

CONEXT

The Official Newsletter of the Digital Council Africa

November 2023 Edition

Issue #015

Our very first
MEMBER ONLY
conference

DCA host inaugural East
Africa Conext conference

Q & A

In conversation with:
Collective X's Evan Jones

Workshop to deliver
feedback on the Draft
Final Data & Cloud Policy



Digital Council

CONEXT CONNECT

SANDTON CONVENTION CENTRE | 30 NOVEMBER



WELCOME FROM JUANITA

Welcome to the Spring 2023 issue of Conext, the official Newsletter of the Digital Council Africa and its members.

The aim of this publication is to not only let our members know what we have been busy with within the organisation but also, and probably more importantly, to provide a platform for our members to let us know what they are up to. As always we strongly encourage participation in this platform where you are invited to share more about your company.

We are thrilled to extend a warm invitation to our highly anticipated Conext Member Summit we call 'Connect'. This members-only event is dedicated to our members and partners and will create a platform for creating dialogue, stimulating conversation, and most importantly just to connect in an informal space.

At Conext Connect, we're on a mission to equip our members with invaluable insights into the current state of the sector while unveiling the ambitious plans that lie on the horizon. In line with this commitment, we will also unveil our highly anticipated annual research during the conference, available exclusively to our members.

If the last few years taught us anything it is that the 21st century is the era of scientific and technological advancement. The pandemic has accelerated the adoption of technology and today, every aspect of our lives is touched by digital. Also, the digital economy has disrupted and transformed every sector of the economy and has streamlined and improved ways of doing things. Therefore, the potential of the digital economy to create economic growth, employment and innovation cannot be underestimated as the digital economy has a direct impact on the economic growth of a country. Certainly, the Digital economy should be at the core of political priorities at all levels of government: international, national, regional and local.

But this is more than simply having an internet connection. We also have to be sure people know how to use technology for their benefit. We need to make sure that every person has access to an affordable connection. For full social and economic inclusion, having adequate digital skills is as important as being able to access technology. In this regard, we are very proud to be a partner of Harambee, whose core message is one that resonates with us.

We believe that partnerships and collaborations such as these are the key to driving broader efforts to build an inclusive digital economy that will unlock growth and economic recovery. Ensuring resilience and growth are of vital importance to not only national economic recovery but also to the future prosperity of the Republic of South Africa.

In the last quarter, several policy directions were published and the DCA are hard at work seeking to understand the impact these may have on our sectors. We strongly encourage participation in the working groups we establish to craft a response to these. Feel free to join the discussions on an ongoing basis and ensure that your company is represented.

I look forward to seeing you all on the 30th November in Sandton as we raise a glass to the year that was, and look forward to the one to come.

As always, please share feedback with us.

Thank you for your continued support,

Juanita

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FROM THE OFFICE

What is Conext?

“CONEXT: a relationship in which a person or thing is linked or associated with someone or something else.”

In a world that is becoming increasingly digital, it is important to ensure that ongoing engagement takes place. The Digital Council Africa strives to remain in contact with its members, and to provide its members with ongoing communication about its activities. Conext is the answer to staying engaged. Member engagement is encouraged through participation in events and working groups and through the distribution of the Conext Newsletter.

The DCA strives to offer members opportunities to network and collaborate and discuss best practice frameworks that is in the best interest of all, solving complex issues through dialogue and policy recommendations and we encourage dialogue between government and private sector from a platform that is independent and product agnostic. Conext belongs to the members of the Digital Council Africa. We welcome and encourage submissions from our members in the form of conversations related to the development of the digital economy as well as thought leadership articles you have written or would like to share, advertorials, adverts and any information that may be of interest to the ICT sector as a whole.

Contributions can be sent to Nadene Reignier at nadene@digitalcouncil.africa

Social Media

Social media is a fast, effective way to reach our target audience and create awareness of not only the Digital Council and our work but also for our members and as a means to share relevant industry news and updates. We have close to 6000 followers across our 3 platforms and had an organic reach of over 3000 on LinkedIn over the last 3 weeks alone. We plan to keep increasing our social media reach and leveraging it to grow awareness of the work of the Council and its members.

LET'S STAY CONEXTED. FOLLOW US ON



Want to feature your company in the upcoming Conext?

This publication belongs to the members of the Digital Council Africa. We welcome and encourage submissions from our members in the form of conversations related to the development of the digital economy as well as thought leadership articles you have written or would like to share, advertorials, adverts and any information that may be of interest to the ICT sector as a whole.

Contributions can be sent to Nadene Reignier at nadene@digitalcouncil.africa

Member Benefits

By joining the Digital Council Africa members have a competitive advantage because they become informed members of their industry as the council actively engages and represents its members at government level. Council members who lead busy professional lives can depend on the organisation to represent and brief them on important industry trends, new legislative rulings, and advances in technology. The main platform the Digital Council Africa (DCA) uses for this is through its annual conference. This event aims to attract C-level speakers and best of breed OEM's and distributors to keep industry informed and updated on the latest trends in technology and legislation. To find out more visit our [website](#).



Proud Partnership: Joining Forces to Empower Youth Futures

SA Youth was officially launched by President Cyril Ramaphosa on Youth Day June 16, 2021 as part of the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention (PYEI) and serves to aggregate opportunities and link unemployed young people to jobs and work experiences. SA Youth is a national pathway management network, an initiative that brings together eight government departments led by the Department of Employment and Labour, in a strong partnership with Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator and other organisations, to form a network that will support young people to find pathways into the economy.

Through these partnerships, we have developed an online platform called SAYouth.mobi. Youth can create a profile, view opportunities for learning and earning, and receive support through multiple channels. SAYouth.mobi has been zero-rated by all mobile networks so that it can be accessed by young people from anywhere in the country at absolutely no cost. This complements existing efforts to create physical spaces where young people can go to access information, opportunities and support including the NYDA centres and will include the 127 labour centres operated by the Department of Labour and Employment in every province.

Visit SAYouth.mobi website at: <https://sayouth.mobi/>

Welcome

Welcoming our new Member



Quadrupleplay, established in 2021, is a dynamic internet managed service provider based in South Africa. Our mission is to empower internet service providers by offering comprehensive setup services, robust

management solutions, innovative billing platforms, and a range of related services. Operating across South Africa and extending our reach to neighbouring countries, including Eswatini, Mozambique, Lesotho, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Malawi, Quadrupleplay has become a trusted partner in the telecommunications industry.

To find out more visit: <https://quadrupleplay.co.za/>



Link Africa is South Africa's largest cost-effective, independent fibre network operator, which provides high-speed, open-access telecommunications infrastructure. We have been supporting MNOs, FNOs and ISPs ignite success by innovating

ways for them to operate on our network as an extension of theirs. Using a patented method, FOCUS™, Link Africa deploys fibre optic cables in water and sewer systems, as well as other modes of infrastructure. Link Africa believes in universal access for all and makes its network available to all people and organisations in metropolitan areas, surrounding townships and now moving into rural areas.

To find out more visit: <https://www.linkafrica.co.za/>



Digital Council
CONEXT CONNECT
SANDTON CONVENTION CENTRE | 30 NOVEMBER

**CONEXT CONNECT -
A MEMBERS-ONLY EXPERIENCE!**
Register Today To Secure
Your Space.



EXCLUSIVE INSIGHTS & CONNECTIONS

We are thrilled to extend a warm invitation to our highly anticipated gathering, meticulously crafted to unite our esteemed members and partners.

ABOUT CONEXT CONNECT

This one-day event offers members a unique opportunity to engage with and hear directly from top CEOs and leaders in the infrastructure sector. Delve into their strategies, gain firsthand market perspectives, and catch a glimpse of their visionary future plans. Prepare to be inspired as you hear directly from these experts.

