

Emerging Technologies in Africa Seminar:

The Mobile Internet Africa's Digital Backbone

10:00 - 11:00 @ Newmark 2310, Tue 1/31

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This presentation gives an African perspective to the evolution and usage of mobile and internet services.

Given the 20% growth rate of the number of mobile phone subscriptions in Africa for the past 5 years and with over 650 million mobile phone subscribers on the continent, there is hope for Africa. The digital dots created by these mobile devices, covering both the urban and rural areas in Africa, is creating a new type of computing and a connected people such that we can now describe mobile phones as Africa's digital backbone!

This has created a new way of thinking and problem solving; in Kenya, mobile payment systems (MPESA), enables villagers to buy water just by sending an SMS. In Nigeria, farmers can get market prices of 24 crops in over 100 local markets across the country using *Nokia Life Tools*. They also get weather information and daily tips on how to improve their farms. In Ghana *mPedigree* is used to validate the authenticity of drugs bought in local pharmacy stores. South Africa is using mobile phones as sensors for Intelligent Transportation Systems and for tracking environmental changes to proactively provide necessary help to people and avoid epidemics. These projects and more will be discussed in this talk.