

# Thingstream partnerships help to fast-track IoT innovations

From tracking vultures to monitoring trucks across the continent, IoT enablers Thingstream's new partnerships in South Africa are driving the development of more cost-effective IoT innovations, faster.

Thingstream, which earlier this year announced it was expanding into South Africa via a local partner network, has formalised partnerships with a number of local innovators, supporting their development of new IoT solutions across multiple industry verticals.

IoT innovation in South Africa is gathering pace with pioneering companies bringing new solutions to market on the back of Thingstream's ability to connect IoT devices without constraints such as cross-border connectivity or the need for high-speed access.



Source: [pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com)

Local initiatives under development using Thingstream include new vulture tracking devices which continue transmitting in real-time, even when the birds cross the border; asset tracking devices that eliminate the need for satellite connections on trucks traversing Africa; tracking and route planning for helicopters; and solutions for advanced agricultural irrigation systems.

Tony Doubell, sales director for South Africa at Thingstream, says four local partnerships have been formalised, and there has also been significant interest across industry verticals in Thingstream's global IoT connectivity platform which connects

via GSM networks using a unique combination of MQTT and USSD messaging protocols.

“Thingstream is delivering a world of opportunity for developers of new IoT solutions, and in South Africa, where there is a high level of engineering capability and technical expertise, we’re seeing a massive appetite for IoT innovation,” says Doubell. “It’s an exciting time for IoT across all sectors in South Africa – every time someone calls me, it’s about a different use case,” he says.



## Innovation vital to Africa's DNA, but so is strategic communication

Mimi Kalinda 3 Sep 2018



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### Bridging the gap

Pylot Pty Ltd, a company within the First Technology Group, is one of the partners now building out its IoT solutions portfolio using Thingstream technology. Trevor Hart-Jones, managing director of Pylot, says Thingstream technology overcomes several challenges in the roll-out of IoT solutions locally.

“In the smart agricultural space, for example, we have implemented IoT solutions to monitor soil water content and manage centre pivot irrigation systems, which potentially saves farmers a significant amount of money on water and power.”

“But because farms are in rural areas are typically not covered by high-speed networks, we had to roll out some of the newer low power wide area networks (LPWANs) to support the IoT connections. This added to the time taken and complexity of implementations, with challenges such as finding suitable high sites, powering those masts, negotiating land leases and securing them against damage and theft. With Thingstream, we can roll out solutions faster and more cost-effectively to more customers,” he says.

“Thingstream bridges the gap between data driven cellular provider coverage and low LPWAN solutions, and our focus for the next three to five years will be on Thingstream-based solutions.”

Another partner going to market with solutions built using Thingstream is Digital Twin, an IoT solutions provider focused on the industrial sector.

With a strong background in industrial equipment and automation, Digital Twin founder, Richard Creighton saw a gap in the market last year for one-stop integrated Industry 4.0 solutions for local industry.

“Thingstream was the differentiator for us,” says Creighton, “The platform delivers ubiquitous communications without being tied to any one provider, at an unparalleled price point.”

Even though many industrial applications present density of communications, which could be seen as a case for WiFi, Digital Twin has opted to use Thingstream to avoid the potential complexity and risk of connecting via WiFi, and also because of Thingstream’s elastic pricing models. With locally-manufactured hardware, Thingstream communications layer, AWS data lake and Digital Twin UI/UX features available, Digital Twin is already running proof of concepts in several large organisations.



Source: [pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com)

“I think we’re going to be on the money in terms of filling the gap we identified. We’ve really built out something quite special – primarily as a result of our relationship with Thingstream. They are a big part of our business and I think they will be a big part of our success,” he says.

Thingstream has also formalised partnerships with Informed Decisions, which specialises in liquid monitoring, and Profitek, an industrial and digital mining solutions firm.

Doubell says the high level of demand means Thingstream South Africa will focus its attentions on the local market initially. However, Kenya – also a hotbed of IoT innovation – could be the next focus for Thingstream solutions. Local partners are also expected to roll their new IoT solutions out across the continent.

“We’re seeing great excitement from the partner side, as they are no longer reliant on mobile operators and the roaming issue is no longer a challenge for them because Thingstream is operator agnostic. Manufacturers are growing their business using our products,” he says.

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