



MACRA

Promoting Universal ICT Access

MACRA MAGAZINE

Issue No 16 | December 2019

WHEN A FULL BANK IS IN YOUR PHONE

**MACRA FORMS
NEW ICT REGULATIONS**

**GOVT PLEDGES CONTINUED
MEDIA FREEDOM IN MALAWI**

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Thank you for 2019

Time flies, so goes the old saying. Very often, this statement will be said in the spirit of a loss -- that time has gone by without someone achieving much.

At other times, it will be said to imply how good moments have come to an end too soon. Here at MACRA Magazine, we go by this second thought. We were having fun giving you what 2019 has been like, technologically speaking.

It has been an eventful year for us. We look back with great satisfaction at the work we have done to keep this magazine the leading source of IT news in Malawi.

We informed the nation about ICT trends locally and globally. We kept the nation informed about groundbreaking ICT projects Malawi is implementing.

We informed the nation about the 4G revolution, the status of digital migration and progress on digital forensic lab as Malawi strives to improve on cyber security.

The list of the strides can go on. In simple terms, as time flew and technology flew, we flew with both.

As we close the year, in this edition, we have carried burning issues of the time. At no point did we ever imagine that your Mpamba or Airtel Money wallet would be your bank account, your bank deposit or withdrawal slip, literally. That's the kind of convergence ICT can bring, all to simplify life.

And then revolution of the moment - the world is now caught in the wires of 5G.

These are some of the issues we have carried in this final edition for 2019. It is an exciting package.



At this point, I want to thank the team at MACRA Magazine for your hard work. We are also grateful to management and staff of MACRA for your ready support for this magazine to generate content and keep coming out. We appreciate profoundly.

I also want to thank the ICT industry in Malawi and our readers for your contributions to our magazine. Thank you.

With the support structure around us and our passion to deliver news that matter, we go into 2020 more confident about what we can achieve with this magazine.

Once again, thank you all. We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

CLARA NGWIRA
EDITOR



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LET US STRIVE FOR QUALITY

The central role of ICT in the life of every of the 7 billion people in the world today is not a matter for debate.



ICT is a product of human ingenuity to make life easier and the world a better place.

That is why today, ICT is at the heart of global development agenda as spelt out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In Malawi, our development blueprint, the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III, places priority on ICT for development.

In brief, we all agree that in the modern world, we cannot do without ICT.

But for us to achieve the best out of ICT, quality is a prerequisite, both in terms of infrastructure and service delivery.

As mobile wallets and bank accounts converge, as digital advertising proves to be a new trend, as the mobile phone connects the rural and the urban, as ICT becomes a new world order, the issue of quality rises to prominence.

In this respect, I want to assure the industry that as MACRA, we will do our part to support you to ensure we achieve quality together.

Some of the projects we have undertaken in the ending year are meant to meet this objective.

Currently, we are working on technical standards that will guide suppliers in the importation of electronic equipment.

All along, we have been using technical standards developed by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and Communication Regulators Association of Southern Africa (CRASA).

Now we are taking a step better by developing our own set of standards. This is important.

We will also have a laboratory where all electronic equipment entering the country will be tested for quality and compliance to our technical standards.

In the year, we signed an agreement with Malawi Revenue Authority. Under this agreement, we seek MRA's help so that every electronic device that enters the country complies with our technical standards.

We believe that with such measures, we will help the local industry to deliver high quality services.

I need to emphasise though that for us to achieve this, we need to work together. We expect the industry to bring into the country equipment

that meets the standards. Throughout the years, we have demonstrated good partnership to achieve our common national ICT goals. May this continue.

On this note, on behalf of management and staff at MACRA, I want to thank the ICT industry in Malawi for the year 2019. We have seen the strides. We have seen the inventions and the innovations. We are moving forward together.

Let me also thank the Board of Directors. We have benefited immensely from your wisdom and leadership.

Finally, I thank the Malawi Government and the Ministry of Information, Civic Education and Communications Technology for strategic direction and a policy environment that have enabled us at MACRA to perform to the best of our mission and vision. We are grateful.

2019 was great. 2020 will be greater.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

GODFREY ITAYE
DIRECTOR GENERAL

...we all
agree
that in the
modern
world, we
cannot
do without
ICT.



When a full bank IS IN YOUR PHONE

How the convergence of mobile money services between banks and mobile phone operators is making life easy

BY WHYGHTONE KAPASULE

Not long ago, a mobile phone and a bank were separate entities, only meeting each other when there was need for one to call the other on queries and other issues.

Then there came a revolution when you could use your phone to pay for services such as water and electricity bills and tv subscriptions from your bank account.

The latest Malawi has seen is that

now you can transfer your money from your bank account into your wallet hosted by a mobile phone operator.

Or you can deposit money into your bank account straight from

your mobile phone wallet service.

Barriers have been broken. Rigidity in money movement is now out of fashion. That is, today, your mobile phone is your full bank, literally. The whole of your bank branch – with all its rolling doors for getting in and walking out, its computers, bank tellers and deposit and withdraw slips -- sits in that phone.

Thanks to the convergence of mobile money services operated by banks and those by mobile phone operators.

BACKGROUND

This is a significant achievement in Malawi's ICT development.

Malawi has been ranking low on development of digital public services and their access.

In the 2016 United Nations e-Government Index, Malawi was outpaced in the area, falling from 133 in 2004 to 166 out of 193 countries.

The UN e-Government Index is a global measure on provision of online services, telecommunication connectivity and human capacity.

Similarly, the uptake of digital technologies by private firms was also low, with Malawi scoring just 0.07 on the business component of the World Bank's 2015 Digital Adoption Index. This was lower than the global minimum standards.

In many respects, Malawi significantly lagged behind its peers in the development of its market for telecommunications and other digital services, a situation which prevented it from achieving wider digital dividends.

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LEGISLATIVE REFORMS

Over the years, Malawi has taken steps to significantly participate in the digital market.

For instance, in July 2016, Parliament approved a Revised Communications Act and a new E-Transactions Act. Analysts says these progressive legislations have helped in modernizing the governance framework for the ICT sector in Malawi.

The legislation, among other things, empowers Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA) with a significant expansion of its mandate and confirms its authority in ensuring

market competitiveness, protecting consumers, safeguarding information security, promoting universal access to telecoms services, and enabling digital transactions and innovation.

And, as always, banks are hardly left behind in uptake of innovations as this has an impact on their customer reach and impact on the economy.

Mobile money services by mobile phone operators in Malawi have grown at breakneck speed, possibly outpacing the physical growth of banks themselves and the customer population they can attract.

But experts saw that a convergence between the two would benefit both the bank and the mobile phone operators as well as Malawians in general and the larger economy.

One of the banks that offers seamless services between its banking halls and the mobile phones of its customers is FDH bank.

The bank's Public Relations Officer, Lorraine Lusinjje, said they embraced the innovation and partnered with Mobile Network Operators (MNOs), Airtel and TNM, on Push and Pull service to meet customer needs.

"We strive for and support collaborative partnerships to boost and increase customer reach. The partnership with MNOs provides convenience and a wider access to financial services for Malawians, thereby promoting financial inclusion," said Lusinjje.

continued on page 10 >>

When a Full Bank is in Your Phone (cont'd)

In Malawi, the penetration of banks in rural areas is very low, which is why many rural populations do not have bank accounts.

And those that have accounts would have to travel a long distance to get to their nearest bank branch to withdraw or deposit money.

But mobile phone ownership is far much higher in Malawi, resulting in increased coverage of mobile phone money services. This has resulted in proliferation of mobile phone money service

agents at people's doorsteps – in places where banks cannot be.

Today, even without being close to a bank, the rural populations are participating in the globalized economy, courtesy of bank and mobile money service linkage. Money can be pushed from a bank account into their mobile phone wallet, and vice versa.

And this is not just for the benefit of ordinary citizens only. Even companies can take advantage.

Speaking at the official



acknowledges that Malawi has made enormous progress in integrating banking processes to mobile wallets such that citizens can now push and pull finances either direction.

"Many processes that were basically manual have now been automated and transactions are largely processed seamlessly these days, unlike in the past," said Ngwira, adding:

"We now have platforms that have linked ATMs, POS and even mobile money and other banking solutions which have enabled processing

of interbank transactions in an automated environment." announcement of the linking of their mobile money platforms in June 2018, National Bank of Malawi and TNM said they wanted to build a "coherent ecosystem together".

He urged all players in the financial, mobile and ICT sectors to strive to increase digital financial literacy so that many people know the availability and advantages of adopting innovative products on the market.

"The partnership opens up to a new world. Corporates do not need to have a headache whenever they want to pay employees. They can push their payroll and split the money to TNM Mpamba wallets," said National Bank official, William Kaunda.

In the end, the broader national economy will reap the benefits. Technologically speaking, Malawi is moving.

Reserve Bank of Malawi (RBM) spokesperson Mbane Ngwira

of interbank transactions in an automated environment."

Reserve Bank of Malawi (RBM) spokesperson Mbane Ngwira

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Between the rivers

BY WEZZIE NKHOMA-SOMBA



CLASS IN SESSION.

It's 21st Century. Somewhere, grass thatched with support from wooden poles and dusty ground are a typical description of a classroom that is expected to produce students to face the world.

This was a typical sight of Maungu Primary School in Chopela 1 Village, Tradition Authority Malengachanzi in Nkhotakota district.

On the other side, students in other grades were forced to have their class lessons under four mango trees that have seemingly joined branches to form a canopy that

protects the students from the scorching sunlight.

According to the headmaster at the school Edward Liwewe Malizani, "the temperatures can hit 35 degrees and the shed from the trees is usually not enough to protect students from the scorching sunlight, hence continued class distraction."

This is history now. Thanks to the generous donation of MACRA and courier operators who have constructed two school blocks, a teacher's staff room, four toilets,

with a provision of 100 learners' desks and office furniture.

The school is perched between five rivers namely, Mambala, Chitenje, Mataka, Mpambadzi and Mpamantha, with no bridges, which makes it difficult for the students to go to other surrounding schools.