UNVEILING OUR RESEARCH

At Conext Connect, we're on a mission to equip our members with invaluable insights into the current state of the sector while unveiling the ambitious plans that lie on the horizon. In line with this commitment, we are delighted to announce the unveiling of our highly anticipated annual research during the conference, available exclusively to our members. This event promises to be a dynamic forum, diligently designed to provide members with a panoramic view of the market's trajectory. By sharing our annual research, we not only offer a comprehensive understanding of the present landscape but also equip you with the knowledge needed to shape the sector's future. Together, let's delve into this enriching experience, forging a collective vision that propels our industry to new heights.

LET'S CONNECT

As we come together to celebrate the culmination of another year, Conext Connect serves as a vital platform for our members to connect, network, and build relationships before bidding adieu to the year that was.

Join us in this endeavour, by sponsoring Conext Connect, you don't just support an event; you become an integral part of a vision.

Your contribution allows us to unite, collaborate, and inspire our members.

Join us on 30 November at the Sandton Convention Centre.

To find out more visit: <https://conextconference.africa/>

LET'S SET THE STAGE FOR OUR FUTURE!

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

Empowering Youth Futures: Insights from the 7th Annual Solutions Exchange



Juanita attended the 7th annual Solutions Exchange on 12 October. Hosted by **Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator** the event is a platform for prominent leaders from government, business, and civil society to share invaluable insights and explore innovative strategies that create transformative solutions for the pressing issue of youth employment in South Africa.

Over 250 prominent leaders from government, business, and civil society convened to discuss and share invaluable insights into what it will take to unlock a million more earning opportunities for young South Africans by 2026.

Deputy President Paul Mashatile delivered the keynote address and emphasised the importance of partnerships for prosperity and job creation for our young people. He stressed the need for a coordinated effort across all sectors to build an ecosystem that provides young South Africans with the tools and opportunities they need to meaningfully participate in the economy.



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the
Date

14 - 16 November 2023

Cape Town

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WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO



East Africa

11 OCTOBER 2023

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DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE SUMMIT | NAIROBI, KENYA

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PIONEERING COLLABORATION: Highlights from the East Africa Conext Digital Infrastructure Summit

The inaugural East Africa Conext Digital Infrastructure Summit was designed with a clear vision: to bring together industry leaders, experts, and visionaries in an environment that nurtures collaboration and creativity. The primary objective was to identify and tackle the specific challenges faced by the technology industry. Throughout the event, participants engaged in open dialogue, actively seeking effective solutions to propel growth and success within the sector.

Dignitaries and influential figures from the industry graced the event, bringing their expertise and insights to the discussions. Simultaneously, the summit welcomed virtual attendees from all corners, ensuring that the knowledge shared and the ideas discussed were accessible to a wider audience.

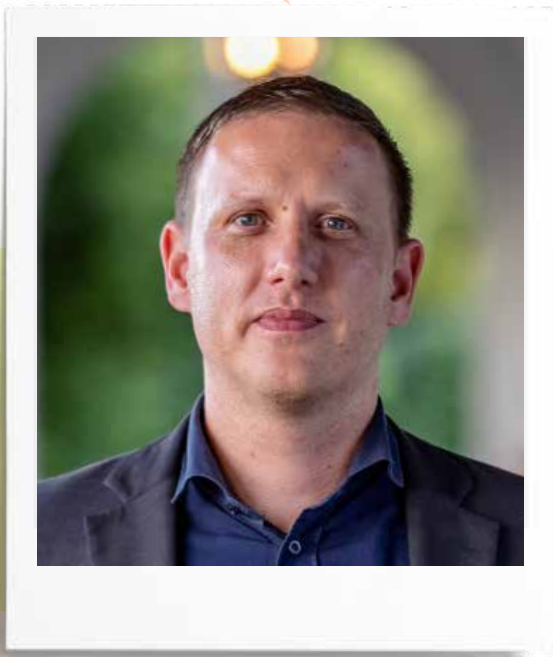
As the summit concluded, the prevailing sentiment was one of achievement.

A recording of the event is available on the [TESPOK YouTube Channel](#).





IN CONVERSATION WITH



Evan Jones is the CEO of The Collective X and is leading the charge as the initiative sets to double South Africa's output of high-demand digital jobs in the next three years, while simultaneously enhancing youth digital skills, boosting employment and injecting a substantial R300 billion into the economy.

Q Your work at both Harambee and The Collective X has been instrumental in driving positive change for youth development and employment in South Africa. Could you please elaborate on some of the key challenges faced by youth in accessing meaningful employment opportunities in the country, and what innovative strategies or programs you have championed to address these challenges and foster the empowerment of young people?

Youth in South Africa, particularly women, face numerous barriers to accessing employment. These obstacles range from spatial challenges to the costs of data, transportation, internet access, visibility in the economy, and unrealistic job criteria, such as requiring work experience for entry-level roles. Harambee has implemented several innovative strategies to address these barriers, including:

- In partnership with the Digital Council Africa (DCA), we worked on policy amendments to enable the roll-out of fibre-optic infrastructure into underserved communities.
- Collaborating with DCA, we engaged with all major telecommunications companies to make the jobs platform sayouth.mobi fully zero-rated. This initiative ensures that all the earning, learning, and support services provided there are 100% free to access and use.
- Over our nearly 12 years of operation, Harambee has advocated among our approximately 1000 employer partners to prioritize hiring first-time work-seekers.
- We have also engaged in policy work to incentivise employers to hire marginalised youth, particularly in the Global Business Services sector.

Q Can you share a specific moment or story that reinforced your belief in the transformative power of digital education and job opportunities, motivating you to continue your work with The Collective X?

At DCA's last annual conference in Cape Town, we invited a young lady from Khayelitsha to share her story of navigating the job market over three years. She went through various digital skill learnership programmes but was declined opportunities because of her lack of experience. After finding herself in an apprenticeship programme she finally secured full-time employment as a software tester with an entry-level annual salary of over R240,000. This job and income have fundamentally changed her and her family's living trajectory, where she now puts her two siblings through school and supports her single father. The exciting thing about this sort of work is that tens of thousands of these sorts of job opportunities are available in the South African market, so the big question on our minds is how we scale these sorts of stories.



IN CONVERSATION WITH

Q Collaboration is integral to The Collective X's mission, spanning educational institutions, governmental bodies, and businesses. How does this collaborative effort contribute to not only fostering a thriving future for South Africa but also creating a 'growing ecosystem' for digital jobs in the country? Additionally, considering the pivotal role of businesses, both large and small, could you elaborate on how they contribute to sustainable economic growth and development while actively participating in this collaborative framework?

Digital jobs is an area that cuts across the economy and all sectors. We share a common interest as business and government in finding scalable models to supply these digital skills. Our research indicates that due to the limited supply of digital skills from our educational institutes, there are over 60,000 vacancies among employers and over 20,000 jobs are being offshored out of South Africa due to this low supply. By collaborating with our partners on scaled supply and financing models, we can unlock a significant sector of our economy. In fact, digital jobs are one of the few areas in the South African economy where there is a significant demand for jobs, and this need will only increase given the role of technology in our future.

Q For our readers who might be interested in getting involved, what are the practical steps they can take to support The Collective X's initiatives, and what benefits can businesses expect from being a part of this collective effort to transform South Africa's digital landscape?

Readers can visit our website at www.thecollectivex.org and contact us through the enquiry page. The Collective X has a magnificent and dedicated community of partners collaborating to solve for digital skills. We meet regularly, host events and workshops. We are also running several pilots to learn what works and share these with the wider community.

