

How fibre to the home is redefining SA's property market



By [Shane Chorley](#)

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Fibre internet connectivity can add almost R80,000 to the price of the average home, according to research in the US. In South Africa, however, the situation is more complicated. Fibre connectivity not only enables access to reliable, high-speed connectivity that is shaping the property market but also off the grid options, given ongoing concerns around load shedding and water shortages.

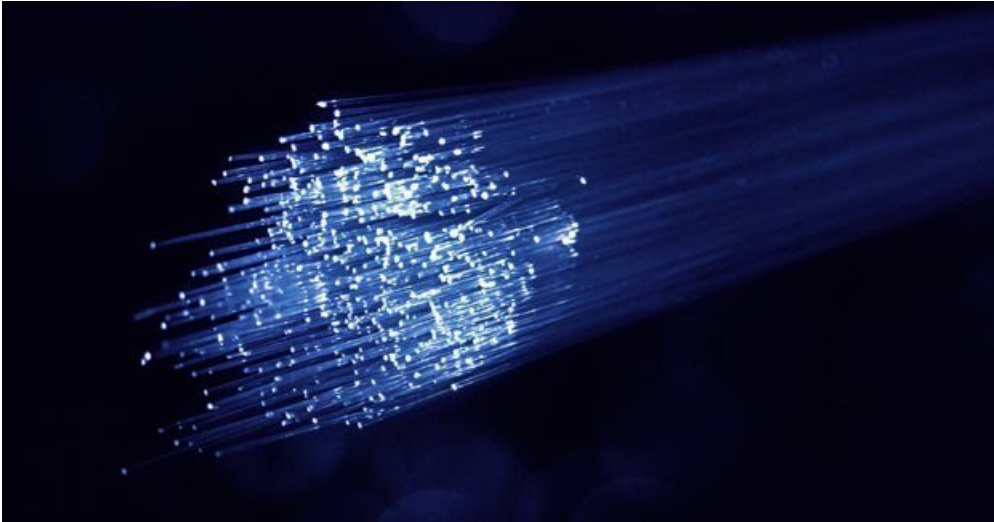


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Given how reliant we have become on high-speed internet access for our work and to relax, if a home on the market does not have fibre installed then most people will not even consider it.

Beyond enabling a more digital-friendly lifestyle, fibre contributes to good security such as channelling CCTV feeds through always-on internet access. Combine this connectivity with alternative energy and you have a situation where load shedding has a minimal impact on the quality of a person's life.

Such has the need been for readily available connectivity at home, research has shown that fibre-to-the-home and building internet subscriptions increased by almost 29% in 2019. Similarly, fixed-line traffic increased by 22.2% during the same period highlighting the demand for bandwidth even before the lockdown conditions of this year.

Remote working

In the post-lockdown world, more people will work remotely than ever. Not having internet and an alternative to the power supplied by the incumbent can cause significant problems when it comes to a person's ability to earn an income.

With the place of work migrating to the home, children using the internet for online education and researching projects, and everything from banking to shopping being done using digital means, buying a property with reliable internet access has become a given.

During the hard lockdown, anecdotal evidence suggests that fibre users have been using the internet at significantly higher rates than previously.

An age thing

For today's youth who have grown up with connectivity, the internet has become fundamental to everything they do. And much like the older generation does not care how electricity works, so too do the youth not care about speeds and feeds when it comes to fibre. They expect high speeds, quality of service, and things to just work. Like turning on a light, their internet access must be something they have access to around the clock.

As they grow older, they will become even more demanding of this experience. Those properties that are unable to fulfil in what they consider these basic needs, will simply not appeal to them.

In many respects, the South African property sector is at a crossroads. It requires more innovative ways of delivering alternative energy, water, and access to reliable connectivity to entice buyers who are looking for an off-the-grid living experience.

Sustainable living

Internet access and being able to live more sustainably will become major influencing factors over the coming five years in how people choose their future homes. Even though solar power has become an affordable option, without rain it will be difficult to be self-sustaining regarding water. Certainly, people have taken access to these for granted.

Many South African towns have had massive problems when it comes to access to water. For example, Makhanda - formerly Grahamstown - and Port Elizabeth are in a low rainfall climate and the reservoirs and water systems there are not working.

Of course, this scenario is not unique. Many other areas are struggling with the same issues highlighting just how critical off the grid living has become in terms of water, electricity, and even the internet.

Similarly, the lockdown has highlighted the importance of high-speed internet access not only for work but for education and entertainment as well. In fact, internet access can be considered a utility much like electricity and water. No homeowner will be able to afford not having reliable, high-speed internet in the world of the future.

ABOUT SHANE CHORLEY

Shane Chorley is head of sales and marketing at Frogfoot Networks.
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