During every rainy season the rivers are pregnant with water meandering like giant snakes cutting off the village from the outside world.

"The school is the only hope for the students and it has become

a lifeline for over 600 learners. As parents we are grateful to MACRA for this development. Be assured that we will take good care of this school," said the chairperson of the School Committee Yashini Bashiri.

Bashiri said as a community, they have already shown commitment by moulding the bricks and fetching sand which has been used in the construction of the school blocks, the teacher's office and the toilets.

Maungu Primary School started in 2014 with about 400 learners for standard 1 to 4.

The commencement of the project has seen the school adding two more classes for standards 5 and 6 bringing the number of learners to over 600. The number of teachers has also been increased from 4 to 10.

A standard 6 learner Zainabu Phiri said the new blocks are a relief because they have been having problems to learn especially during rainy season as they were crammed into one place for shelter.

"When it starts raining we are all moved into one of the classrooms to seek shelter and classes are dismissed until it stops raining," Zainabu said who aspires to be a police officer.

However, Zainabu, 15, wishes for the school to be upgraded into a full primary school.

"I would have loved if the school was turned into a full primary school. My worry is when I finish standard 6, my parents need to find a place for me from another school which will likely be far from here and difficult to reach especially during rainy season," she said.

Group Village Headman Nthondo (Kachepa Barwell) is grateful to see his area as a beneficiary of such development saying it will help to reduce numbers of school dropouts.

"This is one of the areas where school dropout cases are very high due to distances that learners have to cover to reach a school. Some schools are not reachable during rainy seasons as learners and teachers have to cross rivers which have no bridges," he said.

MACRA, a communications regulator and courier operators made the donation as part of the commemoration of World Post Day which is celebrated every year in October.

"MACRA has been helping rural communities in various parts of the country every year during the commemoration of the World Post Day.

"The World Post Day was set aside to commemorate the anniversary of the establishment of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) as a specialized agency of the United Nations on

postal matters," said MACRA's Director General Godfrey Itaye.

Over the years, MACRA and its courier operators have built school blocks in Dowa, constructed maternal wings at Ekwendeni and Mkwepere Rural hospitals among others.

The construction works started in June 2019 and was handed over in November same year.

Commenting on the new structures Itaye said, "We decided to build the schools blocks, toilets and the teacher's staff room. This mean the school will be able to accommodate all the pupils from standard 1 to 6."

Malawi Post Corporation, DHL, FedEx, Sososo buses, Air Cargo, Aramex, Speed, G4S, Kwezy Buses, Ampex, UPS and Xerographics are some of the operators who took part in 2019 World Post day celebrations.

However, Maungu Primary school is still in need of teaching and learning materials which include text books, chalk, exercise books, pencils, pens, markers and flip chart. The school does not have a proper source of clean water.



THE FIRST TEACHERS STAFF ROOM.



CLASS SESSION UNDER TREES



CAPTION



NEW STRUCTURES UNDER CONSTRUCTION.

Pictorial focus on

HAND OVER CEREMONY OF SCHOOL BLOCKS AND OTHER ITEMS WORTH OVER MK48 MILLION TO MAUNGU JUNIOR PRIMARY SCHOOL IN NKHOTAKOTA

Christmas came early to Maungu Primary School as Ministry of information, Civic Education and Communications Technology Hon. Mark Botomani MP recently handed over two school blocks and many more items worth over MK48 Million to Maungu Junior Primary School in Nkhotakota District.

This was part of World Post Day comemoration which falls in the 9th of October.

Postal and Courier Service Providers contributed cash worth over Mk5 million towards the initiative.

Addressing the audience Hon. Botomani said he was grateful to MACRA for the initiative saying it will go a long way in the history of the school and the country as a whole.

in the pictures

1. Minister of Information, Civic Education and Communications Technology Hon. Mark Botomani MP greeting some of the teachers at Maungu Primary School.
2. Hon. Botomani unveils the plaque.
3. Hon. Botomani and his entourage is taken around the school joined by District commissioner for Khotakota Dr. Medson Matchaya, the Headmaster of Maungu Primary School, Mr Edward Liweve and member of parliament for Dedza Central Hon. Daniel Chiwere.
4. Hon. Botomani hands over symbolic learning materials to the headmaster of Maungu Primary School.
5. The old school block.
6. Inside one of the old classrooms.
7. Board Chair of Malawi Posts Corporation (MPC) Rev. Mbolebole speaking on behalf of courier oprators.
8. MACRA'S Director General Mr. Godfrey Itaye speaking at the function.
9. One of the best learners at Maungu Primary School Adijah Kakula.
10. The new school block.
11. Class in session in one of the new school blocks.
12. Minister addresses pupils in one of the class rooms.
13. Newly constructed office.
14. A learner reciting a poem of gratitude during the handover ceremony.
15. Hon. Botomani participates as a student in one of the class rooms.
- 16 & 17. Ampex and DHL were some of the courier operators who took part in the initiative.
18. Elderly women take to the dance floor as a sign of happiness for the new school blocks.
19. Some MACRA members of staff clad in MACRA attire.



news



MACRA BOARD ORIENTED ON INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY



...WE DO NOT LIKE SEEING PEOPLE GETTING ARRESTED AS A RESULT OF CORRUPT BEHAVIOUR. WE ARE HUMAN BEINGS AND WE HAVE FEELINGS TOO. THE WHOLE PROCESS OF DEALING WITH CORRUPT INDIVIDUALS IS SO DEPRESSING.

In September, the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) and MACRA partnered to orient MACRA Board members on institutional integrity.

Speaking during the meeting,

which took place at Nkopola Lodge in Mangochi, ACB's Director General, Reyneck Matemba, said his institution has a duty to sensitize government agencies on evils of corruption.

He said it is not the objective of the ACB to get people arrested.

"In fact, we do not like seeing people getting arrested as a result of corrupt behaviour. We are human beings and we have

feelings too. The whole process of dealing with corrupt individuals is so depressing," Matemba said.

He further said as decision makers, board members should execute their duties with high integrity to

avoid getting arrested.

MACRA Board Chairperson, Rev. Alex Maulana appealed to participants to understand their roles and boundaries as they steer the Malawi Communications

Regulations Authority.

"May I appeal to you to go through the relevant policy and identify gaps that need attention for future review," Maulana said.



VILLAGE COMMITTEE POSE FOR A PHOTO WITH MACRA TEAM.

MACRA CONDUCTS SURVEY ON NATIONAL ADDRESSING PROJECT

MACRA has carried out a survey aimed at drawing lessons from the pilot phase of National Addressing Project.

This phase of the project was carried out in some selected areas in Chinyonga, Namiwawa, Ndirande and Lirangwe in Blantyre.

MACRA's National Addressing project manager Limbani Sekani said the pilot phase of the project

faced a number of hiccups.

"The pilot phase, like most projects, faced a few challenges. Among them was vandalism of the road signs and posts.

"We thought of carrying out this exercise to draw some lessons before we roll out on a national scale," he said.

He said the Authority is in the process of implementing the

next phase which targets all the remaining districts in the country.

Currently, the ground work for the national rollout has commenced with households in Zomba, Lilongwe and Mzuzu being assigned numbers.

Also streets and roads have been named awaiting validation from MACRA.

MACRA HOLDS MEETINGS ON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

MACRA recently held dialogue meetings with secretaries general of various political parties in the country on conflict management in the face of demonstrations and court battles.

MACRA is one of the stakeholders engaged in conflict management dialogue with interested parties.

Addressing the meeting,

MACRA's Director of Finance, Ben Chitsonga, said secretaries general have a responsibility to ensure peaceful demonstrations in the country.

"As SGs, you hold the key to peaceful demonstrations. Party members are under your control and as you give interviews, we appeal to you that you do so in a manner that will build our nation, Malawi," Chitsonga said.

MACRA also oriented

broadcasters on conflict management and responsible broadcasting.

"We need not undermine our power as broadcasters. The masses look up to us for immediate, detailed and trusted information. We must aim to satisfy the audiences with information that is accurate and crucial in the building of Malawi as a country," he said.

AS SGs, YOU HOLD THE KEY TO PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATIONS. PARTY MEMBERS ARE UNDER YOUR CONTROL AND AS YOU GIVE INTERVIEWS, WE APPEAL TO YOU THAT YOU DO SO IN A MANNER THAT WILL BUILD OUR NATION, MALAWI.



MACRA DG, GODFREY ITAYE OPENING THE WORKSHOP.

MACRA EQUIPS DRIVERS WITH DEFENSIVE DRIVING SKILLS

BY WEZZIE NKHOMA-SOMBA

Health and safety matters are of high priority to MACRA. This is why the organisation organized a defensive driving skills training for its drivers at Hapuwani in Mulanje.

MACRA's Health and Safety Committee organised the training which Directorate of Road Traffic and Safety Services facilitated. The two-day training targeted all

the 14 drivers at MACRA. "You may be asking or wondering why is health and safety important? Of course, the quick answer could be because you want to have life,



TRAINEES WITH THE GUEST OF HONOUR.

save the lives of other road users and workmates and save property. "Come to think of it, you wake up this morning and bid goodbye to your family under the promise that by the end of the day you will be returning to the comfort of your home; only to be caught up in an accident caused by some careless driver or your own speeding and ending up in hospital and your family coming to try to support you," said Director General Godfrey Itaye at the official opening of the training.

Itaye noted that careless driving has contributed a lot to road accidents resulting in deaths, loss of property and causing misery on affected families and organisations.

Health and Safety Committee secretary James Menyere said

defensive training was one of the activities that the committee had planned to do because it is lifesaving.

"As a committee we saw the need for this training after noticing an increase in road accidents by MACRA drivers.

"We believe from now onwards we will see a great improvement from the drivers," Menyere said.

Reports show that road crashes kill about 1.3 million people worldwide every year and severely injure an estimated 50 million.

Malawi has not been spared in terms of these crashes. On average, the past 4 years have seen 1,090 people killed and the figures have been increasing each passing year.



ONE OF THE TRAINERS FROM ROAD TRAFFIC DIRECTORATE.