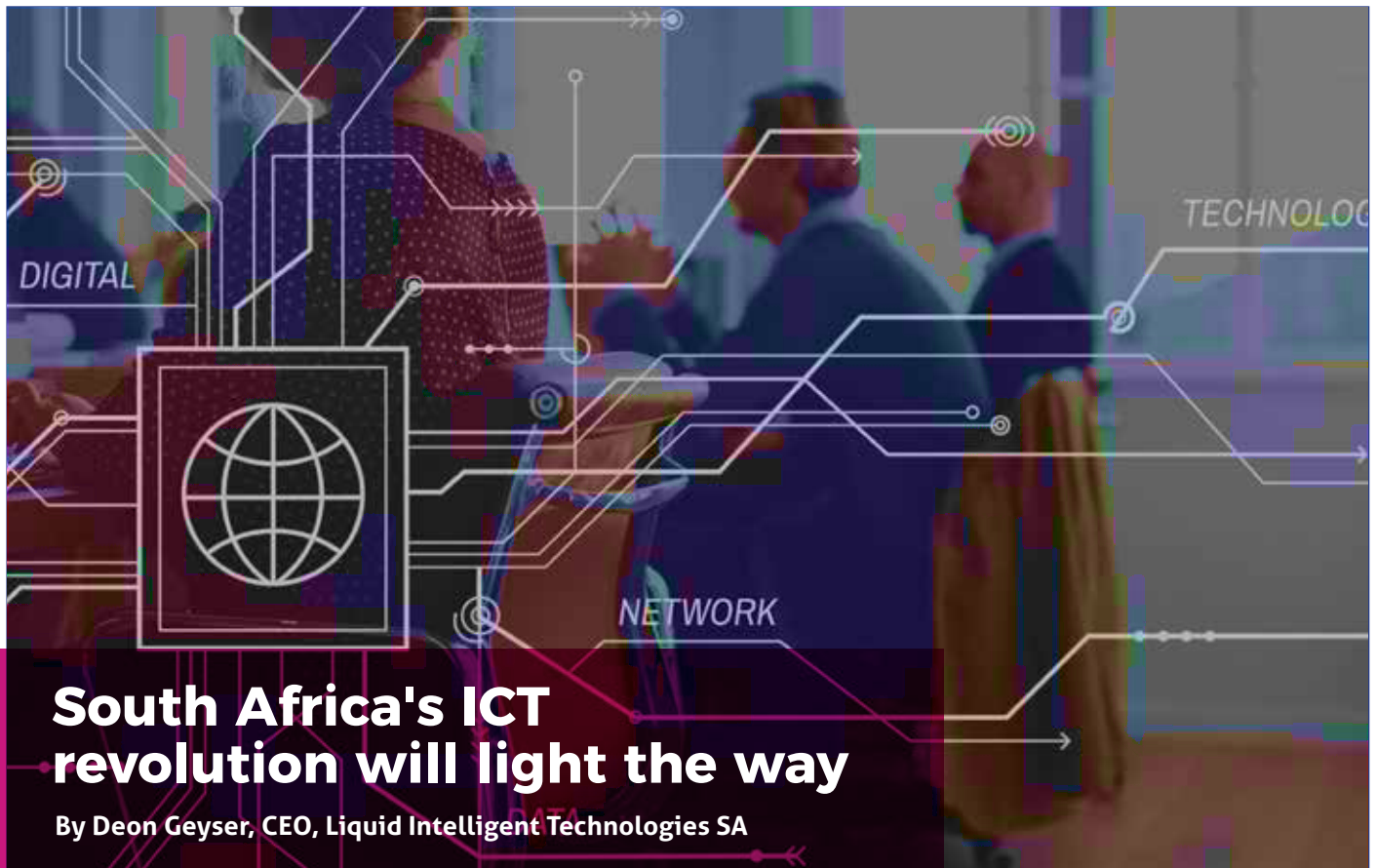
Q In your opinion, what qualities or skills make an individual successful in the digital job market, and how do The Collective X's training programs nurture these skills in the youth of South Africa?

It's important to highlight that The Collective X does not provide training programmes. We work alongside and within a wonderful ecosystem of training partners. Our role is to support and enable this part of our ecosystem so that we scale the right digital jobs of the right quality and at the right price so that business can access and absorb the skills they need.

Q Beyond the professional sphere, what are your personal hopes for the future of South Africa, particularly concerning the youth and their role in shaping the nation's digital landscape?

South Africa is truly a remarkable country of resilient people. My hope is that we can stimulate the right economic conditions so our economy can grow and, in doing so, unlock employment opportunities for our young people. Our youth are one of our greatest assets, and if we can unlock their potential, we will no doubt create a prosperous future for them and the generations to come. When it comes to digital jobs specifically, we have an enormous opportunity to meet the current demand for these jobs, but more importantly, we must also lay the foundation to create the skills of the future.

If you can contribute knowledge, resources, time or goodwill, or if you just want to find out more about The Collective X please visit <https://thecollectivex.org/>



South Africa's ICT revolution will light the way

By Deon Geysler, CEO, Liquid Intelligent Technologies SA

In recent years, South Africa's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector has grown faster than the country's GDP, representing 8% of all the wealth generated annually in the country. From payment systems to cloud-stored archives and internet-powered services, our economy now lives on the web as much as it does in our hands.

At Liquid, we see this everywhere, from small retailers to giants in the manufacturing sector. Online access has become so fundamental that it defines our way of living. This transformation is particularly evident in the mining, manufacturing, logistics, and retail sectors, where the need for reliable and advanced ICT solutions has become standard.

The more businesses depend on cloud solutions and interconnected services to improve efficiency in their day-to-day operations, the more vital it becomes for us to

recognise the fundamental imperative of protecting, expanding, and guaranteeing the efficiency of our ICT network.

If cloud services, internet access and private networks have presented new opportunities for old businesses to become more efficient and new businesses to emerge, they have also deepened the necessity to ensure the reliability of access to that same network. This is why Liquid has invested extensively in building its fibre network (over 30,000 km) in the country, bringing much-needed access to high-speed connectivity to both remote and urban areas.

In the past, when we spoke about private Internet networks in business, we generally referred to automation – cutting-edge technology applications that drive efficiency and innovation in numerous industries. However, the narrative has shifted in the face of the current crisis.

Load shedding has become a regular occurrence for all South Africans and is a significant challenge to businesses, disrupting operations and threatening economic productivity. As a result, we have seen an increased demand for private network solutions. However, instead of using these systems for state-of-the-art applications, clients are using them for basic, reliable communication.

Despite the challenges the energy crisis poses, we remain optimistic and motivated in our goals. We see these challenges as opportunities for growth and innovation, reinforcing our commitment to developing and bolstering South Africa's digital infrastructure to meet the surging demand for ICT solutions.

Five years ago, Liquid committed to investing R8.5 billion into South Africa by launching two new data centres in Johannesburg and Cape Town, ensuring that local businesses don't need to look beyond

South African borders for their data storage needs. Liquid has also connected over 2500 public sites in the Eastern and Western Cape, ensuring that more people in the country have access to high-speed connectivity.

However, to sustain this investment and to continue driving digital transformation, we need an enabling and stable policy framework. One that offers predictability to investors and encourages further development of the ICT sector. A stable environment includes not only a stable currency but also a policy framework conducive to promoting investment.

The digital transformation journey we have embarked on offers solutions to current challenges and paves the way for a resilient future. The ability to adapt and innovate in the face of adversity is a testament to the resilience and potential of the ICT sector. The power of connectivity extends beyond ensuring business continuity amidst load shedding; it empowers us to reimagine and reinvent how we live and work. It allows for remote operations and the use of IoT, paving the way for more efficient and sustainable business practices. With automation, we can streamline processes, reduce waste, and drive innovation.

