

Successful events underline importance of tech to Africa

Two OpenRoom forums for Africa, RetailTech and FinanceTech, held in Cape Town last week underlined the importance of technology in Africa and the need for such networking events.



With the relentless rise of multi-channel retail across Africa, RetailTech, now in its third year, attracted some of South Africa's top retailers, looking to harness technology to business opportunity. The conference sessions looked at the dynamic changes predicted over the next five years and explored the power of social media and enterprise mobility.

FinanceTech, the first-ever forum for the sector, enabled financial institutions from across Africa to explore technical solutions to the huge challenge of managing regulation, financial inclusion, and the fast-paced adoption of mobility enterprise. Sessions focused on regulation, risk management, BYOD and mobile security - with a fascinating presentation on guarding against organised crime.

The fast-paced technology developments outlined in the conference were matched by the energetic speed meetings, which were the main focus of the forums, exposing the retailers and financial institutions to numerous vendors of relevance over the four days. The event offered a host of new ideas to the IT teams attending, and opened up new doors for the vendor companies via the pre-matched one-to-ones.

"The 20-minute time slots are great as they force one to focus on what is essential," said first-time attendee, Ferdie Voges of Shoprite. Nnamdi Oranye of Indian Atlantic Telecoms also picked up on the value of focussing efforts, "Extremely valuable in terms of genuine networking and building significant relationships. The focussed approach ensured that it was relevant to every participant and I walked away with more insight to the industry as a whole." Lastly, Jo-Ann Pohl of Standard Chartered Bank noted that it was "an interesting and fruitful session with many follow-up opportunities."