A CROSS SECTION OF PARTICIPANTS TO THE WORKSHOP.



HR MANAGER MR CHIKUMBUTSO NJOLOMOLE INTERACTS WITH TRAINERS DURING THE WORKSHOP.

MACRA FORMS NEW ICT REGULATIONS

MACRA has come up with new regulations that will be guiding the Authority in the execution of its mandate in five key areas of the ICT sector.

The five key areas include Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT), Quality of Service, Broadcasting, Numbering and Consumer Protection.

In view of this, the legal directorate recently oriented some staff members on these new regulations

which have since been gazetted.

"MACRA realized that there was need to come up with new regulations to level the playing field for ICT service providers," said licensing manager, Kelius Mlenga.

Among others Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) Regulations will provide the legal framework governing the transmission of television signal using digital means as opposed to analogue signal.



MLENGA EXPRESSING A POINT DURING THE MEETING.

Broadcasting regulations will provide minimum standards of obligations to be met by content service licencees in the country.

Consumer Protection Regulations set a minimum requirement aimed at protecting consumers of communication services while Numbering Regulations will guide MACRA in the allocation, assigning, utilization, return and withdrawal of numbers allocated to mobile network operators, commercial banks, and emergency services such as the police, ambulance and fire brigade services.

Finally, quality of service regulations provide key performance indicators that will determine whether the service provider is meeting the required standards as set in their respecting licences.



MACRA, MRA SIGN MOU ON CUSTOM CLEARANCE

MACRA and Malawi Revenue Authority (MRA) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to enforce custom clearance of postal and courier items as well as tax compliance by all communication operators.

According to the MOU, every electronic device entering the country should comply with the technical standards of the country and communication operators are expected to comply with tax payment.

Speaking at the signing ceremony in Blantyre, MACRA's Director General Godfrey Itaye stressed the importance of the MOU.

He said it will help MACRA to improve in service delivery.

"It is through partnerships like these that we are able to effectively deliver on our mandate, and efficiently regulate the communication sector.

"This partnership we are entering today will curb some malpractices that were happening in the postal sector including smuggling of drugs, money laundering as well as counterfeit goods and contraband," Itaye said.

Commissioner General for MRA Gray Malata expressed optimism that the partnership will bring mutual benefits to both parties and the country as a whole.



MACRA AND MRA BOSES DISPLAY THE MOU.

"MRA is mandated to collect revenue and protect the society from harmful goods by clearing only legitimate items. With this MoU, we will now ably have adequate information regarding consignments that are entering Malawi. At the same time we will further facilitate trade by speeding up the process of clearing goods," said Malata.

MRA IS MANDATED TO COLLECT REVENUE AND PROTECT THE SOCIETY FROM HARMFUL GOODS BY CLEARING ONLY LEGITIMATE ITEMS.



HON. BOTOMANI CUT THE RIBBON AS MACRA BOARD CHAIR REV. ALEX MAULANA ASSISTS.

MACRA TELECENTRES take ICT services to rural areas

BY CLARA NGWIRA

When the journey of establishing telecentres started in 2006, very few people in the rural areas understood where MACRA was going.

At that time, MACRA officials went around the country at research level. It was hard to make a meaning of what they were up to.

Then impressive structures in the name of multipurpose telecenters

sprang up in all the three regions of the country.

Admittedly, while some have survived the test of time, others have experienced effects of illiteracy in the areas they are based and consequently underutilized.

However, the concept has evolved over time and two new models have been adopted. These are 'Connect a Constituency' and

'Connect a school'.

People of Khwema, a village in the interior of Dowa district, are some of the beneficiaries of these telecenters.

They have named theirs 'Mauni Telecentre'.

The establishment of telecentres in the rural areas is part of MACRA's efforts to ensure that ICT services are accessed by every person

across the country.

Malawi has placed priority on nurturing a tech-savvy generation; hence the telecentres being furnished with equipment that unearths and enhances the tech skills of the country's youth and children. They will grow up understanding the benefits of telecentres and value the use of modern ways of communicating.

Village headman Khwema cannot help but love what he sees in his village.

"Every morning I go around the building to inspect it," he smiles as he adds that he has turned into a happy guard of the structure.

"I am excited with the telecentre because it means our children will start learning about computers at a tender age and I hear people buy cars through computers so this will help farmers in my village to do the same. This is development," he says.

But even the elderly aren't ready to be left out. Two elderly women have the centre in front of their house and they are looking forward to watching television.

"We just hear about television; people tell us that they see women



THESE LADIES ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO WATCHING LOCAL DANCES AT THE CENTRE

performing our local dances. We want to see ourselves there too because we used to dance in our prime age," they said.

The telecentre has also brought a development the community might only have dreamt of. Computers need electricity to function. ESCOM has brought electricity to facilitate operations at the centre.

Since last year the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology, together with MACRA, have been launching these telecenters in many areas of rural Malawi.

Speaking during the launch in

Khwema village, MACRA Board Chairman, Rev. Alex Maulana asked the people to own the centre and guard it against vandalism.

Launching the centre, Minister of Information Communications and Technology, Hon. Mark Bottoman appealed to the community to fully utilize the services at the centre which include internet surfing, photocopying, typing, lamination and computer lessons.

On the same day, Hon Bottoman opened Salima telecentre. This was in addition to launching two other telecentres in Karonga and Phalombe.



MAUNI TELECENTRE IN DOWA.



VILLAGE HEADMAN KHWEMA BEING INTERVIEWED



BENEFICIARIES OF THE CENTER



THE MINISTER 2ND FROM RIGHT LISTENS TO A PRESENTATION BY A MACRA OFFICIAL.

Govt commends MACRA FOR PROFESSIONALISM

BY LEMEKEZANI CHISAMBIRO

Minister of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Hon. Mark Botomani MP visited MACRA offices as part of the familiarization tour of his ministry.

The minister met MACRA management team before touring technical directorates to get acquainted with MACRA's core business.

Speaking during his tour, Botomani commended MACRA employees for conducting themselves in an ethical and professional manner when discharging their duties.

THE AUTHORITY IS CURRENTLY IN THE THIRD PHASE OF THE "CONNECT A CONSTITUENCY PROJECT"

In particular the minister took a keen interest in the telecentre project and Universal Service Fund as the form the basis for attaining universal ICT access in the country, he said.

In his remarks MACRA's director general Godfrey Itaye stated that the Authority is currently in the third phase of the "connect a constituency project"

"So far we have constructed over

90 telecentre across the country; we plan on building a telecentre in all the 193 constituencies of the country under this project in a bid to ensure universal ICT access for all. He said.

In regards to the Universal service fund, the authority has set up a Universal access unit, as well as a USF committee which will oversee all the projects under the fund. The fund is set to start implementing projects in 2020.



MINISTER IN A MEETING WITH MACRA MANAGEMENT.



THE MINISTER EMPHASISES APOINT TO THE DG.

MACRA WARNS AGAINST ILLEGAL SPECTRUM USE



KONDWANI EXPLAINING TO JOURNALISTS HOW SPECTRUM MONITORING EQUIPMENT WORKS.

The Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA) is warning against the illegal use of spectrum in the country.

This follows completion of an upgrading exercise on the spectrum monitoring sites which have been increased to 19 from five stations across the country.

MACRA spectrum planning manager Dereck Kondwani

says the regulator has mounted monitoring sites across the country and that all illegal spectrum users would be apprehended.

"The regulator is taking such action because Malawi as a country needs to protect its spectrum.

"Any illegal and misguided interference to the air waves could result into serious security and safety breaches but also compromise the quality of services

such as telecommunications and broadcasting," Kondwani said.

He said the spectrum is also used in air traffic control saying any interference must not be entertained.

Following the upgrade, MACRA now has the capacity to monitor all transmissions across the country including in areas such as Likoma and Chizumula Islands.



DIRECTOR OF BROADCASTING FEGUS LIPENGA ADDRESSING THE MEDIA.

MACRA LIFTS BAN ON RADIO FREQUENCY LICENCES ISSUANCE

BY WEZZIE NKHOMA-SOMBA

The Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA) has lifted a moratorium it had imposed in June 2018 on broadcasters on the issuance of radio frequency licences in the FM band (87.5 – 108MHz).

Speaking at a press briefing on the lift of the suspension on issuance of radio frequency licences in the FM Band (87.5 - 108 MHz), Director of Broadcasting Fegus Lipenga said the implementation process is not meant to victimize anyone saying it is aimed at improving the quality of broadcasting in the country.



LIPENGA: THE PROCESS IS NOT MEANT TO VICTIMIZE ANYONE.

"A new plan for the Band has been developed and MACRA is ready to implement it.

"Content service providers can therefore apply for frequencies using the normal procedures and the issuance of the new frequencies will be done simultaneously with the implementation based on progress," Lipenga said.

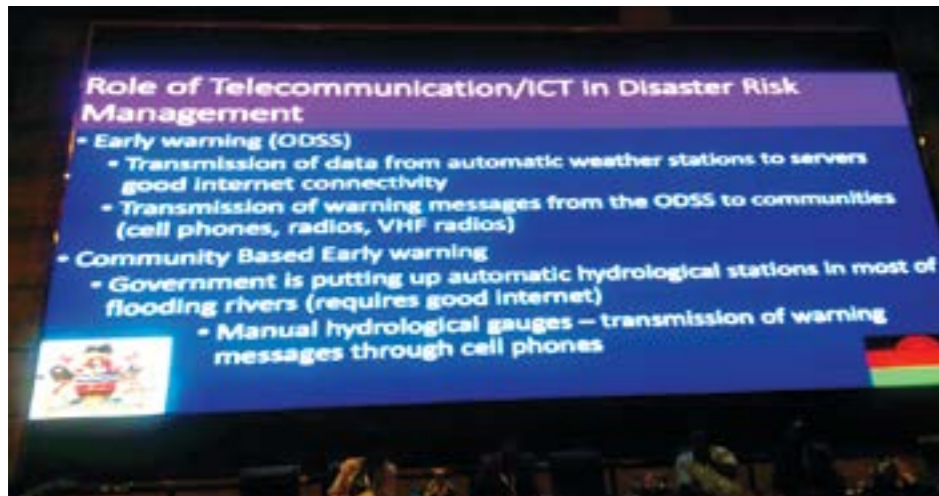
He said MACRA has set up a task force for implementation and broadcasters are members of this taskforce to ensure transparency.