As we continue to invest in our digital infrastructure, we are responding to more than just the immediate challenges posed by the energy crisis – we are laying the foundation for a digital future, one that is resilient, inclusive, and sustainable. Our response to the energy crisis should include a strategy to ensure our connectivity remains uninterrupted. A shutdown in telecommunications is as impactful as a power outage, perhaps even more so. If we can't communicate, we cannot function and certainly cannot grow.

Ensuring connectivity has become just as, if not more, vital than power reliability. This is our challenge and our opportunity. As we navigate our energy challenges, let us seize this opportunity to invest in our digital future to build a resilient and interconnected South Africa. Let us embrace the age of connectivity.

It is vital that businesses in South Africa should continue to invest in infrastructure despite the challenges that surround us. If we do not promote this digital transformation and commit to a vision of a connected future where every individual and business has access to reliable, high-quality ICT services, then who will?





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MEMBER

EQL:HER Lounge @ Africa Tech Festival

CREATING A SPACE FOR WOMEN IN THE TECH INDUSTRY

Partnerships that matter

The Digital Council Africa is proud to be one of the official co-hosts to the *EQL:HER* Lounge at *Africa Tech Festival*.

The lounge will not only serve as a networking hub for women at every level across the festival, but it will be an opportunity to tune into panel discussions, fireside chats, Q&As with main stage speakers and hosted power hour networking sessions. Co-hosted across the three days with Digital Council Africa, WomHub, and Inspiring-Fifty.

Join Juanita and the Digital Council team on Tuesday 14th November from 10h00 onwards in the EQL:HER Lounge to participate in the conversation.

The EQL:HER Lounge is located upstairs adjacent to the VIP/speaker lounge

AGENDA FOR 14 NOVEMBER

10h00: Welcome Opening Remarks by **Juanita**, CEO, Digital Council Africa

10h05: Keynote Address by **Sandiso Sibisi**, Founder and Open Innovation Studio Director, COOi Studios

10h20: Panel discussion: Taking a Seat at the Table

Moderator: Nomvuyiso Batyi, CEO, ACT

Busisiwe Khaba, Regional Head of Public Policy: Economic Policy and Regulation – Africa, Middle East & Turkey, AWS

Reshni Singh, CEO, BPeSA

Sanum Singh, Lead Android Partnerships, Google

11h10: Fireside Chat: Cultivating a Sustainable Talent Stream for Women in Tech

11h25: Panel Discussion: Lift as you Rise

Fran Swart, Partnerships, The Collective X

Tracey Swart, Portfolio Executive: Digital, Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator

Charmaine Houvet, Senior Director, Cisco

13h00: Wellness session with business coach **Dawn Klatzko**, author of *Art of the Suit* and *Anatomy of a Personal Brand*

14h00: Power Hour 4iR Women Networking session

15h30: Drinks Reception

To learn more click [here](#).

Kindly note registration to the area is compulsory.

Register for your pass here <https://lnkd.in/d3X-93pf> to gain access to the lounge

#WomenInTech #EQLHER #AfricaTechFestival #TechForGood



Inspiring Fifty
AFRICA



SA ICT spend in National & Provincial Government

BMIT sees big opportunities for the industry in the major re-prioritisation of digital transformation in government

BMIT's recently published annual *SA ICT spend in National and Provincial Government Report* outlines how digital transformation has become a priority right across both national and provincial government departments and initiatives, creating a number of opportunities for the private sector to participate.

Digital Transformation was mentioned in every budget vote analysed and even got a mention in the Infrastructure Fund Section of the Budget, which confirms its high priority.

There are two major components of this transformation - the internal digitisation of government systems, and the digitisation of the citizen-interaction side of government.

The top four ICT spending national departments all form part of the Justice Cluster, which is engaged in the massive, ongoing Integrated Justice System (IJS) programme, comprising multiple projects across

eight departments, electronically enabling and integrating the end-to-end criminal justice business processes (i.e. from the report of a crime to the release of a convicted person). BMIT's report gives an update on progress in that longstanding project, pointing out that it comprises an average of approximately 40 – 50 projects on an annual basis across all IJS member departments.

The new SA Connect Phase 2 Project Streams now coming on board provide much of the supporting connectivity to ensure Departments are more fully capacitated and citizens are more fully included. Several tenders were issued by Broadband Infracore. The DCDT has earmarked R3.8bn over the next three years for this project.

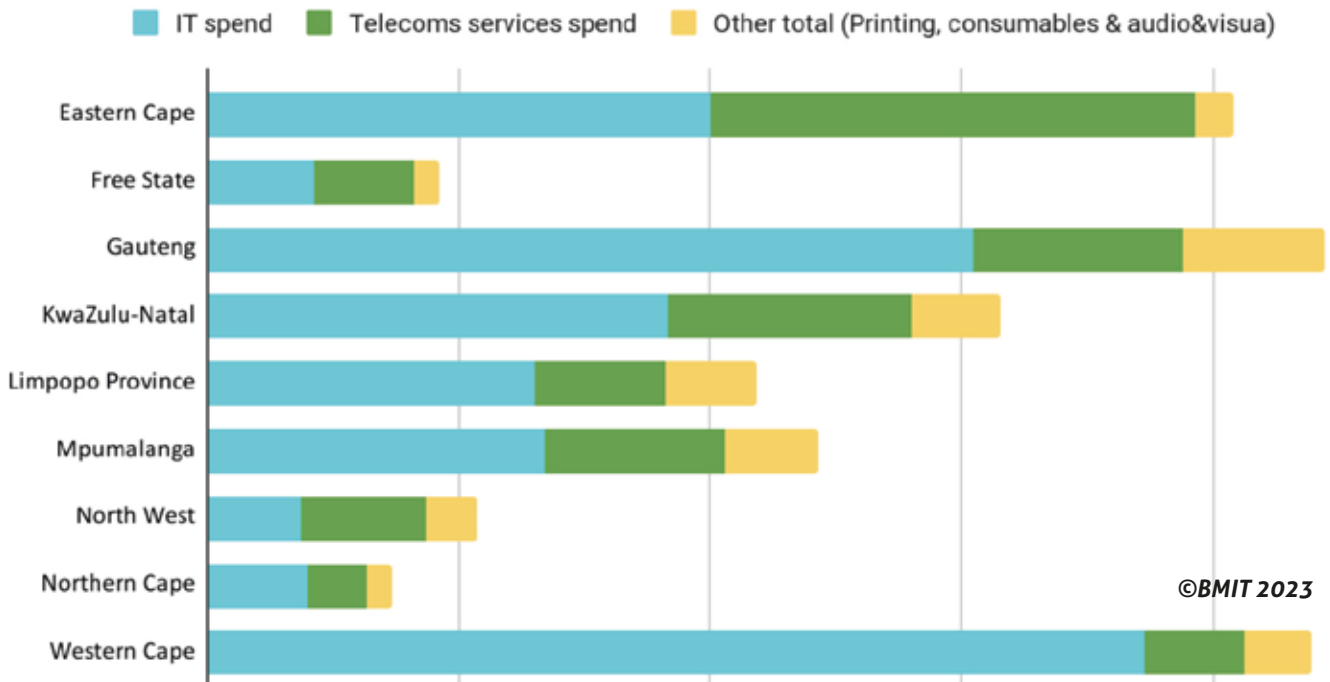
BMIT's Report aims to help ICT companies tailor their sales strategies to maximise the opportunities in the sector - from both a telecoms and IT perspective - and to prioritise engagement by department as well as across provinces, to gain a greater share of the estimated R21.4bn spend in the current financial year, projected to grow at around 2% CAGR, to 2025/2026.

An important consideration here is the concentration of ICT spend in national government, where, in the 2023/23 financial year, out of 40 departments in total, the top 19 departments were responsible for 93% of all ICT spend with 9 of those departments spending over R300m.

