

Smartphone, tab revolution bites at Africa's heels

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Smart phone and tablet PC ownership is a rising, unrelenting trend that should open up opportunities for ICT players in sub-Saharan Africa, according to research.

African specialist brokerage and adviser Imara said in a research note on Tuesday (17 January 2012) that sub-Saharan Africa still presented attractive opportunities for players as there was a growing market for more sophisticated mobile devices.

"These communication gadgets may indeed open up significant possibilities for technology marketers in sub-Saharan Africa," they said.

A recent Accenture report paints a picture of the rising trend. While consumers around the world still have strong ownership and usage of desktop or laptop computers, purchase intentions for consumers are slowly declining, while smart phone and tablet PC ownership is rising steeply. In the past 12 months, the percentage point increase in smart phone and tablet PC purchases almost equals the purchase decrease of computers and mobile feature phones, says Accenture.

Zimbabwe's Econet Wireless has already partnered with Core Group, SA's official Apple distributor, to resell Apple products in the Zimbabwean market.

And Apple is not even aggressive in Africa - Nokia, Samsung and Google have been more active in looking at growth prospects on the continent, according to the researchers.

A recent IDG Connect survey reveals that 47% of the Ipads used in Africa are purchased for the worker by the employer, indicative of it becoming a work device of the future.

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