Broadcasters will therefore be required to cooperate with the task force to ensure smooth implementation of the process.

GENERAL STORIES



TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORS URGED TO TAKE A LEADING ROLE IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT



MACRA JUST LIKE OTHER TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORS SHOULD BE IN THE FORE FRONT SO THAT THE USE OF ICT IS MAXIMISED DURING DISASTERS SUCH AS CYCLONES

BY WEZZIE NKHOMA-SOMBA

MACRA and other Telecommunications Regulators in Africa have been urged to take a leading role in disaster management which has of late become a concern to many African countries and the world as a whole.

Making a presentation at the African Telecoms/ICT day commemorative workshop in Maputo, Mozambique, Deputy Director for Response and Recovery for the Department of Disaster Management Affairs Dyce

Kapumula Nkhoma said MACRA just like other telecommunications



NKHOMA MAKING A PRESENTATION DURING THE MEETING.

regulators should be in the fore front so that the use of ICT is maximised during disasters such as cyclones, saying communication is key.

Under the theme "Using Technology to Save Lives: Emergency Communications for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management" the workshop was part of this year's African Telecommunications ICT day.

Ten African countries including Malawi were in attendance.



CANCER INITIATIVE EXPLOITS ICT FOR AWARENESS

BY YAMIKANI YAPUWA



BRAM FUDZUMAN-WE DO NOT NEED BIGGER SYSTEMS FOR US TO BE ABLE TO EMBRACE ICT'S TO SERVE OUR COMMUNITIES IN THE HEALTH SECTOR.

CSQ HAS CREATED A DATABASE OF 1000 PEOPLE WHO ARE BEING REACHED WITH CANCER AWARENESS MESSAGES THROUGH WHATSAPP.

Chikhulupiliro Ng'ombe was only eight years old when he was diagnosed with Leukaemia (cancer of the blood).

Prior to his diagnosis, Ng'ombe and his parents got no cancer awareness messages.

"There was no awareness that was available to me or my parents prior to diagnosis. The awareness we got was offered in South Africa, by cancer survivors, and social workers," he remembers.

Now, Ng'ombe who is founder of Cancer Survivors Quest (CSQ), is striving to save others from his

experience. His organisation has exploited ICT to create awareness on cancer.

CSQ has created a database of 1000 people who are being reached with cancer awareness messages through WhatsApp.

He says ICTs have as much impact on health as they do in business as messages can be shared among society quickly.

"Information is power, they say, but currently there is little or no information about cancer. You only receive it after diagnosis. Those trying to push for more information on cancer have little or no support

and lack the financial capacity.

"So, by using ICT we are able to reach farther than we could and reaching more people comparing to the physical technique," he said.

He further explained that when doing the door-to-door campaign they can reach an average of 100 people at a time.

"But by using ICT like whatsapp broadcast messaging system we reach over 1000 people in less than 10 minutes, without taking into consideration those that will forward the message.

"All this is done with ease and most

of the time at home, so even the need for transportation is reduced," he said.

Ng'ombe added that currently responses are at 90 percent and within minutes of sending the broadcast and through the messages shared, people will be able to identify the signs of cancer earlier and seek medical attention in good time.

"Awareness will empower the nation to make cancer an important matter in health and will push government, leaders, NGOs and individuals to play a role in the fight against cancer.

"Awareness helps to bring hope. By understanding cancer better, we are aware what we can do to fight it in a more confident manner," he said.

ICTAM President Bram Fudzulani hailed CSQ for the initiative. He said it shows that Malawians can make a difference by even using small ICT systems to serve communities.

"Organisations like Cancer Survivors Quest utilising simple platforms like whatsapp to disseminate information tells us a lot that we do not need bigger ICT systems to serve our communities in the health sector," he said.

Fudzulani added that the use of ICTs in the health sector is one major area that the country needs to do more.

"There are a lot of things going on and I know of various organisations embarking on projects towards deploying health systems in government and NGOs but I think we need to do more if we look at consolidated efforts that different



NG'OMBE DURING ONE OF THEIR AWARENESS MEETINGS.

partners are trying to test these technologies in the health sector.

"There is also the need for collaboration and working together to avoid duplication of initiatives that are already being implemented by other partners," he said.

Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA)'s



WE ARE USING ICT FOR CANCER AWARENESS.

Director of Telecommunications Henry Silika commended CSQ for the initiative.

He said it comes at a time when the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) is championing the use of ICTs for the world to achieve Sustainable Development Goals.

"This is a good initiative because it proves that ICTs can be used to improve health and wellbeing of people. The promotion of use of ICTs in health care provision cannot be left to government and its agencies alone," he said.

Silika underscored the need for the country to do more in the use of ICT in the health sector.

"ICTs can play a critical role in improving health care for individuals and communities by among others providing new and more efficient ways of accessing, communicating and storing information.

"We have seen software developers coming up with different applications to be used in the health world over.

"The government through Digital Malawi project intends to connect all rural health centres to the Government-wide Area Network to improve the flow of health care information," he said.

He added that such initiatives will be further enhanced as MACRA will soon operationalize the Universal Access Fund (USF).

The objective of the USF is to bridge the digital divide especially in the rural and underserved areas.

GOVT PLEDGES CONTINUED

BY NATHAN MAJAWA



COMMITMENT -LIPENGA (L) INTERACTS WITH MINISTER OF INFORMATION MARK BOTO.MANI

Government says it has so far demonstrated its belief in human rights and freedoms including that of the media.

Minister of Information, Civic Education and Communications Technology Hon. Mark Botomani was speaking at a regional conference on Media Freedom and Democracy organized by Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA)-Malawi Chapter in Lilongwe.

"It is for this reason that all freedoms, including those relevant to the media namely

freedom of expression and freedom of the press are jealously safeguarded. However, even if these freedoms were not grounded in the Constitution of the Republic, Government would still protect them because we believe that diversity of opinion is a refinery where raw materials of ideas and thoughts are cooked and seasoned," Botomani said.

He said since the 1993 Referendum, the media industry in Malawi has registered growth and development with over 80 licensed broadcasters.

"From the era of one radio station: the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), and one newspaper publishing house: the Blantyre Newspapers Limited (BNL), today, we are talking of over 80 radio stations, over 40 television stations and several publishing houses. From a time of no known school of journalism, today there are a lot of training institutions including public and private universities," the minister said.

At the conference, Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA) pledged to

MEDIA FREEDOM IN MALAWI

continue creating a conducive atmosphere for the enjoyment of freedom and strengthening of democracy by the media.

Addressing the conference, Director of Broadcasting at MACRA Fergus Lipenga said among other actions, MACRA is training broadcasters on specific areas such as content development, ethics and professional conduct.

"These are helping to build capacity of broadcasters and the media in general, for them to carry out their work effectively and responsibly. We look forward to working with MISA-Malawi as partners because we recognize the critical role of journalism as foundation stone of communication," Lipenga said.

He added that to ensure that broadcasting quality and promotion of local content is achieved, MACRA plans to build studios in all regions where broadcasters will attend both fresh and refresher courses.

"We are responsible for ensuring that broadcasters are broadcasting quality local content. MACRA is also involved in building capacity for content producers as well as in establishing conducive infrastructure for the development of local content. Plans are underway to establish studios in all regions of the country and introduce tailor-made training programs for broadcasters," he said.

Lipenga urged MISA-Malawi to consider investing in its own monitoring system. Such a system, he said, would ensure that the media is operating within the law in the course of its work.

British High Commissioner to Malawi Holy Tett said the UK government is committed to ensuring that journalists are able to do their job without fear of retribution or fear for their lives.

The conference attracted media representatives from Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, Lesotho, Namibia and the host Malawi. It ran under the theme 'Building Resilient Democracies in SADC: The role of the media'.



PARTICIPANTS POSING WITH MINISTER OF INFORMATION MARK BOTOMANI.

MALAWI TO BENEFIT FROM UPU SYSTEM REFORM

BY WEZZIE NKHOMA-SOMBA



DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WILL NOW BE ABLE TO RECOVER COSTS THAT THEY INCUR WHEN THEY RECEIVE, PROCESS AND DELIVER INTERNATIONAL MAIL ON BEHALF OF ORIGIN COUNTRIES

MACRA DIRECTOR GENERAL, GODFREY ITAYE.

Malawi is set to benefit from the decision made by the Universal Postal Union (UPU) for developing countries to recover costs which they incur when they receive, process and deliver international mail on behalf of origin countries.

The reform will change the structure of coming up with fees that postal operators charge for processing and delivering international mail and small parcels.

The adoption of what is known as the 'Victory Option' took place at an extra-ordinary meeting held in

Geneva recently.

MACRA's Director General Godfrey Itaye led the Malawi delegation at the emergency meeting.

He said the reform has come at the right time as postal institutions in developing countries are struggling to survive due to reduced revenues.

"Developing countries will now be able to recover costs that they incur when they receive, process and deliver international mail on behalf of origin countries," he said.

Itaye added that the adoption has enabled the UPU to remain intact as the United States of America

withdrew its intention to leave the UPU.

UPU called for the meeting following concerns from some countries including the US over remuneration rates for bulky letters and small packets.

Itaye said the adoption of Option V by the Third Extra Ordinary Congress of the UPU means that member countries need to start preparing for the implementation of the agreed reforms.

"Specifically, Malawi is supposed to sign, ratify and accede to the 11th Additional Protocol on the postal remuneration of bulky letters and small packets before the implementation date of July 2020," he said.

There has been a significant increase in the volume of bulky letters and small packets containing goods in recent years, as a consequence of the growth of the e-commerce market.

Some countries expressed concern with the current postal remuneration system with regard to cost coverage on rates applied to bulky letters and small packets across borders.