Digital transformation is a particular focus of the top ICT spenders. A major component of the digitisation programme is found in the Department of Home Affairs currently engaged in the digital indexing of 350 million records dating back to 1895. The importance of this project is revealed by the fact that the DHA spent over R761m on printing last year.

Provincial government ICT spend remains concentrated, although BMIT notes that the balance is shifting as the historical dominance of the top three provinces is gradually eroded: In the past year, Gauteng, Western Cape and KZN, each dropped their proportion of total spend by about 2 percentage points, while Eastern Cape increased its share from 12.2% to 17.4%.

The Eastern Cape has ramped up its broadband connectivity project rollout significantly. Together, Gauteng, Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape contributed 68.7% of total ICT spend in 2022/23. Mpumalanga’s share has, however, edged up from 8.9% to 10.4%. The relative spends are shown in the table below:



Graph (from Report) of Proportional Spend across Provinces for 2022/2023

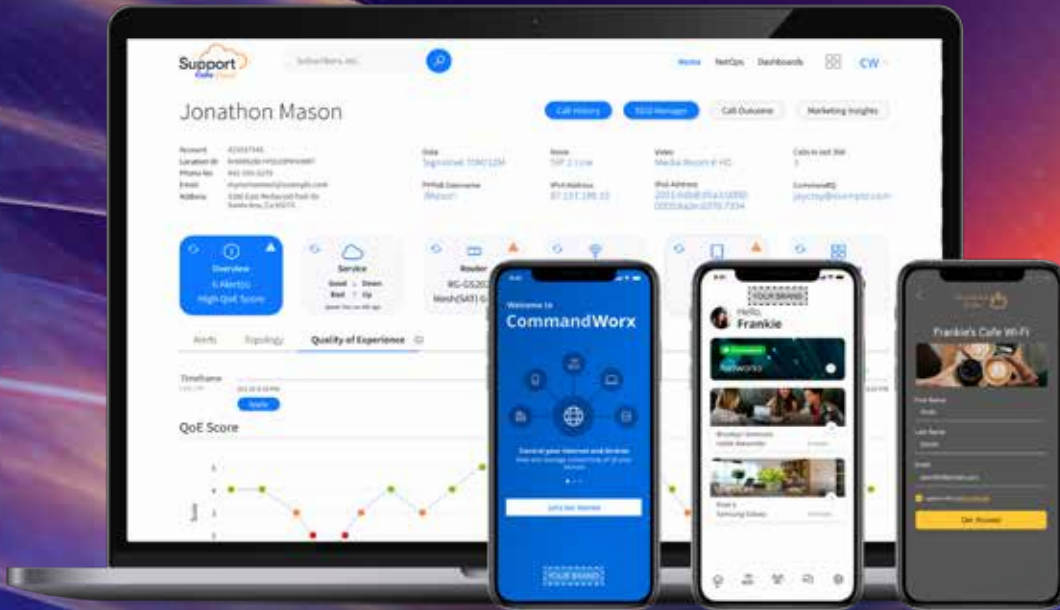
Historically, education and health are included as top spenders in all 9 provinces. However, given the current talk about NHI, which will require comprehensive and substantial ICT infrastructure in terms of patient record systems, and monitoring systems, among others, ICT spending on health is only marginally up. BMIT notes that the national budget actually dropped below R200m for 2022/23, spending having declined in the IT Services, Mobile telecoms and Data categories over the past year, while ICT spend on Health in five provinces declined over the past 2 years - only Mpumalanga made a notable change, with its E-Health project, bumping up its proportion of ICT on health from 22.6% of the total, to 42.7%.

The many advantages to government’s digitisation programme in the South African context include the following:

- **Improvement of efficiency and cost saving**- for example by eliminating lost paperwork and reducing human errors. The spend on printing at national government level in 2022/23 was R1.4bn, with DHA alone spending just over half of that and Police being another big spender in this regard.
- **Reduced corruption** with improved audit trails, and traceable documents, making it harder for corrupt officials to ‘lose docketts’ or tamper with procurement processes. DCA members will be hoping for simpler, faster and simpler tendering processes as well.
- **Speeding up of service delivery and citizen satisfaction** - with a particular, high-profile focus being the reduction of Home Office queues.
- **Greater compassion**, for example being able to hold remote interviews with children etc in court cases, and enabling from-home applications for welfare/ notification of death/ child support, etc.
- **Crime control** - with a range of digital tools, supported by centralised, cross department identification records.

It is important that we, as private and corporate citizens can play multiple supporting roles to help usher in these benefits. Government needs ideas, applications, connections, skills and a range of IT services (data storage, cloud, cybersecurity, etc). BMIT’s report also provides a useful departure point for fine tuning one’s strategy and priorities when engaging the public sector.

Although digitisation of government was already established as a foundational element of the Strategic Implementation Plan (arising from the Presidential Commission on the 4th Industrial Revolution, in 2020) and many of the above initiatives have long been in the pipeline, the noticeable shift in priorities in the last year or so is encouraging.



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UPCOMING EVENTS



In Partnership with



The Digital Council Africa in partnership with the World Broadband Association and Huawei will be hosting the Africa Fibre Forum 2023.

The current pace of digitalisation and globalisation makes the fibre infrastructure industry more important and relevant than ever. Therefore having the right policies and ecosystems in place is key to accelerating fibre infrastructure deployment. On the African continent, many countries and operators have launched fibre strategies and are now in the process of establishing the necessary practices to support this. This session will bring together individuals from policy, technical and commercial backgrounds across Africa who will share and discuss methodologies for the acceleration of fibre deployment in the region, which in turn will ensure an accelerated digital Africa.



Draft Final Data & Cloud Policy Workshop

The Digital Council Africa, in collaboration with the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCDT), hosted a workshop on 1st November at the Riboville Hotel in Waterfall, where the DCDT provided feedback on the Draft Final Data and Cloud Policy. Comments and inputs received from various stakeholders were duly considered.

[View the agenda here](#)

Corning's hardened connectivity innovations have brought high-speed connections to millions – and we're not finished yet

By Kara Mullaley

Twenty years ago, the telecommunications industry was facing a **challenge: How do you take the benefits of high-speed fibre connectivity, and bring them all the way to the consumer? How do you bring fiber to the home, and do it at scale – connecting homes by the millions?**

Corning's engineers looked at this challenge and saw opportunity. Their **answer: Move the splicing from the field to the factory and create a true connectivity solution.** By creating the industry's first fully pre-connectorized optical connectivity solutions, Corning ushered in the era of fiber to the home.

Today I'm thrilled to report that Corning has reached a major milestone in bringing fiber to homes around the world: As of this year, Corning's hardened connectivity solutions have passed over 100 million homes globally.

Those engineers who developed Corning's first generation of pre-engineered solutions could not have fully envisioned the way fiber has enabled broadband use in our homes today. Think of the

array of devices we rely on from the time we get up in the morning, from phones to TVs to tablets and laptops. And surely, they did not envision a global pandemic, where millions of us would consult with our doctors through a video connection or collaborate at home in real time with work colleagues around the world. Fiber connections really do touch *every aspect of our daily lives.*

Corning believes everyone should have access to a fast, reliable broadband connection. That's why, since those first hardened connectivity solutions, we have continued to innovate – always with a focus on helping operators deploy their networks more cost-effectively, with faster, simpler installation that lessens their reliance on specialized labor. It's important for our industry to focus on this kind of innovation, because we need to address not only the needs of today but plan for future growth as well. To understand what's ahead, just look at the numbers.

Why it matters

Homes that are "passed" by fiber means that they can be connected to fiber running along the main road through a terminal, such as Corning's ***Evolv® with Pushlok™***. To put the 100 million figure in context, a *December report by the Fiber Broadband Association (FBA)* put the number of passed homes in the U.S. at 68 million, and figures from the Fiber to the Home (FTTH) Council Europe *note that the number of homes passed in Europe reached 219 million last September.*

To me, what's interesting about these numbers is not just the size but the rapid growth they represent. The *FBA report* states that 7.9 million homes were passed by fiber just in 2022 -- a 13% growth over the year prior, making it the highest annual deployment to date. In the EU, 20 million homes were passed just last year.

