience reach that each element (product and channel) within the campaign will deliver
- I can demonstrate the total value of a print / mobile campaign.

The abilities of each member of the team to demonstrate each one of these competencies may, and often does, vary, in some cases significantly.

The training solution therefore may require different executions for different individuals. This may sound complex, but in the hands of a training professional it does not need to be, and it is the only way of ensuring that the training is justifiable and relevant. This in turn facilitates acceptance from the team. Without this relevance and buy in, investment in training is likely to be money wasted, and lack of expertise will continue to be an impediment to goal achievement.



## Sales Team

In order to foster an environment where each individual member of the team is accountable and willing/able to ask for assistance when needed, and in order for the sales team to wholeheartedly adopt

the new sales procedures, advertising managers should ask themselves the following eight questions before they lead their teams in embarking on selling commercial mobile opportunities.

	Question	Reason
1	Is the selling process easy?	<i>If the answer to this questions is 'no', the salespeople will not do it. Simple.</i>
2	Is the booking process easy?	
3	Does the support exist in ad design?	<i>Without processes that work efficiently the salespeople will have a whole bunch of ready-made excuses.</i>
4	Does the support exist in fulfilment, i.e., a process to ensure what is booked is delivered?	
5	Does the support exist in production areas, not just for one ad campaign at a time but in the event of high volumes being sold?	
6	Is mobile a part of the target / bonus requirements?	<i>If not, salespeople will tend to think you are not serious and will focus their efforts on whatever brings them personally the best returns.</i>
7	Are the mobile targets set on a participative basis?	<i>If the salesperson does not understand how the target relates to their business base and activity level and does not see a way to achieve it, the target may as well not exist.</i>
8	How confident do salespeople feel about acknowledging their weaknesses and asking for help?	<i>If this does not exist, accept that adoption of the new sales procedure will take longer because it is a culture change. Without this open environment, progress will be difficult.</i>

## 4.8 How can mobile fit into the overall digital media strategy?

Many of the news organisations we have met in Africa describe that their approach to mobile has been mostly trial and error. Several also describe that there is no separate mobile strategy – mobile is included in the overall digital media strategy. Some also say that mobile is moving so fast that no fixed mobile strategy is possible. This can be partly true, but you also have to dare to make strategic decisions. But also be prepared to re-evaluate your work as you go along.

Different strategic paths to choose can be doing it yourself or partnering up; to have your content available only on your own platform (to fully own and control your content), or to be available everywhere – such as on a network supplier's portal (with less control but a wider audience).

You can choose to be proactive and strive to be innovative and first, gaining the first mover's advantage with head start of building your brand and your audience in the mobile arena, and in the process be prepared to make mistakes and

hopefully also successes and learn from them. Or you can choose to be a follower and tag on only to the services and products that have been proven successful by others.

How mobile fits into your sales strategy, and how mobile fits in to the newsroom/editorial process is another issue. For advertising: should the media house sell mobile advertising or should you partner up with an external partner such as AdMob? Do you sell mobile advertising separately or in bundles with online and print advertising? For the editorial process: should mobile be given as high priority and importance as print and web? How do you publish – mobile first or print first?

We see examples of all of these different strategies, and we cannot really say that one model is correct or recommended overall – different solutions will work for different organisations. But what we would recommend, however, is to go through these issues with your management and decide on your direction.

# 5. Summary and conclusions

The mobile channel in Africa is of undisputable importance. Africa is one of the regions in the world where mobile usage and mobile internet usage is growing the fastest, and as the internet penetration is low here, mobile is for many Africans the only way to access news and information digitally.

So therefore we advise you to seriously consider taking a move into mobile. Looking into this channel should be on the “to do” list of all African media companies. We do not want to summarise a list of services you could implement; instead, we want to remind you of the list of questions you can ask yourself when you are entering mobile, questions that can help you get one step closer to launching successful mobile services.

1

## Who is your **audience**?

Knowing your audience is of highest importance. Try to pinpoint your potential mobile audience: what is their age, gender, social standing, and financial status? What are their interests, and what is their daily media consumption?

2

## What are your audiences' **needs**?

In what situation can you provide your readers value through the mobile channel? If you look at how your target audience live, you can figure out what kind of information you could provide them with throughout the day, and whether mobile is the best channel for you to deliver that information to them.

3

## What do you want to **achieve** with mobile?

We advise you not to see mobile as a revenue generating channel in the short term – unless your target audience is large and mature. Rather, see it as an investment for the future to start building your brand in the mobile sphere and positioning yourself in an upcoming market, and as a means of tying your readers closer to you. Is this something you want to do?