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PARTICIPANTS DURING ONE OF THE STAKEHOLDERS MEETING IN BLANTYRE.



CTO'S DR. MARTIN KOYABE.

MALAWI TO CARRY OUT ICT ACCESS GAP ANALYSIS

BY LEMEKEZANI CHISAMBIRO

The government of Malawi through Digital Malawi project is set to carry out an ICT gap analysis study with technical assistance from the Commonwealth Technologies Organization (CTO).

Speaking at a stakeholders meeting with the country's industry players, MACRA's Director of Telecommunications Henry Silika said the study had come at the appropriate time.

"MACRA through the Universal Service Fund is set to carry out various ICT projects in the underserved areas of the country with the aim of bridging the digital divide.

"For us to effectively carry out this task there is need to get a clear picture of the ICT gaps in the country," he said.

Mr. Silika highlighted some of the challenges the ICT industry is currently facing in the country.

"Our goal as MACRA is to promote universal ICT access for all, we want everyone to be connected in this country. However, the reality on the ground is that some areas which operators deem unattractive economically and hard to reach still remain underserved.

"As an ICT regulator we hope to reach these underserved areas through the ICT projects under the universal service fund," he said.

currently facing in the country.

"Our goal as MACRA is to promote universal ICT access for all, we want everyone to be connected in this country. However, the reality on the ground is that some areas which operators deem unattractive economically and hard to reach still remain underserved.

"As an ICT regulator we hope to reach these underserved areas through the ICT projects under the universal service fund," he said.

In his remarks the lead consultant from CTO Dr. Martin Koyabe was optimistic that the study will yield the desired outcome which is an effective map of the country's ICT

CSQ HAS CREATED A DATABASE OF 1000 PEOPLE WHO ARE BEING REACHED WITH CANCER AWARENESS MESSAGES THROUGH WHATSAPP.

gaps and its needs.

"ICT interventions under Universal Service without a clear map of the actual gaps and needs of Malawi's ICT industry are futile and therefore, there is need for tailor made solutions based on the actual ICT needs of a particular area," he said.

The gap analysis study will act as a tool which MACRA through Universal Service will use to effectively deliver on its mandate of promoting universal ICT access for all.

MACRA is set to start implementing projects under Universal Service in 2020.



CRASA GROUP PHOTO.

CRASA SAYS SADC WORKING TOWARDS UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO ICT

BY WEZZIE NKHOMA-SOMBA

Communications Regulators for Southern Africa (CRASA) says ICT regulators are working hard to achieve universal access to ICTs in the region.

Speaking in Salima during a project

management training for Universal Access Fund (USF) managers and CRASA USF Committee meeting, CRASA's Head of Electronic Communications Bridget Linzie said governments as well as regulators are now trying to get to hard-to-

reach areas so that they have access to ICTs, just like other areas.

Linzie said ICTs are changing the manner health and education services are provided as well as the way communication is done.



HEAD OF UNIVERSAL SERVICE EMILY KHAMULA-LUNGU.

"At SADC we have made great strides in regards to the provision of Universal Access to ICT services. If we can just look at how we are achieving the targets of broadband for SADC member states, you will find that most of the countries have

managed to provide Universal access in the urban areas," she said.

MACRA's Head of USF Emily Lungu said the project which started in the country two years ago is expected

to be fully implemented in 2020.

"For example, now we have Universal Service Fund rules which we developed in consultation with our stakeholders like licensees from telecoms, postal and broadcasting sector.

"So, we have the guidelines on how we should access the funds, on how we can identify an operator to get the funds for rural areas and also how the projects can be identified in order to achieve universal service in the country," Lungu said.

During the meeting, Malawi was elected as vice chairperson for the CRASA Universal Access and Service Committee (UASC).

Zambia is chairing the committee. Seven SADC member states attended the meetings. They include Malawi, Tanzania, Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Mauritius.



CROSS SECTION OF PARTICIPANTS.



LINZIE BEING INTERVIEWED BY THE MEDIA.



THE MALAWI DELEGATION LED BY THE DG AT WRC 19.

MACRA REPRESENTED AT WRC 19

This year Malawi through a delegation lead by MACRA's director general Godfrey Itaye attended The World Radio Communications Conference (WRC19) which was held in Sharm El-Sheikh Egypt.

WRC is a global event where the world meets to deliberate and plan the use of Radio Frequency Spectrum in the world.

Radio frequency spectrum is an essential resource that is critical for the provision of wireless communication services that touch on every aspect of human life.

Through A11.4 Malawi championed for the provisions necessary to allow SADC countries to reclaim their satellite orbital resources that were lost due to usage of satellite resources by the developed countries.

At this years WRC Malawi franked by other countries in the region successful pushed for this resolution, thereby enabling the re-acquisition of lost orbital resources. It is envisaged that through the critical infrastructure development program, Malawi and the rest of the SADC countries will be able to

develop the satellite network and reduce the digital divide.

Other key issues discussed include the acquisition of the spectrum necessary for the development of 5G networks. The conference identified a number of radio frequency spectrum bands for the use of 5G systems.

As MACRA we believe that the efficient use of radio frequency spectrum will improve the socio-economic lives of the people through the provision of affordable wireless broadband services.



MACRA
Promoting Universal ICT Access

What is the role of MACRA Consumer Affairs Unit (CAU)?

MACRA is an independent communications regulator and one of its major mandates includes ensuring that service providers respect and protect communication consumers rights in the provision of their services.

MACRA Consumer Affairs Unit (CAU), therefore, works towards ensuring that consumers are safeguarded against the ill effects of competition whilst ensuring that the benefits of the competition are passed on to the consumers. Its mandates include empowering consumers through consumer awareness programmes on consumer rights and obligations and enforcement of these rights. You, the consumer and your interests, are the focal point of CAU.

The Communications Act and the licences issued to all communication service providers contain provisions that protect you, the consumer, in your dealings with the service providers by placing obligations on the service providers to be honest and deal fairly with you.

MACRA, through CAU, will, therefore, assist you, the consumer, to make informed decisions. If you have a problem or a complaint relating to your rights as a communication consumer, you should always contact the service provider first to resolve your complaint. If you are not assisted, or you are not satisfied with the assistance offered by the service provider, you may contact CAU.

What are your rights as a communication consumer?

If you are using telecommunications, broadcasting or postal services offered by service providers licensed by MACRA for your personal use, then you are a Communications (ICT) Consumer.

As a consumer, you have the following rights:-

- 1. The right to access information** - to be informed of Communication Consumer Bill of Rights as well as reasonable access to all relevant information that will enable you, the consumer, to exercise and enforce rights.
- 2. The right to transparency and disclosure** - to receive clear, transparent and complete information about rates, terms and conditions for all services and products.
- 3. The right to high quality and reliable communication services** - to receive services that meet clearly defined quality of service benchmarks and standards which are regularly monitored and the results should be made publicly available.
- 4. The right to be protected against market abuse** - including unfair trade practices, false and misleading advertising, anti-competitive behavior and unfair and irresponsible marketing.

STEPPING UP ON Consumer Protection

- 5. The right against non-discrimination** - to be treated equally to all other similarly situated consumers free of prejudice or disadvantage.
- 6. The right to fair and reasonable treatment** - to expect a fair deal from service providers, with reasonable rates that fairly reflect the cost of the services rendered.
- 7. The right to health and safety** - to receive products and services that adequately meet defined standards of health and safety.
- 8. The right to redress channels** - to access readily available channels of complaint redress that are inexpensive, easy to use, timely, effective and fair and should include clear escalation procedure to MACRA as the final arbiter.
- 9. The right to choice** - to select freely from a range of quality products, services and service providers at competitive prices and to have your choices respected and protected.
- 10. The right to personal privacy and security** - to enjoy lawful personal privacy and security of personal data and be protected against unauthorized use of personal information.
- 11. The right to representation and voice** - to have your voice heard including through the formation of consumer advocacy groups, public participation and input into proceedings and decisions that affect consumer rights.
- 12. The right to accurate and comprehensive billing** - to receive accurate, understandable and itemized billing for all products and services that you have subscribed to.

What is the communication consumer complaint handling process?

If you, as a communication consumer, have any issue or complaint against your service provider related to your right as a consumer, you have a right to file a formal complaint with MACRA only if you have not been assisted by your service provider or if you are unable to come to an acceptable resolution with your service provider.

If you have a complaint against your service provider, follow the steps below:

Complaint Handling Process

- Step 1** - Contact your service provider - Telecomms, Internet, Broadcasting (Television and radio) Postal (Post office or courier operators);
- Step 2** - If your service provider does not resolve your complaint within 14 days or if you are not happy with their resolution, then contact MACRA on Tel: +265 1 810 882, Fax: +265 1 811 801 or email to: consumer-help@macra.org.mw
- Step 3** - If you are not satisfied with MACRA's decision, you may seek legal redress against the service provider in any appropriate court of law in Malawi



#CYBER SECURITY



SOCIAL MEDIA VISIBLE THREATS: ARE YOU STILL IGNORING THEM?



How social are you? Today, the answer to this question is defined by the number of social media accounts you own and the amount of time that you spend online. We find everyone active on social media in some form. Even businesses are implementing social media strategies actively to connect with their customers in their own terms and preferred platforms. The online presence for the exchange of data is leading to new and potential attack vectors.

The data that we share in our social media accounts could be misused, or the websites that we connect to via our social media accounts can be malicious. In other words, it is the

IT IS ALWAYS RECOMMENDED TO AVOID CLICKING LINKS OR ATTACHMENTS SENT THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA THAT YOU CANNOT RECOGNIZE.

user who is inviting the threat by sharing malicious content.

Social media threats are unwanted spam, that is user-generated, such as chat, comments, link sharing, and more. This malicious content can appear in many forms – hate speech, fraudulent views, fake friends, bulk messages, personally identifiable information, and more.

The threats are spread among a large number of people through a trusted group member. In fact, it is observed that more than 6 million Facebook accounts are compromised every single day, and one among 10 social media users complain about being a victim of a cyber attack.

