

M2M industry set to grow 23% annually

Machine-to-machine (M2M) technology, which allows both wireless and wired systems (cellular, wireless and fixed devices) to communicate directly with other devices, is expected to grow as an industry from a current US\$121 billion business internationally to \$948 billion by 2020.



This 2013 study, conducted by Machina Research, indicates that the industry is projected to maintain 23% annual growth rates over the next decade and this was further supported by a number of advanced M2M applications introduced at the recent Consumer Electronics Show (CES) with experts heralding 2014 as the year of integrated M2M business solutions.

A M2M example would be a vending machine that directly communicates with a central stock system to indicate that it requires refilling or has coins that require emptying.

Duncan Ellison, M2M specialist at FastNet, says that developments within the sector are now enabling the technology to become more accessible to business owners. "Over the last decade, there has been a steady improvement in the affordability and ease of use of this kind of technology, which is helping businesses improve efficiencies and compete in the current economic climate."

The company offers a range of M2M products, which can be used in a variety of industries including building management (BMS), energy and utility monitoring, transport and fleet management, backup generator management, fuel loss solutions and temperature management for sensitive goods.

He says that these systems are able to monitor electricity, water and gas usage as well as environmental and business parameters such as humidity, door status and the operational status of machinery, all of which can be done through the same system.

The information collected is automatically uploaded to a cloud-based dashboard, where the management of companies can easily see an overall picture of their businesses. The systems are wireless and can be typically installed within an hour without the need for a technician.

"The common perception is that this type of technology is complicated and expensive to install. Using our systems, however, is simple to set up, cost effective and able to provide companies with critical information about their businesses at a fraction of the price of equivalent systems," he concludes.

For further information, go to www.fastnet.co.za.