

New free app access to BizRadio

A new free app allows iOS and Android users one-click access to BizRadio's live streams and archived podcasts. Developed by local software solutions house and BizRadio sponsor DVT, the app extends the station's reach from its web portal.



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Described as an internet-based business radio and social media service, the app gives its listeners and users the opportunity to consume content on the go and provides it with a different platform through which to extend its brand and create new revenue streams.

BizRadio co-founder and director, Grant Jansen, says the appeal of mobile applications to online media services such as his, is in the immediacy of access to content.

"South Africans are great consumers of mobile content and smartphone usage particularly in the enterprise market is becoming more prevalent, so a mobile application made sense as part of our broader business strategy.

Value-added content

"We've seen examples, mainly from larger global media services, of how applications have become an extension of their service, not only providing the traditional audio stream, but supplementing it with value-added content, text information, videos and social media links, not to mention advertising space for generating additional revenue.

"In South Africa there's an on-going debate on how 'traditional' media can win back audience numbers and continue to generate the necessary revenue to stay in business, and mobile apps to us represent an excellent opportunity to do both by delivering the quality content our target audience is looking for. We use the word 'radio' loosely because it's familiar but it's really all about providing content, with the streaming daily show just another - albeit effective and familiar - delivery channel."

Mobile apps available, affordable

DVT chief technology officer Craig Neill, a regular contributor to the station, says mobility and mobile applications are changing the way people are using and accessing news, information and technology. "Most of us don't think twice about switching on the car radio and tuning into our favourite stations and for many of us this is also the only time we get to consume the content we want to listen to," he says.

"Media services like this don't have the same reach, so they need to find different ways to give their audience what they need, when they need it. At the same time, consumers are becoming more selective about what they listen to, short on time and want to control when and where they get their content. Smartphones and other mobile devices have given users this control, so the media has to adapt and evolve to the changing landscape. It's no secret that we're passionate about this emerging trend, and our longstanding partnership with the station is evidence of that."

Johan Pieters, manager: enterprise mobile solutions, DVT, says there is a misconception by many companies that mobile apps are unaffordable and take too long to develop.

"You can either develop native apps for each platform - iOS, Android, BlackBerry and so on - which indeed can become very expensive and time consuming, or you can make use of cross-platform development frameworks that are both freely available and often license-free," says Pieters,

"For this app, we used Adobe's free open-source framework PhoneGap, which combined with our own in-house frameworks and skills allowed us to go from concept to working prototype quickly. PhoneGap and frameworks like Sencha Touch make it easier for us to create cross-platform apps by using industry-standard Web code like HTML 5 and CSS and then package them for their native platforms.

Cross platform options

"In South Africa there are other (licensed) cross platform options available for developing applications that include non-smartphone - or feature phone - platforms, still very prevalent in the South African community. It makes sense to use these when the broader feature phone community is being targeted."

Jansen says future development could see the introduction of more features, such as offline content, contextual information and live social media links, allowing slicker content delivery, so users don't miss a beat. "We've been amazed by how quickly DVT was able to turn this project around for us," he says.

"I hope that through our own experience we can encourage like-minded South African businesses to embrace the potential of customised mobile apps and realise the value of working with people that know what they're doing and deliver on their promises."

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