

Prepaid data roaming heralding change in M2M market

According to Kees Snijders, MD of Flickswitch, the introduction of a prepaid data roaming solution by Vodacom could have a significant impact on the machine-to-machine (M2M) market in Africa. "While Vodacom is not the first operator to go the prepaid data roaming route, the announcement reflects the need to provide companies who are reliant on M2M solutions, including vehicle telemetry, with a more cost-effective offering. For us, the added benefit is that we can provide our clients with a managed prepaid SIM solution meeting their unique requirements," says Snijders.



Kees Snijders

By virtue of the fact that Vodacom is now the first operator covering South Africa and its neighbouring countries with a prepaid data roaming option, the impact on fleet management could be significant. "In this sector, the bulk of the traffic is confined to South Africa and its neighbours. By now having a prepaid solution that can fill this gap means companies can more effectively run their telemetry and similar services.'

He believes that these kinds of roaming solutions have been on the cards for a long time. "Vodacom is committed to driving this offering to selected areas which could herald a change in the way companies approach their M2M strategies. The business and telemetry market segments have been ripe for these kinds of solutions for a while. For Flickswitch, this means that we can use it as the foundation to provide companies across various vertical industries with an option that can better be budgeted for."

For example, there is nothing stopping a truck driver from taking a SIM card out of a telemetry device and using it to surf the web. This could result in a massive financial implication for the organisation given the high costs of mobile roaming data. With a prepaid SIM, these costs are managed as the driver can only consume the fixed amount of data loaded on the device.

"No matter how you look at it though, roaming is an expensive value proposition. However, in going the prepaid route, operators like Vodacom are looking to diversify their offerings and providing business with more cost-effective, long-term solutions." says Snijders.



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