4

## What could you **offer**?

There are many possibilities. In this report you find some suggestions, both of content services (delivered to end-users) and of “other uses” such as using mobile as a reporting tool. What you should offer depends on your audience and your market. What do they need? Creating relevant content is of absolute key! Make use of the unique features of the mobile channel when you develop a service: mobile is a personal device, designed for communication/interaction; it's portable and always with you.

5

## **How** do you offer it?

The mobile definition is broad as it encompasses message-based services, mobile websites and applications. To decide which of these forms you should offer your content in, you need to find out what kind of mobile users your target audience is today and in the near future. Is it a developed market, or do people still use low-end phones?



6

**How will you finance the services?**

Making money from mobile is still a challenge for many media houses in the world. A broad division of two business models are: 1. Paid-for services, 2. Advertising financed models. In general it has been proven that the kind of content users are willing to pay for is necessary content, i.e., what you “need to know”, not what is “good to know”. And also, if there is something you are passionate about – like your favourite sports team – you are likely willing to pay for information about that.

7

**Is your media house prepared?**

Your staff will likely need both convincing of the importance of the new channel and be given proof of why that is the case. They will also need to test it themselves to understand it, so some training for your staff will be necessary if mobile is to be integrated into the news flow. Some internal guidelines of what to publish when and in what channel will be necessary, and positive synergy effects can be made with cross-referencing between channels.

8

**How can mobile fit into the overall digital media strategy?**

When you first enter mobile, you might want to start dipping your toes into it without a full-blown mobile strategy – which we would even advise. However, you will soon have to make some strategic decisions. Should you partner up with a service provider or develop a system on your own? Do you want your content to be available only on your platform (to fully own and control your content), or to be available everywhere – such as on a network supplier’s portal (with less control but a wider audience).

To conclude, you should always consider how mobile could bring added value to your existing channel portfolio – and not cannibalise. You should offer something unique in the channel and not just the same as you have already published in print or online, so that your mobile offering is complementary to your existing channels, rather than supplementary, and readers will not abandon your other channels.

In the textbox on the next page you will see a summary of some of the best pieces of advice or future mobile predictions for the region that newspapers and media experts in Uganda, Kenya and South Africa gave us during the research for this report – all based on their own mobile experiences so far. We let these words of wisdom conclude this report.

## OUR ADVICE TO AFRICAN MEDIA:

<b>THE AVUSA GROUP:</b>	"Mobile media is 'content snacking' – it isn't a main consumption media".
<b>THE DAILY MONITOR:</b>	"One of the most important lessons learnt is the importance of integrating all channels. There should not be internal competition between departments of what piece of news should go into what channel. All should think multiple media: the news should go into the channel most suitable".
<b>iHUB:</b>	"There is an ongoing M-revolution. Services young people want are first and foremost social media services such as Facebook and Twitter – basically anything around social, entertainment and what is happening now and where are of interest, what is hot and what is not. Mobile web is going to surpass SMS, and the appstore concept will become big".
<b>GROCOTT'S MAIL:</b>	"Monetising is the challenge. You have to give the advertisers something for free first – you have to show them value before they will become interested. Don't go for banner advertisements; instead, create offerings with a time component that is really attractive. When you create services – you have to think mobile, and focus on what works now and when you are on the move".
<b>MTN:</b>	"Go for as many products as possible in your portfolio, as the novelty factor is big. Quantity is key". (Note: MTN's experience is that newly launched services receive much hype then die. It can also have to do with the quality and uniqueness of service.)
<b>NEWS24:</b>	"Make it light!" (Note: here they talk about kilobytes for a mobile website.)
<b>THE OBSERVER:</b>	"It is not an option, not to go mobile. It will be huge in a few years. But you will need to consider how mobile will affect the other products in the portfolio – so you do not cannibalise your existing business".
<b>PAMOJA MEDIA:</b>	"Newspapers should make their web pages adapted for the mobile screen, and they should research what their target audience wants. Today most of the content young people want is available only in social media."
<b>THE MAIL AND GUARDIAN:</b>	"Create services for your target market! If your audience is web-based – that is where you should focus your efforts – not on SMS. Tailor mobile offerings to your audience; a mobile audience is not same as a web audience. Use both gut feel and research, experiment and try soft launches".
<b>THE NATION MEDIA GROUP:</b>	"We believe that a concept similar to ours for Zuqka where mobile citizen journalism content is combined with a print product has great potential. Overall, media companies should not ignore the opportunities and possibilities with citizen journalism. People want to be recognised in both print and online even if mobile is the in-channel".
<b>THE STANDARD:</b>	"Cross promotion between all different platforms – paper, mobile, internet, TV, and radio – is an important part of a media convergence strategy".
<b>YO! UGANDA:</b>	"1. Make sure you look at pricing, and remember that text/SMS is a volume business – the money will not come from high prices charged to end-users but from high volumes. 2. Focus on services that are relevant to your local market. And there is a niche to be explored in Africa for local language services in mobile".

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