

# Africa's mobile phone penetration now 67 percent

By [Adeyemi Adepetun](#) 17 Jun 2015

Sixty seven per cent of Africa's population, estimated to be about 1.13 billion, now has mobile phones...

Besides, about 26.5 per cent (297,885,898) of the population is on the Internet, with 50.3 million on the Facebook. Egypt leads the chart, as the country with the highest number of Facebook users with 13 million of its population on it, making it the world's 20th.

South Africa is in second position, with 5.5 million Facebook users, making it world's 32nd. Nigeria is third with 5.35 million Facebook users and it ranked 36th globally.

Nigeria is currently home to about 190 million connected telephone lines, with 145 million having active subscription. Internet users, according to the Nigerian Communications Commission are about 86 million.



Image via [123RF](#)

According to StarTimes Group Vice President, Media, Michael Dearham, in a document titled: "Content Building in the Digital Era", presented at the 5th edition of the yearly African Digital TV Development Seminar, organized by StarTimes Group, last week in Beijing, China, there are about 722,500,000 mobile phones with 127,500,000 being smartphones on the continent.

Dearham said the increasing population provides opportunities for huge content development, amidst other marketing activities that can boost earnings and at the same time create job opportunities for the teeming army of unemployed youths on the continent.

Already, a report by the GSMA had projected 80 per cent of sub-Saharan Africa (SAA) would have access to mobile phones in the next five years, making up double the current rate of access.

GSMA said by the end of the decade, the mobile industry is expected to contribute \$104bn to the SSA economy.

Currently, the region is the world's least mobile penetrated in the world, as just a few percentage of the population has a mobile subscription.

Low-cost smartphones and affordable mobile broadband packages are bringing more and more people online in Africa, opening up a new market for m-commerce, mobile marketing and apps.

GSMA posited that if network operators and smartphone manufacturers can continue to keep the barriers to entry as low as possible, then the region could see significant growth.

It is possible, however, that the area could become similar to India's mobile market, in which the penetration rate grows, however, many users are unlikely to spend money on apps, driving a need for effective mobile advertising in-app.

In a related development, the latest Ericsson Mobility Report, noted that growth in mature markets comes from an increasing number of devices per individual, adding that in developing regions, it comes from a swell of new subscribers as smartphones become more affordable; almost 80 per cent of smartphone subscriptions added by year-end 2020 will be from Africa, Asia Pacific, and the Middle East.

According to the report, in sub-Saharan Africa, GSM/EDGE-only subscriptions will remain predominant up to 2020, due to the high number of lower income consumers using 2G-enabled handsets.

Speaking on the report, Senior Vice President, Chief Strategy Officer, Ericsson, Rima Qureshi, said: 'This immense growth in advanced mobile technology and data usage, driven by a surge in mobile connectivity and smartphone uptake, will make today's big data revolution feel like the arrival of a floppy disk. We see the potential for mass-scale transformation, bringing a wealth of opportunities for telecom operators and others to capture new revenue streams. But it also requires greater focus on cost efficient delivery and openness to new business models to compete and remain effective.'

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