PRIMARY SOURCES OF VISIBLE THREATS ON SOCIAL MEDIA NEFARIOUS CONTENT:

The widespread popularity of social media helps spread nefarious content that includes stalking, harassment, or cyberbullying. For example, teens often share illegal images, spread rumors, and use social media to harass fellow classmates to gain popularity. In extreme cases, harassment or cyberbullying results in suicide or murder of victims.

It is believed that girls report three times more harassment than boys on social media.

Such nefarious content can be used by predators to contact and build a relationship under false pretences, ultimately harming them further.

To overcome such complex situations, teens, when bullied, should inform their parents. People

should maintain caution when it comes to sharing personal data online. As a precautionary measure, parents should also monitor their children's social media accounts and should stay involved with them.

Many people share images or website links, confirming an interesting article or valuable information. Websites that contain malware, when shared on social media, will gain an increasing number of views. Such sites can infect computers in large quantities and can compromise victims' data.

It is always recommended to avoid clicking links or attachments sent through social media that you cannot recognize. These links may be fake or contain harmful viruses that can compromise or destroy crucial information on your computer.

Tesla owners received a wakeup call recently in a conference at Singapore where an information security expert, Nitesh Dhanjani, Ernst and Young Security Executive, revealed that Tesla's electric cars could be hacked using simple techniques. This can happen when the cars are connected to a specific entertainment-based app. Likewise, it is quite common for attackers to access computers and retrieve information.

PREDICTABLE PASSWORDS:

The US Department of Homeland Security sent out a warning against the use of standard or guessable passwords when several government agencies were targeted by "password spray"

attack, which is a type of brute force login attack. DHS believes that such attacks require little more than a rudimentary knowledge of the target organization and internet search skills. Social media accounts should always be protected with strong passwords, and the reports should not be left unattended anytime. Installing a dual authentication on every social media account is another good option to protect them from getting hacked.

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BEWARE, YOU MAY BE A VICTIM OF SOCIAL MEDIA INVISIBLE THREATS



Social media is an authoritative connectivity source that brings your distant friends, relatives, associates, and family members together.

It allows you to share any content immediately among your group of people. What you put up in your account will be circulated around the world wide web with or without your knowledge.

Though there are security settings where you can share content in closed groups on social media platforms, intruders often find their way to gain access to private information.

When everything appears to be healthy on your profile page, cybercriminals are often actively working in the backend. Initially, you may not be serious about your

social media hack as your bank information, or crucial information is not directly compromised.

However, your personal and family details are at stake, and the leakage of such information might result in severe damages. There are situations, when your personal data has been leaked by social media companies, intentionally or unintentionally, without your knowledge.

How are social media hacks dangerous?

Even though any hack is a matter of worry, a breach of personal information should also be taken seriously. The social media account may not hold any of your financial data, but it reveals your personal details to someone who is miles away. Anyone from another corner of the world can siphon information

from your account and might use this for malicious purposes.

Social media profiles often display your personal information, such as, your birthday, native place, place of working, phone number, and other security question hints. If someone performs a more in-depth study, they can easily gain access to your financial or email accounts. When you purchase anything from a social media outlet, your credit card information is stored, which hackers can confiscate quickly. Social media hacks are far more dangerous than our imagination.

Facebook Data Leakage Case

The cybersecurity firm, UpGuard, has uncovered two incidents of data compromise related to Facebook users. In the first instance, a Mexico-based media company,

CulturaColectiva accumulated 146 gigabytes of data having more than 540 million records which include likes, reactions, comments, Facebook IDs, and many more.

In another incident, UpGuard exposed a data breach related to a Facebook-integrated app called, At the Pool. This exposure came from a since-discontinued app which mistakenly posted password accounts of 22,000 users on a public Amazon cloud server.

Are you willingly giving them the right to your big data?

By neglecting to read the social media site's terms, you may be giving consent to the company to access your personal information. While you would never hand over your bank passbook to anybody, it is highly likely that you are blindly agreeing to the terms of the website, where there may be a clause of accessing your personal information.

For example, one of Instagram's terms of use states: "Instagram does not claim ownership of any Content that you post on or through the service. Instead, you hereby grant to Instagram a non-exclusive, fully paid and royalty-free, transferable, sub-licensable, worldwide license to use the content that you post on or through the service." While agreeing to such terms doesn't give ownership of published content to the respective social media companies, the consent declares an acceptance to use the information posted on their platforms.

"While privacy policies were originally intended to be a protection mechanism for

consumers, they have turned into ownership policies," said Nico Sell, CEO of the Wickr Foundation.

When you sign into a social media account, they may ask for additional information, including details of your schooling, work, hometown, or general interests. All these can be used in the future for a specific malicious purpose. This information may also serve as a feed to display ads or news items of your interest. Though it appears harmless, the history may be shared among your contacts on a friends list.

Before you share any of your pictures or posts, be aware of what you are sharing and who you are sharing with. You must review your privacy settings for each platform to ensure the visibility of your profile and posts to others.

When you give your personal data while signing up to a social media account, it is not the end of intruding your privacy. They often go beyond the data provided and track your IP address too. One way to learn about oversharing of your information is always to read the terms listed. Look for the 'apps and websites' option that you may find under 'Settings' and review which websites are using your information.

Your deleted information may be existing at the backend: If you delete your account, your entire data will not get disappeared immediately. Facebook itself takes 90 days to permanently delete the data or profile from the backup that the user has deleted.

"We store data for as long as it is necessary to provide products and services to you and others,"

Facebook' data policy states.

However, on the deletion of account or data, the same is available online to the user or other viewers. The information that others have shared with you will not be deleted as it is done from their account.

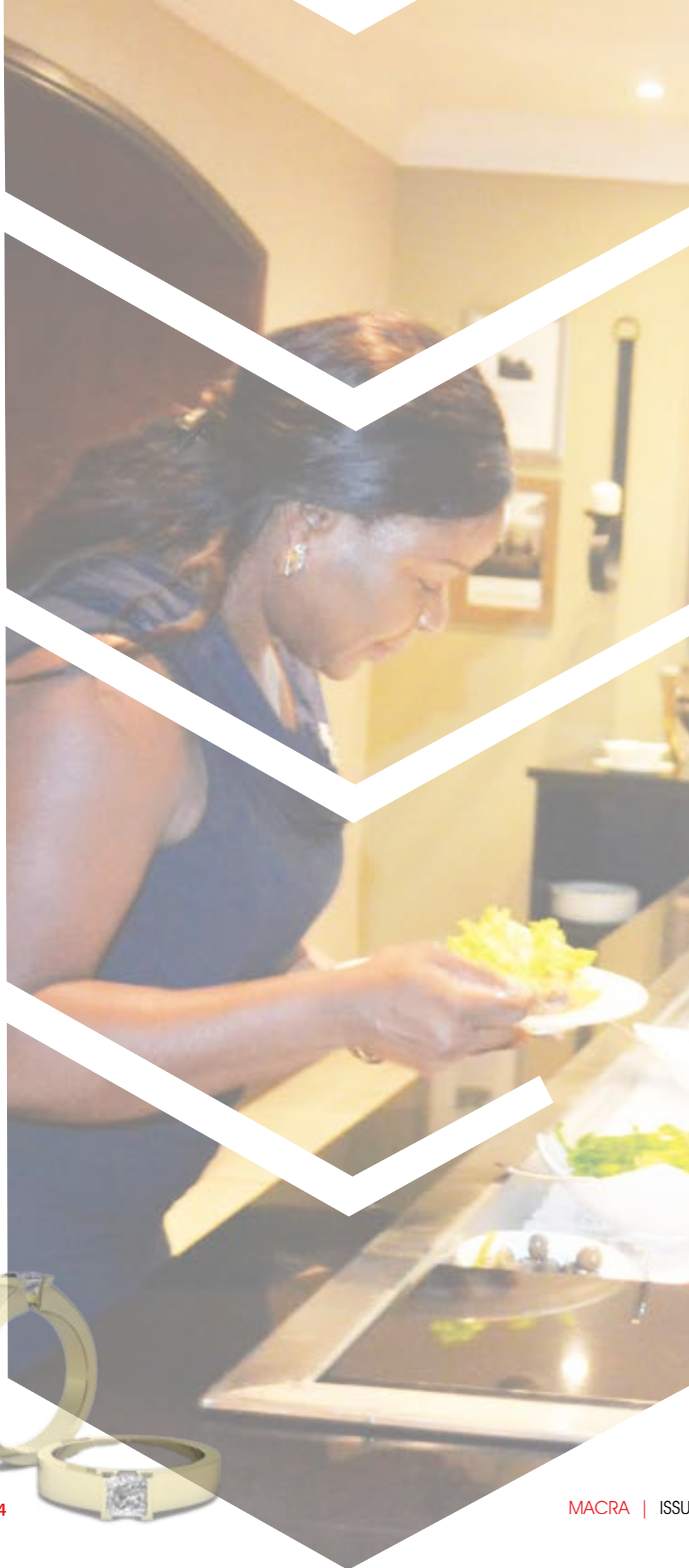
Instagram won't allow you to delete the account, though you can deactivate it. Instagram's terms of service state that your photos, likes, friendships, comments, and other data of your account will not be available to you. Whereas, that information will exist within the service.

To conclude, social media accounts may have more to them than we are aware of. If you lack the knowledge of privacy law, you cannot stop your data from getting compromised. An in-depth analysis of every account settings is required before you opt to share your details. When we are not sure of controlling the visible social media threats, invisible threats cannot be reached.

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#MACRA SOCIALS



Weddings

In the first half of 2019/20 financial year, MACRA family got busy socially as three of its members of staff got married.

Clara Mwafurirwa, Communications Manager wedded Uchizi Ngwira, Tamanda Chimombo, Broadcasting Monitoring officer, wedded Cromwell Ngwalo while

Nathan Majawa, Broadcasting Monitoring Officer, wedded his love Matilda Chimwaza on the 18 and 24 August and 6 October respectively.

The Ngwalos and Majawas made their vows in Blantyre while the Ngwiras did theirs in Karonga.

