

GSM>3G Africa to address fast-growing market issues

Pan-communication conference and exhibition GSM>3G Africa is set to break attendance records with 3000 participants and 124 individual companies exhibiting, announced organisers Informa Telecoms and Media on Friday, 13 October 2006. The event will take place 19 - 20 October 2006 at the Cape Town International Convention Centre, with its programming to focus on the unique issues that the African mobile communications market faces.



Julia Rey, research manager
at Informa

A major focus of this year's GSM>3G Africa conference will be satellite technology. "With limited network infrastructure at vast distances, Africa's operators often find delivering reliable, high-quality mobile services to be the biggest challenge," Informa's research manager Julie Rey explained. "We hand-picked experts this year who will be able to most comprehensively address this challenge, to the benefit of everyone who attends."

Diverse range

The conference will feature a diverse range of key speakers, from high-positioned industry executives to seasoned journalists and government officials. This year's speakers include 16 leading operators, including the CEOs of Celtel International, Cell C, Zantel and Safaricom, as well as representatives of alternative players such as Virgin Mobile South Africa, Intelsat and Vonage.

Participants will also have the opportunity to share their wares and update themselves on the latest solutions, advancement and innovations in the industry. The biggest names in the industry, giants such as Nokia, Blackberry, Motorola, Gateway, Siemens, Huawei, Formula Telecom Solutions, Ericsson, Alcatel and others, will display innovations and solutions at the exhibition that cater specifically to African operators' needs. The updated show floor features will make participants' experiences on the exhibition floor even more informative and productive.

According to Rey, mobile operators in Africa must address challenges unlike those of other regions. "For example, building mobile phone networks in Africa is more cost-effective than investing in new network technologies in mature markets," Rey said.

Unique position

"This puts operators in a unique position, one not found in other parts of the world. With demand in many countries focusing on basic voice services, mobile operators can take advantage of more established, less expensive network equipment."

"The area's growth potential is enormous," continued Rey, "and growth has been vigorous, with the subscriber base increasing by almost 66% in 2005."

She explained that while, in some countries, operators have begun to adopt 3G technology, there are others for which basic mobile voice services are still quite new. "Operators on different parts of the continent face different challenges, but there

a few common features that market insiders recognise as specific to the region," she said.

"This conference will bring together representatives of every aspect of the communications industry: operators, vendors, content providers and government officials," said Informa's marketing manager Stephen Cassidy. "Our newest features will attract more participants than ever before."

Rewarding experience

Cassidy added that new features at the GSM>3G Africa event would make the experience even more rewarding for those who came. "Now, attendees of the event can access an online networking tool, which allows them to interact with other attendees before, during and after the show. We are expecting a record turnout this year, and I believe it is partly due to the fact that each year we offer new and improved opportunities for learning and networking."

Cassidy is of the opinion that this year's Africa event will be more enriching than any before. "Each day, attendees will be able to choose between two 'streams' of lectures and panels," Cassidy detailed. "One deals with technology, and the other centred on strategies and services. Additionally, we have dedicated sessions covering wireless broadband innovations in Africa on both days. We are putting the information exchange in the hands of participants this year, and letting them choose which subjects are most important to them."

This separation of the conference's content into different streams is designed to allow individual participants to reap the maximum benefits from the conference. "In a sense," he said, "we are letting attendees create their own conference—an experience tailored to their specific needs. This is just one way in which this event will be even better than the last."

Informa provides business intelligence and strategic services to the global telecoms and media markets. For more information on GSM>3G Africa in Cape Town, go to www.gsm-3gworldseries.com/africa/pr4.

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