

Pamoja launches vision to cultivate cloud services market for Africa

In what is a step closer to establishing a premier cloud services marketplace for Africa, Pamoja, the cloud services business unit of Pan-African ICT enabler [SEACOM](#), has launched its go-to-market strategy to partners and customers at a presentation recently held in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The company, established in 2011 by SEACOM's, founder Brian Herlihy and Stafford Masie, former GM of Google SA, is a provider of wholesale cloud computing services via telecommunication companies, ISPs and other service providers in Southern and East Africa.

These institutions have also recognised the cloud as a source of new revenues, with global investments in cloud services projected to more than double from an estimated US\$55 billion in 2011 to almost US\$130 billion annually by 2015.

Pamoja is focused on a wider market, incorporating the fast-growing Small-to-medium Enterprise (SME) segment, and will leverage off SEACOM's infrastructure, exposure to partnerships and Africa's growing mobile and Internet market to entrench its services model.

Albie Bester, general manager of Pamoja, said the company is differentiated by access to SEACOM's extended network, which covers the entire continent, and its role as cloud business unit for the channel.

"Our wholesale model rules out conflict in the channel...there are no downstream issues resulting from us competing with our resellers. Another benefit to partnership with Pamoja is that we eliminate the risk for organisations entering the cloud computing market. This is about creating economies of scale," said Bester.

"Aside from funding and infrastructure, we also have access to SEACOM's relationships with telco and ISP's. Pamoja exists because of what is happening in the cloud... according to *Forbes'* top ten strategic CIO issues for 2013, at number six is 'Upgrade 'Cloud Strategy' to 'Business Transformation Enabled by the Cloud'. At the end of the day, the Cloud is not a technology matter to an organisation, it is about empowerment. In Africa, it is about business agility and for businesses to become more competitive," he added.

Steven Ambrose, CEO of Strategy Worx, said connectivity is critical to the growth of mobile and the realisation of the internet in Africa.

"Researchers say 50 billion devices are going to be connected to the internet by 2020...the number is so large. There are seven billion people in the world and there are approximately five billion with mobile phones, so connections are key and will

change the world. We are living in a time when new thinking has to come into play. In 2008 a total of 80Gbps of internet capacity was available to the continent...it now stands at 35460 Gbps. There has been a huge shift in sheer capacity to Africa," said Ambrose.

"We are also seeing a massive explosion in terrestrial connectivity. The fact is that you cannot do what people are doing on mobile unless you have terrestrial connections and connections to the Internet, nothing much would be happening in Africa," he added.

Pamoja's cloud services will be provided via the company's network of datacentres, located directly on the SEACOM submarine infrastructure. The first cloud platform is running in the Mtunzini cable landing station near Richards Bay. The second platform is planned for Kenya, after which roll out will occur as and where there is demand.

As SEACOM's strategic arm leading entry into content aggregation and associated cloud computing services, Pamoja is leveraging off its parent company to build an SME cloud services marketplace and take its white-labelled cloud services to the market through an exclusive channel of resellers.

To date, Pamoja has three channel partners in South Africa, three in Kenya and in discussion with others in Tanzania, Rwanda and Zambia.

Speaking at the launch Mark Simpson, CEO of SEACOM, said, "Our rapidly growing IP network has been, in recent times, a key enabler for SEACOM and its customers, providing services that are more flexible and much more resilient. Our IP transit and Ethernet products have deepened our relationships within the market, particularly with emerging ISPs and customers working hard to build Africa's ICT future. We continue to monitor and participate in what we called the African Internet ecosystem."

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