

What to expect at AfricaCom 2018

The 21st edition of AfricaCom kicks off today, 13 November 2018, in Cape Town and is shaping up to be an impressive event. The number of speakers, visitors and exhibitors grow year on year, mirroring the expanding influence that technology, media and telecommunications (TMT) is having on the world at large.



Source: pixabay.com

This exponential explosion of technology also makes AfricaCom an essential destination for discovery, as one of the best things about the digital ecosystem is also one of the most challenging – the sheer vastness of the innovations and solutions that are launched on a daily basis. Fortunately, once a year, a host of clever people, their inventions and the people who have the answers, congregate at the world's largest Africa-focused event.

At AfricaCom, it becomes somewhat easier to source the missing link, meet up with colleagues and generally network to secure the future of Africa's digital advancement.

With so much on offer this year – new product launches, demonstrations and drop-in sessions - here's a guide to some of the exhibitors showcasing at AfricaCom 2018 between 13–15 November at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC):

First timers: There are a number of new exhibitors this year to look out for, such as Stoneroos who will be debuting their white label TV solution called OTT NOW!

Also, head on over to the Technology Arena to see the Mobile Health Bus from Glasshouse/MST Group. This state of the art vehicle showcases how mobility as a service using solar, satellite and a host of other cool tech, is reshaping how data is gathered, processed and harnessed in hard to reach areas, not to mention uplifting, healing and educating those in need.

Network operators

AfricaCom would not be what it is without the presence of the Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) or the device manufacturers and the supporting cast of services that keep it all going. From MTN, Vodafone, Orange, Airtel, A1 Telekom Austria, the Telenor Group, China Communications Corp and more, not to mention China Mobile, possibly one of the largest telecommunications provider in the world.

But what is this without the ubiquitous mobile phone? Get to view the latest from Ericsson, Huawei, Nokia, along with the likes of KaiOS, who are pioneering new operating systems for smart feature phones.

Satellites are playing a role in the connectivity journey

Eye in the sky – satellite is playing an increasingly important role in the connectivity journey, as witnessed by the growing number of exhibitors attending AfricaCom each year. Expect to see the likes of SAS, Avanti, Amos by Spacecom, Leosat, SES, ABS, ARABSAT, YAHSAT, Telesat, SatADSL and the Russian Satellite Communications and more. Also look out for Intelsat offering the best of both worlds – satellite and terrestrial – to deliver video and broadband services at cost effective rates, anytime and anywhere.

However, these are not the only solutions that are available, as there are an increasing number of alternatives such as Google's sister company Loon, which will once again be at AfricaCom. Able to transmit LTE signals directly to users on the ground, Loon is looking to deploy a network of floating cell towers, using stratospheric balloons to provide internet connectivity to unserved and underserved areas around the world, starting in Africa with Telkom Kenya. The project kicks off in 2019.

Connecting the continent

Still on the connectivity front, fibre continues to play an important role in linking the continent and in developing smart cities. Thus, Liquid Telecom also makes a return showing this year. Also, at AfricaCom, is a fair selection of the top players in the undersea cable fraternity such representatives from Huawei Marine's PEACE (Pakistan & East Africa Connecting Europe) cable offering.

Let's not forget about wireless. Exhibitors such as those who manage more than 21 million wi-fi hotspots worldwide, along with Advantech Wireless, and companies such as CableFree: Wireless Excellence who build the products that keep the eye, up, in the sky.

In the supporting role of helping telecommunication providers reach their goals of getting Africa connected, AfricaCom welcomes back the likes of Parallel Wireless, who's 2017 first time attendance at the show resulted in some excellent business – that is after all, what AfricaCom is all about....connecting and growing businesses and people alike.

Post connectivity, there is a myriad of mobile/digital service solutions – B2B and B2C – many of which will be at AfricaCom. From health and wealth, to education, entertainment in the always-on era, online age verification even, as well as gaming, it's all on display and up for discussion.

Underpinning all of this technological smorgasbord is data – providers and those who know what to do with the Yottabytes of information generated by all the machines around us – consequently, AfricaCom has also seen a slew of new data service providers.

To list all 450+ exhibitors at this year's AfricaCom would take more words than we have, so the next best thing is to register

to visit the event and immerse in three days of technology, media and telecommunications, with a view to understanding the sheer capabilities of our connected future.

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