

The silver lining

Written by Janet Paterson

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Letter from the editor

At a time when it seems that everywhere you look, clouds are in the way, it's nice to find a little silver lining for those involved in e-commerce in South Africa.

According to research from World Wide Worx, not only is local Internet access set to double to around 9 million users in the next five years but online advertising in South Africa grew at the fastest rate of all English-language countries in 2008, increasing from 27% growth in 2007 to 32% last year and accounting for spending of at least R319 million. The upshot of all this is that as more and more consumers get online and more and more businesses use technology to reach them, confidence in the medium continues to grow.

Interest and excitement around new media such as social networking and cloud computing technology will be given a much needed shot in the arm by the imminent landing of two new undersea cables and the advent, finally, of bandwidth worth talking about in South Africa. According to Cisco and World Wide Worx, local bandwidth amounted to a paltry 80 Gbps at the end of 2008; the good news is that 10 Tbps is on the cards by 2011, courtesy of upgrades to existing cabling, with three new ones about to come online and a further three between 2010 and 2011.

If the expected decrease in prices follows, those involved in e-commerce can look forward to interesting times ahead as more users come online and new ways of retaining existing clients and keeping them excited with more efficient products and services becomes possible.

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