Why MXit is Africa's largest social network

By Nur Bremmen   22 Oct 2010

While South Africa's teachers were on strike in September, volunteers used the country's largest social network to help students prepare for exams. If you think they turned to Facebook, you would be wrong.

They turned to the country's mobile instant messenging and social network service, MXit.

MXit is primarily a Java-based mobile application giving users the functionality to exchange instant messages practically for free. Users are able to message in groups, called chat zones, functioning seamlessly across other platforms like MSN messenger and Google Talk.

In the early stages of the application's development, it was a cheaper replacement for SMS among the youth. Now the service has evolved into a broader social network play.

"I think users just immediately saw a cost benefit to using MXit," said the company's spokesperson Juan du Toit.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nur Bremmen is a staff reporter at [[www.memeburn.com]].