Below are the highlights:

From all of us at MACRA Magazine we say Congratulations to the newlyweds. We also wish to applaud MACRA management and staff for the support rendered to Tamanda, Clara and Nathan on their weddings.

- Clara & Uchizi -



- Tamanda & Cromwell -



- Nathan and Matilda -



MACRA LADIES CELEBRATE MOTHER'S DAY IN STYLE

MACRA management this year treated MACRA ladies to Mother's Day dinner at Ryalls Hotel in Blantyre on 19 October, 2019.

It was a night of interaction and fun for the women.

As part of the celebrations, MACRA ladies were presented with shopping vouchers amounting to K100, 000 each.

The ladies thankful to management for treating them in a special way.



WOMEN INTERACTING DURING THE DINNER.



IT'S EATING TIME.



THE LADIES POSE FOR A PHOTOGRAPH.



BLESSING AND DIANA SING ONE OF THEIR FAVOURITE SONGS AS PART OF ENTERTAINMENT.

MACRA COMMEMORATES WORLD AIDS DAY



As part of World Aids Day commemoration which falls on 1 December every year, MACRA has for the past two years been holding a Kids Fun Day to mark the day. This year's event took place in August at Game Haven Country Lodge in Thyolo.



WORLD AIDS DAY

MACRA members of staff came together in the fight against HIV and AIDS by holding a candle lighting ceremony. The event took place at MACRA premises in Blantyre.

Below are the pictorial highlights for the event.



DG LEADS IN CANDLE LIGHTING.



MEMBERS OF STAFF JOIN IN THE EXERCISE.

COMMEMORATIONS



MEMBER OF STAFF DONATING BLOOD.



CHAIRPERSON OF HIV/AIDS COMMITTEE
THOKOZANI CHIMBE



MEMBERS WERE ALSO TREATED TO A LUNCHEON.



#INDUSTRY NEWS



THE E-COMMERCE PORTAL WILL ENHANCE COURIER SERVICE DELIVERY-NKOLIMBO.

MPC'S E-COMMERCE Portal enhances courier services

BY YAMIKANI YAPUWA

Malawi Posts Corporation (MPC) says it intends to come up with e-commerce portal to enable customers to sell, buy and

ship goods.

MPC Public Relations Manager Ida Nkolimbo told MACRA Magazine that currently the corporation has

various systems that are stand-alone.

She said their technical team is working on integrating these

of business. This will enable local SMEs to become competitive and equally participate on the local as well as the global market.

"The e-Commerce portal will be available for all. One will only need to register to access the portal and the portal registration is open to all that are interested; hence it qualifies as very transparent," she added.

Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA) Communications Manager Clara Ngwira said this is a good development as it will impact on the economy in a big way.

"The e-Commerce portal will enable people to buy goods electronically and ship them using the world postal network and to be delivered by MPC.

"Goods can also be bought from Malawi electronically and sent through the postal network to be delivered beyond the borders of Malawi," said Ngwira.

She said the buying and selling of goods online will result in increased business for courier operators as there will be need to physically deliver the goods that have been bought online.

"As buying and selling becomes easier using the e-Commerce, buyers and sellers will need courier services to send and deliver their goods," she said.

She added that MACRA championed the passing of E-transactions and Cyber Security bill into law in 2017. The two pieces of legislation provide the legal framework for e-Commerce

"However, there is need to create awareness on the opportunities that have been availed with the passing of the E-transactions law," she said.

Ngwira added that the authority is also championing the physical addressing project as it will also help in home delivery of courier.

"In order to facilitate home delivery of courier items, MACRA is implementing the Physical Addressing project. The project has already been rolled out across the country," she added.

Currently, MPC website is linked with international track and trace system. This is accessible through the link which enables customers to trace items within the logistics chain.

Ngwira said these types of technology help to improve courier service providers' quality of service.

"AS BUYING AND SELLING BECOMES EASIER USING THE E-COMMERCE, BUYERS AND SELLERS WILL NEED COURIER SERVICES TO SEND AND DELIVER THEIR GOODS,"

"MALAWI POSTS CORPORATION WILL NOT BE THE SAME"

BY YAMIKANI YAPUWA

As Malawi becomes more technological, the culture of sending letters has declined drastically. So what is the fate of Malawi Posts Corporation (MPC) whose core business is known to have been sending people's letters? What is its situation now and what does the future hold for the parastatal? YAMIKANI YAPUWA spoke with Henry Shamu, Post Master General, on the fate of the corporation.

How many Post Offices do you have countrywide and how many are bringing in desirable revenue?

We have a total of 180 post offices. Of these, only 30 are ticking financially.

Why do you keep those post offices that are making losses instead of closing them?

We cannot close them down because communication is a basic right of the citizen, and so we must provide the service on a social scale.

How far have you gone with the refurbishment of post offices to provide enough office space for the provision of some government



GIVE IT ONE OR TWO MORE YEARS, MPC WILL NOT BE THE SAME AGAIN-SHAMU.

services?

In terms of refurbishment of post offices, there are two parts. The first is refurbishment for the Mlambe One Stop Centre. The pilot has been completed, and the post offices involved are Lilongwe and Mangochi. The second part is refurbishment to accommodate the National Registration Bureau (NRB) for provision of continuous registration. This involves 65 post offices for a start. For this, the process has begun but the actual

refurbishment is yet to be done. It is the NRB that will do the refurbishment with funding from UNDP, and matters are at procurement stage.

Apart from the refurbishment of post offices, what other reforms are you undertaking at MPC?

We have introduced the post bus service, and are due to launch mobile money wallet. These are for augmentation of revenues. The post coach will enhance same day delivery courier service (each bus has nine-tonne capacity for the purpose), and will also bring in revenue through passenger fares. We

have started with seven buses. The mobile money wallet is ready and is only awaiting licencing by the Reserve Bank of Malawi. We are also putting together infrastructure for e-commerce.

How has the implementation process of the reforms assisted MPC in its service delivery to customers and the general public?

The Mlambe One Stop Centre is



MINISTER OF INFORMATION MARK BOTOMANI AFTER UNVEILING THE BUSES IN LILONGWE.

meant to afford convenience to the people as a number of services are offered under one roof. These include postal, MRA, road traffic, and immigration services. It must also culminate in cost savings as the people will no longer have to travel far to access the services.

Ever since MPC started implementing the reforms, what has changed in the way it operates?

The post bus will enable same day delivery courier service, which was not possible before. The mobile money wallet, which is yet to be implemented, will see our customers sending and receiving money through the phone. They will also be able to make payments through the phone, as well as keep money in the phone. The wallet will be a great lever towards financial inclusivity for the rural masses.

How will these reforms enhance MPC's revenue generation?

The enhancement of courier, and the passenger fares, that come with the post bus will clearly increase our revenues. Also, the mobile wallet will bring revenues through



THE POST BUS SERVICE WILL INCREASE OUR REVENUE AS WELL AS ENHANCE SAME DAY DELIVERY COURIER SERVICE.

commissions. The e-commerce will provide the corporation with the opportunity for last mile delivery in the case of customers that are shopping online. Such delivery is by no means free of charge.

Any last words?

Give it one or two more years, Malawi Posts Corporation will not be the same.



SHAMU DURING THE POST BUS SERVICE LAUNCH.

THE ENHANCEMENT OF COURIER, AND THE PASSENGER FARES, THAT COME WITH THE POST BUS WILL CLEARLY INCREASE OUR REVENUES. ALSO, THE MOBILE WALLET WILL BRING REVENUES THROUGH COMMISSIONS.



BENGA POSTAL AGENCY.

GOVERNMENT REVIVING 154 POSTAL AGENCIES

BY WEZZIE NKHOMA-SOMBA

Government, through the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority, has embarked on a project to revive 154 dysfunctional postal agencies across the country.

MACRA's Deputy Director of Postal Services Burnet Namacha said postal services are the basic and most affordable means of communication.

He said the Government of

Malawi has the obligation to provide universal postal services to everyone regardless of their location, race, religion, gender and social status among others, hence the decision to give a new lease of life to the postal agencies.

The country has 154 postal agencies. However less than 10 of these are currently operational.

To ensure that the majority of people are not denied postal services, MACRA is reviving the

postal agencies to the tune of K13 million per agency.

"The only way to provide basic postal services to the rural and underserved communities is through the operation of postal agencies. So, we are renovating the buildings, providing furniture, a desk top computer and electricity," Namacha said.

So far MACRA has renovated three postal agencies namely, Thavite in Salima, Bonga in Nkhotakota

and Chisombezi in Chiradzulu. The latter is operational while the other two will start providing services early next year.

And the renovation is bringing excitement to communities.

"This is a big relief to us. We have been walking for over 45km to have access to postal services since our postal agency here at Thavite was closed.

"It has not been easy as we had to spend over K2, 000 on transport for us to travel to Salima Post Office to buy a postage stamp of less than K2, 000 in order to post a letter and communicate with our relatives across the country," said Amosi Nsulani who trades at Thavite Trading Centre in Salima.

Post Master for Salima Post Office Jean Chirwa observed that a lot of mails from the surrounding agencies including Thavite remain uncollected by owners due to long distances.

"Salima Post Office has been receiving mails for Thavite communities but because of the distance, they have been unable to come and collect their mails.

"When we receive the mails for these agencies, we only keep them for one year before we return them to the sender," Chirwa said.

She added that Malawi Posts Corporation (MPC) is grateful for MACRA's support saying the communities have been suffering for a long time.

District Commissioner for Nkhotakota district which is one of the beneficiaries, Dr. Medson Matchaya said as a council their interest is in the importance of the postal services to the communities and not profit making.

"We will make sure that these agencies are sustained and serving the communities. We will ensure that the postal agency is reopened as quickly as possible so that the communities are served," Matchaya said.

Postal agencies are operated by district councils while MPC provides technical support.



NKHOTA KOTA DC, DR. MATCHAYA.



A CUSTOMER BEING ASSISTED AT CHISOMBEZI POSTAL AGENCY.