According to a *report from OpenVault*, the average household consumed 586.7 GB of data each month, an increase of 9.4% over 2021. Video is a tremendous driver of traffic, accounting for about 65% of all Internet traffic, according to a study from *Sandvine.*

This means that the demand for broadband networks is increasing exponentially. As *the only medium capable of enabling new and emerging technologies such as 5G*, fiber is the most future-ready technology for carriers to plan for this insatiable demand from consumers and businesses alike.

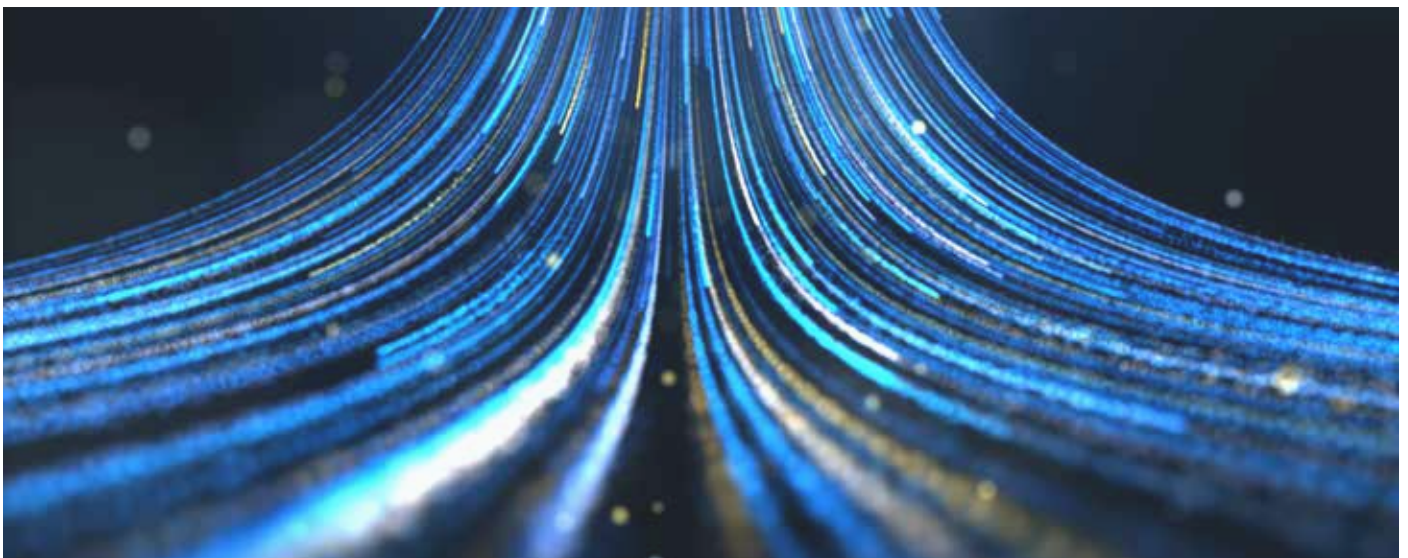
Plenty of work remains to be done, of course, in order to make “Internet for All” a reality, particularly in rural areas. That’s why we’re glad to see a wave of public and private investment in broadband. One significant driver of growth will be the U.S. Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which allocates \$65 billion in new spending for broadband. Of that amount, \$42 billion will go toward new infrastructure under the ***Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program***.

What hardened connectivity brings

To bring this back to Corning’s perspective, we are also seeing a rapid rise in adoption driven by *evolving technology*. In 2019, our record for homes passed with hardened connectivity was only 52 million – meaning we added nearly 50 million more homes in just a few short years. Key to this acceleration is the broader adoption of hardened connectivity by large and small carriers around the world.

What makes or breaks a broadband network business case isn’t the fiber cable, but the connection points that branch cables repeatedly to reach individual homes and businesses. *Hardened connectivity* accelerates and simplifies broadband deployments, reducing the requirement for highly specialized labor. That’s especially important right now, in a time of labor constraints. The alternative is terminal boxes that need to be opened and spliced in the field, exposing equipment to environmental hazards, technician errors, and adding time and expense to the process.

Through every generation of our pre-engineered solutions, Corning has helped set the standard and build trust in our industry, allowing fiber networks to be built quickly and reliably. Nearly half of the 100 million homes Corning has passed rely on our ***FlexNAP™ system***, a preconnectorized cable solution tailored to fit network operators’ exact specifications. Another critical concern today is congested pathways: Our ***Evolv® Terminals with Pushlok™ Technology*** leverage smaller connectors and physically occupy less space, in turn reducing the size and cost of the pathway infrastructure itself. Our newer additions to the Evolv portfolio include *terminals that support* fiber-lean distributed tap and traditional distributed split architectures gaining popularity in North America.



The future is fibre

At Corning, we’re proud of the accomplishment represented by 100 million homes passed, but most of all, we’re thrilled to expand that number every day and enable more individuals the opportunity to experience the benefits of high-speed broadband.

We see tremendous potential for fiber to bring connectivity to homes all over the world, and we’re proud of the way Corning’s hardened connectivity solutions help operators “push the easy button” to deploy their networks in a cost-effective manner.



How aerial fibre brings affordable, reliable internet to more South Africans

By Shane Chorley,
CEO at Frogfoot Networks

We previously looked at how traditional large suburbs have ample servitude space that allows for conventional trenching, but this is not as easily available as network operators look to expand into more densely populated communities. Here, the aerial fibre approach is taken, where fibre optic cables are strung from poles, in a similar manner to how legacy copper networks were rolled out for telephony services - or how electricity is still distributed in many communities.

This is not an uncommon deployment methodology and is used even in developed countries such as the United Kingdom to provide fibre connectivity to high-density neighbourhoods. Aerial fibre also helps better tackle the challenge of adequately catering to the number of users within a property. In traditional suburbs, the number of users per erf is more certain, while in more dense neighbourhoods, there can be uncertainty about the number of homes that need to be connected within a particular property. FNOs deploying aerial fibre also do not have to worry about addresses, as they can just look at which is the closest pole to the user.

This method also gives operators flexibility during the design phase as they do not have to overbuild in advance, as the requirement for additional capacity in a particular community can be easily addressed.

In the conventional trenched approach, operators have one chance to plan properly as they don't want to go back and trench again.

FNOs adopting the aerial approach just need to ensure that their poles are erected to the correct heights as required. Depending on whether it is located within the suburb, along a minor road, or a major trunk road, height restrictions will vary in order to facilitate the safe movement of large vehicles. While aerial fibre deployments require fewer people on-site, due to the lack of trenching, erecting poles correctly and at the right height requires that contractors have the necessary skills and specialised equipment.

There are few instances where additional poles need to be installed and the only available space is within someone's erf, which first requires the permission of the land owner.

This is generally avoided where possible, because in certain circumstances these poles can become a security risk.

A disadvantage of aerial fibre deployments is that the cables are exposed to the elements. For example, strong wind conditions can cause the cables to break. Another example is when cables contract (when it is cold) and expand (when it is hot), and this continuous movement ultimately impacts the lifespan of the infrastructure. The good thing is that because the cables are just strung up on poles, breaks can be easily identified - as opposed to trenched fibre where advanced detection equipment is needed - and fixed or replaced. In addition, being private sector players with a brand and reputation to protect, FNOs tend to ensure that their poles are well-maintained and cables are strung to requirements.



