

Orange, Baidu partner to drive mobile data adoption

Orange has signed a strategic partnership - on an exclusive basis - with Baidu, the Chinese internet company, to develop a co-branded internet browser for smartphone customers in Africa, the Middle East and Asia (AMEA).



The partnership marks the first time Baidu has signed such an agreement with a global operator, and supports Orange and Baidu's aim to make the mobile web available for all in emerging markets.

Mobile internet usage in Africa is increasing rapidly as Orange continues to deploy 3G networks and make more low-cost smartphones available, customers have been steadily moving from basic feature phones towards more low-cost Android smartphones. Orange, which has a mobile customer base in AMEA of nearly 80 million customers, has continued to see its smartphone user base in AMEA increasing, for example the demand for Android devices in Egypt has doubled in 2012.

Customised browser

The new Orange and Baidu browser offers a highly customisable but simple interface for customers in AMEA, enabling them to access web-based apps and internet services unique to Baidu and Orange, as well as services like Wikipedia, Facebook or Twitter, amongst others.

Customers benefit from a feature rich user interface that provides one-click access to all of their preferred local and global services but also benefit from a browser that is much faster and more data efficient compared to other browsers, reducing the amount of data consumed by 30-90% depending on the types of services and files accessed.

Orange and Baidu have already developed an Arabic and English browser for Mobinil customers, and both companies are now working to launch French versions of the browser for countries across Orange's African and Middle East footprint.

Marc Rennard, senior executive vice president for Orange activities across Africa and the Middle East, commented: "The

appetite for mobile internet services is very strong in Africa, for example demand for Android devices in Egypt has doubled in the second half of this year [last year].

Price and access have been a barrier to entry, but partnering with innovative companies like Baidu provide unique solutions that give our customers affordable access to all the services they desire without compromising on features or ease-of-use. Building on the partnerships we've signed with major brands such as Wikipedia and Facebook in AMEA, we continue to innovate in Africa and honour our commitment to make the internet accessible to all customers across our footprint."

Hu Yong, general manager of Baidu's International Business Unit, said: "Baidu's success has been built on developing technologies, products and services appropriate for China, the world's largest emerging market. We're now bringing that experience to bear in other markets now enjoying rapid growth. Working with Orange in the Middle East and Africa, Baidu hopes to contribute meaningfully to the region's growth by making the mobile internet easier than ever to use."

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