

The 'amazing grace' of mobile revolution

 Bylssa Sikiti da Silva

3 Mar 2010

From humble beginnings as a simple device with a communications capability akin to a traditional telephone, the cellphone has been transformed and now offers us a whole range of amazing opportunities. So what of the future?



"A cellphone is no longer just a phone, but has actually become a personal computing device, and with all these high-end applications I would say it is more than a PC itself and this has brought many opportunities, especially in emerging markets," Brandsh Media founder and CEO Angus Robinson said yesterday, Tuesday 2 March 2010.

Robinson, who recently returned from the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona, Spain, was speaking at the Radisson Blue Hotel in Sandton, Johannesburg.

However, Robinson warned SA operators to refrain from selling their ideas or services to the developed world, US and Europe in particular, which he said are well advanced in this sector.

Choose your target carefully

He said SA's mobile innovative projects should target markets such as Brazil, India, South America and the rest of Africa which have similar needs and economic situation and lack resources of US and Europe's magnitude.

He also urged emerging markets to liberate and recycle phones as there is still a huge demand for SMS, USSD and basic WAP sites.

"We will not catch up with them, but let's take what works here," he added.

Robinson stressed that SA, which currently has some 40 million SIM cards in use, needs to look at putting into the market as many 'ordinary' phones as it can and develop and upgrade services that can run on those devices to make it relevant to its society, with a view of tackling issues such as crime and education.

"We don't need to focus on a R8000 iPhone, but rather a US\$15 phone such as the Vodafone 150," he said.

"This is not to say that iPhone applications and similar developments do not have a place in emerging markets. Emerging

markets have more needs for practical applications as opposed to games and entertainment.

It's not about advertising, it's about engaging with the customer

“Smart phone-based applications can be sponsored or subsidised by NGOs or companies as significant corporate social investment programmes. For example, an application can be used to help farmers trade fresh fruit and vegetables to interested audiences.”

He said he was tired of hearing that mobile advertising is the way to go, insisting that it is not about advertising but rather the way the ad is integrated into the consumer's environment.

“It is not about unwanted SMSes, but rather how to engage customers in the way that they feel as if they are not being marketed to.”

In the presentation titled *Year of the App*, *Stuff* magazine editor and *The Times* columnist Toby Shapshak said citizen journalism's turning point was in 2005 during the London bombings when a lot of people took pictures of the tragedy with their cellphones and disseminated them across the world, totally changing the mobile landscape.

And the future?

Commenting on the ‘war’ of applications between LTE and WiMax, and who will be the eventual winner, Justin Pratt said: “Both will win because they both speak “IP” (internet language) and the method of transmission is increasingly irrelevant.

“WiMax is much cheaper and will eventually do voice but, GSM has an installed base of over 3 billion. Telcom firms will likely build both depending on myriad variables while it is highly likely that service providers will predominately use WiMax.”

“Intel is building a dual-mode WiMax and Wi-Fi chip. We will see a seamless roaming between Wi-Fi and WiMax and both will be embedded in all phones and laptops,” Pratt concluded.

[Justin Pratt's presentation](#)

For more, go to www.brandsh.com/.

ABOUT ISSA SIKITI DA SILVA

Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer.

- Angola tense as journalists, protesting youth targeted by government - 1 Nov 2011
- Managing promotional resources: are TV broadcasters getting it right? - 1 Nov 2011
- Mbalula vs the media: privacy, dignity vs public interest - 31 Oct 2011
- Multibillion-rand Motorola Razr marketing campaign - 28 Oct 2011
- [Tech4Africa] Power failures, low bandwidth? Try cloud computing - 28 Oct 2011

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>