

Mobile will be the TV of the future

According to Discover Digital, a digital entertainment and video on demand (VOD) services company, traditional broadcasting is changing as more consumers turn to mobile.

Discover Digital MD, Stephen Watson, says dramatic changes are taking place both in the broadcasting business and the mobile industry space. Free-to-air and pay-TV channels are losing their appeal as viewers demand their own choice in what they watch, and when. Sports rights holders are also starting to engage fans directly through live offerings or digital rights distribution deals to OTT players.



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Meanwhile, mobile service providers must add value to their voice and data packages by giving customers extra services and content and device manufacturers are looking for key differentiators to continue to engage consumers post the point of purchases. “We live in an era where disruptive technologies are changing consumer habits, particularly with the early adopters being the Millennials and Generation Z,” says Watson. The battle between the OTT players, the device manufacturers and the networks as to who will ultimately own the customer is well underway.

“This sets the scene for an explosion of mobile video on demand content,” says Watson. “In sub-Saharan Africa, connectivity is improving rapidly and the number of smartphones in use is surging, with over 525 million smartphone connections expected by 2020. For many in the region, the smartphone is the only internet access device and the preferred way to consume digital content such as music, TV, movies and educational material.” Deloitte reports that a third of those who have smartphones look at them every five minutes, with 54% of South Africans and 52% of Nigerians already using their smartphones to watch short videos.

"Already, mobile data use is soaring as people increase their use of rich content on social media. Inevitably, they will move to watching feature-length movies and TV shows on demand in far greater quantities on their smartphones too. Mobile operators will seek to encourage data use and retain their customers by offering video on demand services bundled free as part of their overall services. The small screen will become the TV of the majority," says Watson.

This represents a threat to traditional TV players who run the risk of losing their audiences to the convenience and choice of small screen entertainment on demand. "Any broadcaster with no push to mobile will become irrelevant in a decade," says Watson.

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