

All the mobile 'need to knows' this holiday season

From mobile data-saving tips to numbers to call in a roadside emergency, the festive season's the time of year when mobile-related advice flies almost as fast as those trolley races down aisles.



Source: pixabay.com

Need to know how to trim your mobile spend in anticipation of those heavy grocery bills this December? Want to restrict your children's app usage in favour of some grandma and grandpa time between Christmas and New Year? South Africa's vibrant mobile sector is sure to publish reams of useful consumer information over the holidays.

Keeping up with all these varied mobile hints and tips across so many media platforms can be tricky, as our attention turns towards tinsel, turkeys and (so many) treats.

The Wireless Application Service Providers' Association of SA (Waspa) represents over 384 of the firms that develop the lion's share of mobile content, applications and value-added services we enjoy as we laze at the beach, berg and bush during this time of year.

Waspa's been publishing consumer-related mobile information since its inception, almost a decade and a half ago, as part of its consumer protection mandate aimed at building confidence in the industry.

Here are some useful mobile tips for this coming season:

- **Knowledge is Power** - Downloading your mobile network's usage app, opting to receive SMS data usage updates and downloading special data-saving apps will all help you to remain on top of data usage in order to make informed decisions. The more you save on background data, the more data you'll have to use on mobile apps you really want to use.
- **Protecting Children** - SA's mobile networks offer practical ways for parents to protect their children from accessing adult content over the holidays. Ask your cellular network operator what measures they have put in place to protect children in this regard.

Vodacom, for example, enables parents to block adult content from being received on their child's cellphone by dialing *111*123# from the applicable device. For MTN subscribers, dial *101# from the handset, select the content that needs to be barred, create a PIN number and input the parent's mobile number.

- **112 in an Emergency** - All South African cellular users have automatic and free access to the 112 national emergency number operated by the country's cellular networks. This easy-to-remember number, which is the same three-digits worldwide, will put mobile callers in touch with the relevant municipal police, ambulance, fire and rescue services in a certain area.
- **Get to grips with WiFi** - Many cellphone, laptop and tablet users remain connected to relatively more pricey 3G, HSDPA or LTE mobile networks when we visit restaurants and other public places that offer free or inexpensive Wi-Fi connectivity.

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