For the community, by the community

With traditional suburbs being saturated with fibre, and operators looking to further expand their networks into densely populated communities, it is very likely that this will be achieved through the use of aerial fibre. Such a method of deployment allows FNOs to get into more areas and bring users fibre connectivity at a rate that they can afford.

Aerial fibre is also ideal as maintenance becomes easier - the network operator knows which string provides a particular user with connectivity and which pole they are connected to. Once people get used to the reliability and stability of fibre, network interruptions can be especially frustrating; as a result of the aerial deployment methodology, the network operator can respond more quickly and take the necessary action to restore connectivity.

Of course, there is the concern that aerial fibre, with its exposed infrastructure, might be more prone to being targeted by criminal activity. It is quite likely that there will be theft in the beginning, before criminals quickly realise that there is no resale value to the fibre optic cables. FNOs are also turning to the communities themselves in order to take care of the infrastructure that has been brought in, by using locals for a variety of activities ranging from sales to activations, while contractors are encouraged to have local maintenance teams.

Ultimately, fibre is going to add value to the local economy and help uplift communities, and community members will look to protect infrastructure as it makes a difference in their lives, by bringing broadband connectivity to all.

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO



In Collaboration With



ADVANCING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION & INNOVATION IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR WORKSHOP

In celebration of Public Service Month, the Digital Council Africa, in collaboration with the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies, the Department of Public Service and Administration, and Microsoft, hosted a workshop. The event brought together experts to discuss the status of digital transformation in government and the path towards achieving a fully digitised government, along with the benefits it offered.

Find a recording of the event on our [YouTube Channel](#)

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO



GREEN HYDROGEN SUMMIT SOUTH AFRICA

The Digital Council Africa was the supporting partner to the Presidency and Infrastructure South Africa for the second South Africa Green Hydrogen Summit.

The summit was hosted by the Minister in the Presidency responsible for Electricity Dr Kgosisentsho Ramokgopa, on 16 -17 October at the Century City Convention Centre in Cape Town.

Green hydrogen and its associated large scale renewable energy production has the potential to support the expansion of the electricity transmission infrastructure to add additional renewable energy generation capacity and to support the local development of renewable energy. This makes green hydrogen a key component of South Africa's future energy mix and features as one of the Big Five Frontiers in the South Africa Investment Strategy.



What is SA Youth?

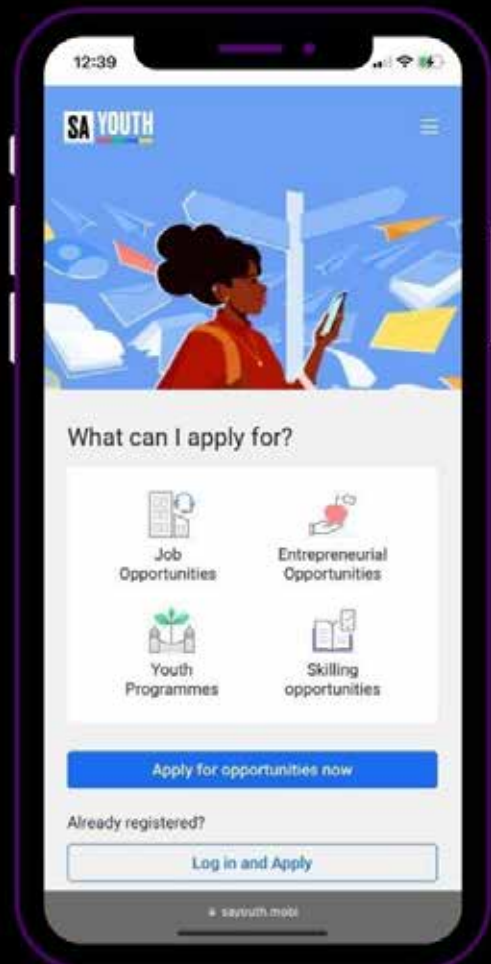
A place for all young South Africans to come to find work opportunities, learn new skills, find out how to become more employable, and get support.

How can you become part of the network?

STEP 1: Go to sayouth.mobi on your phone's browser and register. NO DATA NEEDED!
 STEP 2: Answer a few questions that will help us get to know you better so that we can connect you to job opportunities that match your profile.
 STEP 3: Log in regularly to search for new jobs
 STEP 4: Build your profile and keep it up to date

What can you do on sayouth.mobi?

- Look for work
- Access work-seeker resources to help to become employable
- Access a list of hustling support resources to help you start or grow your own business.



Need help?

- Call us toll-free between 9am - 5pm Mon-Fri on 0800 72 72 72
- Email us at support@sayouth.org.za
- Chat to us on our Facebook page

To find out more:

- Click on the following link <https://sayouth.me/3zsKdRH> or
- Find us on [Facebook](#) and search for "What is SA Youth?" on the content tab

To access resources you will need to be registered on SAYouth.mobi first



m4a

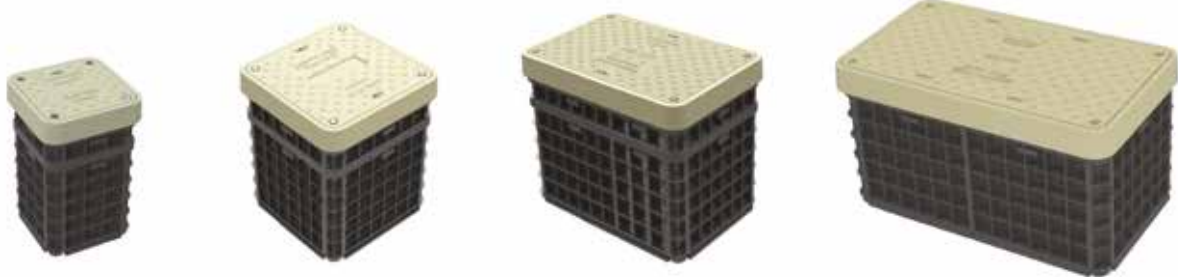
OUR PRODUCTS BUILD NETWORKS

m4a (Pty) Ltd is a specialist manufacturer of composite and plastics products with a focus on utilities networks and infrastructure markets.

Our flagship product lines include: axSCHAMBERS™, fibreFLEX™, fibreDUCT™ and optiDUCT™, corruDUCT™, civilworks™, cnktCLOSURES™ and fibreCABLE™.

FIBREFLEX™

Our fibreFLEX™ modular chambers offer unmatched flexibility to the installer in underground fibre and other utilities networks. The fibreFLEX™ range of composite utility chambers are a state-of-the-art solution where multiple panel arrangements are supplied in a "flat-pack" format, which are easily assembled on site resulting in various length and depth configurations. Different combinations of panels allow for different chamber sizes and our design also allows for vertical extension where deeper trenching standards and potential road or paving upgrades exist (floating lid).