MACRA AND MPC STAFF VISIT THAVITE POSTAL AGENCY TO ASSESS PROGRESS.



NAMACHA STRESSING A POINT DURING A MEETING WITH NKHOTA KOTA DISTRICT COUNCIL.

#ITU NEWS





HOW CAN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) HELP MAKE OUR ROADS SAFER?

What does a fully autonomous, electric, high-performance race car have to do with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

For starters, the vehicle, developed

by Roborace, is providing a testing ground for new efforts to build public trust in how next-generation vehicles could improve road safety and reduce the 1.35 million annual road deaths worldwide (SDG 3.6).

Increased use of autonomous,

electric, connected vehicles could also reduce emissions, improve traffic flows — and provide affordable, safe and sustainable transport systems to underdeveloped nations (SDG 11.2).

But how do we go from race track to the road?

A panel of experts – Bryn Balcombe, CSO at Roborace and Founder of the Autonomous Drivers Alliance; Lucas di Grassi, Formula-E World Champion and CEO at Roborace; and Fred Werner, Head of Strategic Engagement at ITU’s Standardization Bureau – met at Web Summit 2019 to discuss how AI will make our roads safer, and how ITU is helping lead the charge.

Pointing to the speed of advances in the automotive industry, Lucas di Grassi predicted that in the not too distant future, your child will be driven to school by a car designed using the best characteristics of every racing driver in the world – from Rally to Formula One to Formula E.

“What happened in the last 10 years in the automotive industry, it changed more than it did the previous hundred, and the next 10 will be even more changes to come,” he said.

“Motorsport is a laboratory for all the technologies which will make the car faster, but also safer like ABS, braking, seatbelts, [and] like all types of crash tests and structural tests, and so on,” said di Grassi. “The next big thing in safety will be autonomous driving; you take the human element out.”

Roborace is one arena where this technology is being developed. The global racing championship is the world’s first competition where teams of AI developers programme autonomous electric vehicles to race around the track.

The teams share the same

hardware – the DevBot, a bespoke racing car developed by Roborace – so the only differentiator is the team’s customized AI algorithm that they develop for the competition.

But why is a racing competition the best place to develop this technology?

“If you look at where the industry is going, electric, connected and autonomous are the three mega trends for the automotive industry,” said Bryn Balcombe.

5G IS THE FIFTH GENERATION CELLULAR NETWORK TECHNOLOGY PROMISING SUPER-FAST LOW LATENCY INTERNET EVERYWHERE.

“The best way to engage the public in the debate around technology is to have an entertaining sport – something that they can watch and enjoy and then you can communicate to them about the messaging in the background.”

ITU LEADING THE WAY

To take the technology from the controlled environment of a race track to the road, international collaboration to develop performance and safety standards

for AI-driven vehicles will be crucial.

A new ITU Focus Group on ‘AI for autonomous and assisted driving’ will work towards the establishment of international standards that will monitor and assess the performance of the AI ‘drivers’ steering automated vehicles.

The aim is to create the equivalent of a driving license for AI drivers – an idea that originated at the AI for Good Global Summit.

5G’S FUTURE HANGS IN THE BALANCE

From cleaner oceans and more efficient transport systems to safer factories, smarter cities and more preventative health care, billions of citizens are counting on 5G innovation to improve their lives.

5G is the next step in our journey to connect all societies to a better future. Building upon and working with 4G, 5G will deliver more than just faster downloads with lower lag — it will be an evolutionary step with a revolutionary impact.

It promises to have a deeper impact on our lives than any previous mobile generation.

More than two-thirds of the people on the planet — over 5 billion — now have a mobile subscription, connecting people to each other and to the digital economy. The Internet is the most important enabler of social development and economic growth of our time. Already 3.6 billion people are online through mobile, and this figure is set to grow by an additional 1.4 billion by 2025.

The future of connectivity is on the



table at WRC 19, and the work we do in Sharm El-Sheikh will have a huge impact on how we connect everyone and everything to 5G, realizing a better future for all.

ITU plays a critical role in connecting the world's citizens to the enabling power of mobile services through the identification of harmonized spectrum, fostering scale and affordability. Progress from 2G to 3G to 4G has seen each generation offer new capabilities and bring new benefits to more people. 4G networks already cover 81% of the global population.

Starting with the 900 MHz band in 1979 (the World Administrative Radio Conference (Geneva, 1979), the ITU's Radio Regulations laid the foundation for today's mobile broadband networks. These allocations and identifications have paved the way for mobile broadband to thrive.

The facts are clear: 5G and other services can co-exist.

In Sharm El-Sheikh this year, the 3000 delegates representing nearly all of the world's nations had the unique opportunity to deliver new levels of connectivity across the globe. With access to the right spectrum, 5G networks are expected to cover nearly 40% of the global population by 2025.

5G DOMINATES ITU TELECOM WORLD 2019

We are living in the digital era where ICTs are the building blocks of everything around us, from government infrastructure (E-Government) to the world's economies.

We see, now more than ever, ICT being applied in all aspects of our lives, from the infrastructure around us (smart cities) to public health and agriculture.

In this light, every year the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) gives a platform to international organizations,

government institutions, world leaders, innovators, investors as well as SMEs through the ITU Telecom World to showcase the latest ICT developments as well as discuss prominent issues taking place in the industry.

This year the topic of discussion was the hottest ICT revolution --the licensing and usage of 5G spectrum as the backbone of our information infrastructure, Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence as well as big data analytics.

5G is the fifth generation cellular network technology promising super-fast low latency internet everywhere.

Currently, in Malawi we are on 4G, with mobile operators like TNM offering 4.5G.

At this year's ITU forum in Budapest, companies like Huawei and MTN South Africa showcased some of the usages of 5G, with products like virtual gaming, smart cities, smart health and smart farming.



john DONGLE

By Rodgers Chilemba & Steven Maseya



NEWS

FROM AROUND THE WORLD



SOCIAL-MEDIA INFLUENCERS INCOMES SOAR

The money made by social-media influencers has risen meteorically in the last few years, according to a new report.

Marketing firm Izea found the average price of a sponsored photo on Instagram has jumped

from \$134 (£104) in 2014 to \$1,642 (£1,276) in 2019.

Brands appear willing to pay handsomely to sponsor posts, videos, stories and blogs, too, says Business Insider.

But one expert insists it will not mean the end of traditional advertising.

"Digital marketing is the equivalent of word of mouth but there will always be a mix between that and traditional advertising," said Yuval Ben-Itzhak, chief executive of social media marketing platform Socialbakers. - **BBC**

M-PESA AMONG TOP 10 MOST INFLUENTIAL FINANCE PROJECTS

Safaricom's M-PESA has been recognised as one of the Top 10 Most Influential Finance Projects of the last 50 years by Project Management Institute (PMI) in its 2019 Most Influential Projects list.

The 12-year old service further stood out by being recognised among the Top 50 Most Influential Projects in the last five decades.

More than 1,000 projects were considered by a group of 400 leaders in the global project management community, including PMI chapter leaders and members, as well as academics and industry experts.

"We are honoured to receive this accolade and global recognition

which is a true testament to our impact on society. This recognition further underlines M-PESA's commitment to our customers and its transformation to the country which has seen financial inclusion in Kenya grow by more than 50 percent in the last 12 years to stand at more than 82 percent today," said Michael Joseph, CEO Safaricom.

To meet the standards of recognition, the project list identified efforts that changed the world, shaped lives, and altered the DNA of the organisations and the companies that launched them.

The list is part of PMI's 50th anniversary celebration that includes various activities to recognize the important role

project management has played over the past five decades and celebrate where the profession is going. -- **BiztechAfrica**

**MORE
THAN 1,000
PROJECTS WERE
CONSIDERED BY
A GROUP OF 400
LEADERS IN THE
GLOBAL PROJECT
MANAGEMENT
COMMUNITY...**

BOTSWANA SEES DECLINE IN MOBILE SUBSCRIPTIONS



The Botswana mobile landscape has seen a 1.4% decline in active mobile subscriptions to 3,181,591 in March 2018 from 3,226,389 in March 2017.

This is according to the latest BOCRA ICT Market Review released.

Botswana has experienced a remarkable growth of more than 100% in mobile telephony subscriptions since 2009 when BTC introduced mobile telephony services.

Previous studies have concluded that Botswana market was experiencing a unique form of competition where consumers own multiple SIM-cards belonging to different service providers. "This practice was driven by the need to take advantage of product and price offerings availed by the various service providers."

The above practice also ensures that consumers have access to other networks by swapping SIMcards in areas of

the country where their network of choice is not available or limited. The number of active mobile subscriptions decreased from 3,226,389 in March 2017 to 3,181,591 in March 2018 representing a decline of about 1.4% compared to the 6.8% decline recorded between 2016 and 2017.

Mobile Teledensity declined from 159% in March 2017 to 157% as at March 2018. - **BiztechAfrica**

UK'S LABOUR VOWS TO NATIONALIZE TELECOMS NETWORK SERVICE



Britain's opposition Labour Party said it will nationalize telecoms provider BT's fixed line network to provide free full-fiber broadband for all if it wins the December 12 election.

The news, the latest proposal by Labour for nationalization of infrastructure, sent BT shares down as much as 3.7%, wiping nearly half a billion pounds off its market capitalization.

The plan would require a sweeping upgrade of Britain's internet infrastructure that would be paid for by raising taxes on tech firms such

as Alphabet's Google, Amazon and Facebook and using its Green Transformation fund, Labour said.

Labour said it would nationalize Openreach - the digital network arm of the country's biggest broadband and mobile phone provider - as well as parts of BT Technology, BT Enterprise and BT Consumer.

"It's time to make the very fastest full-fiber broadband free to everybody, in every home in every corner of the country," said Labour leader Jeremy, according to an extract released by the party.

"By creating British Broadband as a public service, we will lead the world in using public investment to transform our country, reduce people's monthly bills, boost our economy and improve people's quality of life."

BT, which traces its history back to an 1846 telegraph company, was once one of Britain's national champions but was privatized by Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government in 1984. – Reuters

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