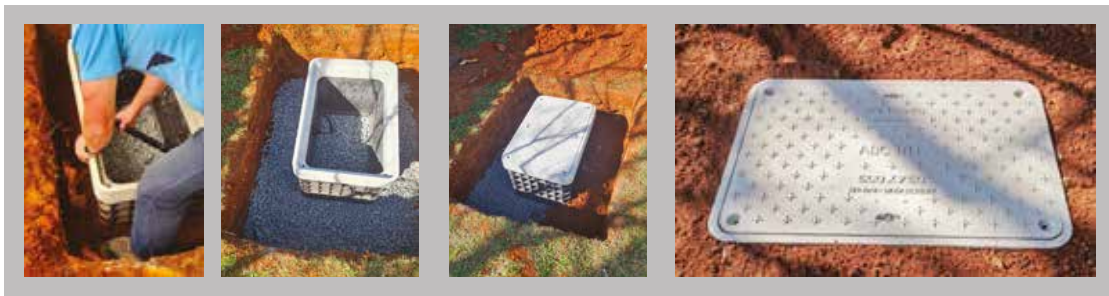


fibreFLEX™ 350FF Chamber

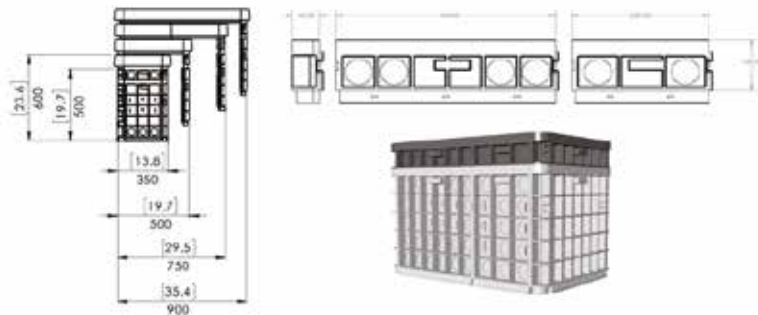
fibreFLEX™ 500FF Chamber

fibreFLEX™ 750FF Chamber

fibreFLEX™ 900FF Chamber



A unique feature of the fibreFLEX™ range is that various arrangements of panels allow for a longer and deeper chamber. For incremental depth, add 100mm Extension Panels.



- fibreFLEX™ Modular Chambers are available with RAMAC™ Smart Monitoring and Security Technology solutions.
- Interoperability with m4a's selection of CNKT™ Fibre Splice Closure range of products.
- A composite design allows for high strength / low weight – installation cost savings.
- Size flexibility suited to all fibre and utility traffic installations.
- Manual on-site sawing of ports possible to accommodate existing utilities.
- The use of high strength composites for covers improves load bearing capabilities and eliminates theft and corrosion.
- Flat Pack format allows for increased shipping volumes - transport cost savings.

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The Evolution of Data Centres and their Future Requirements

Eckart Zollner, Business Development



As a relatively new industry, data centres continue to evolve, driven by rapid technological advancements. These changes encompass various aspects, such as the physical environment, cooling systems, and power infrastructure within modern data centres.

Just over three decades ago, the predecessors of modern data centres were switching centres, primarily managed by telecommunications giants. At that time, most telecommunication networks were state-owned monopolies, relying on a network of switching centres at different levels. These networks were primarily designed for voice services and analogue signal transmission, and even the early days of mobile communication depended on analogue circuit-switched infrastructure.

The late 1990s marked a significant turning point with the emergence of the internet and modem-based transmission technology. For the first time, data networks began to develop in parallel with voice networks. Although data speeds and bandwidth were initially limited, the introduction of technologies like DSL for land-based networks and GPRS for mobile networks facilitated the transformation of the Internet into a widely accepted form

of electronic communication and information sharing.

This shift towards digital communication signalled the birth of modern data centres. These centres became essential for secure data processing and storage, requiring large server farms in climate-controlled environments and a reliable power supply.

As markets around the world began to liberalize, a multitude of network providers, service providers, and ICT companies emerged. This rapid expansion created a demand for carrier-neutral data centres, where various providers could collocate to connect their data networks both locally and globally. The rise of digital technologies further fuelled the growth of digital services, contributing to the ever-increasing demand for data centres.

The ongoing evolution of digital technologies led to an exponential increase in data volumes. This surge in data necessitated faster processing and extensive storage ca-

pabilities. Furthermore, the advent of machine learning and artificial intelligence technologies relied on rapid data mining, creating a multitude of new data sets.

All these factors contribute to the demands placed on 21st-century data centres.

To stay ahead of the rapidly evolving technology landscape, data centres must be designed for adaptability throughout their lifespan. A data centre with a projected design life of 25 to 30 years must accommodate multiple generations of technology. Upgrading from ambient air to liquid cooling or transitioning from single-phase to three-phase power distribution, alongside utilising various energy sources, exemplifies the adaptations required in data centre infrastructure. Importantly, these changes often require live migrations instead of prolonged shutdowns and restarts, emphasizing the need for data centres to continuously evolve.



Modern data centre design should embrace a modular architecture approach, offering flexibility and scalability. This approach enables the seamless integration of new technologies without disrupting data centre operations. While specialized data centre designs may emerge for specific areas like high-performance computing or research, the majority of data centres require scalability and flexibility to meet changing demands throughout their lifecycle.

In the ever-evolving technology sector, capital-intensive infrastructure projects like data centre builds must be adaptable to remain relevant and successful in the face of future demands.

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO



C4IR South Africa Digital Transformation Expo 2023

From Left to Right: Juanita Clark, CEO Digital Council Africa, Zintle Ramano, Director BAAB Media Group, Prof Mpho Primus, Deputy Director UJ Institute for Intelligent Systems, Dr Brenda Kubheka, Co-Founder IQHealth, Sandiso Sibisi, Founder COOi Studios

Juanita chaired a conversation at the Digital Transformation Expo 2023. The session focused on celebrating women leadership in 4IR/STEM. Exploring the opportunities and challenges for women in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) in the Global South.

The theme of the second Digital Transformation Expo, convened by C4IR South Africa, was "Enabling Digital Transformation for All, a Human-Centred Approach." The expo brought together leaders from business, government, civil society, international organizations, and academia, along with innovators.

Within the framework of this theme, the expo focused on the significance of digital transformation across industries. It promoted the adoption of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), big data analytics, blockchain, and the internet of things (IoT). Special emphasis was placed on empowering small and medium enterprises with digital tools and capabilities, enabling their participation in the digital economy. At the core of this approach was a user-centric mindset, driven by empathy and a commitment to creating solutions that cater to the diverse needs and aspirations of people.

The Premier Fibre Connectivity Choice for the Financial Sector.

When facing the relentless race of milliseconds and connectivity uptime is of critical importance, only the best will do.

Envision a partner who doesn't just understand, but master's the essence of connectivity uptime. Because every fleeting moment matters.

Consider a network that is not merely built to function, but engineered to excel - especially in the face of South Africa's unique power challenges. In the bustling arena of major financial hubs, you want the best at your side. With MetroFibre, you are always a stride ahead, and some of the industry's most influential players agree.

MetroFibre is Africa's foremost carrier Ethernet certified operator, and is at the forefront of

robust, high-speed connectivity solutions tailored exclusively to the rigorous financial world. Our impeccable sub-1ms round-trip connectivity - spanning across Gauteng - stands on a solid foundation of carrier Ethernet architecture, meticulously crafted with scale, resilience, and security in mind.

Excellence is not just an aim; it is our ethos. From our operational agility and VIP support channels to the unmatched calibre of our network fabric, we don't just offer a service - we provide an advantage.

When the market's tempo races, we ensure that you are ahead of the curve.

Risk Mitigation

Innovative post-quantum cryptography with globally recognised security standards.

Predictive Prevention

Advanced line monitoring for proactive fault interception and swift geo-pinned fault isolation.

Unyielding Resilience

Sidestep the obstacles of power and municipal load shedding with always-on power optics.

Unwavering reliability.

Ultra-low latency.

Unparalleled peace of mind.

MetroFibre
The Home of Fast



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LOST AND FOUND

The Digital Council Africa has an [Equipment Monitoring page](#) on its website. The aim is to curb theft of equipment.

To view a list of stolen equipment, you can access the list [here](#).

We encourage members to regularly send through the serial numbers of stolen equipment, and inform us when equipment is recovered to ensure that the information remains up to date and accurate.

Information can be sent to Reesha Iyer at reesha@digitalcouncil.africa

In addition, it remains the responsibility of the industry to regularly do spot checks against the serial numbers of contractor equipment to ensure that stolen equipment is identified and that culprits are eradicated from the industry.

Companies wishing to purchase second hand equipment should compare the equipment serial numbers against those listed on the website.