

ShowMax expands internet TV service to sub-Saharan Africa

ShowMax, the internet TV service launched in August 2015, has expanded its footprint to 36 additional countries across sub-Saharan Africa. In total, ShowMax now supplies subscription video on demand services to 65 countries worldwide.



Image by 123RF

[ShowMax](#) has officially launched internet TV services to 36 countries across sub-Saharan Africa. The company originally launched in August 2015 with the largest subscription video on demand catalogue on the continent.

The sub-Saharan service costs US\$ 7.99 per month for unlimited viewing. The catalogue includes approximately 15,000 TV show episodes and movies, totalling almost 10,000 hours of viewing. The service includes a Kiswahili language section and a Nollywood section, as well as an African Film section that pulls together classic movies from across the continent.

Barron Ernst, chief product officer for ShowMax commented: “The speed and cost of connectivity are significant hurdles for any internet-based service in Africa. Getting it right means you’ve got to do much more than just flick a switch.

“We’ve been busy testing the service in key locations across the continent and optimising our delivery network. Perhaps more importantly, we’ve adapted our apps to address the needs of consumers in Africa, introducing features like downloads for viewing TV shows and movies when not connected.”

The product features developed by ShowMax to address connectivity constraints include:

- Adaptive bitrate streaming that monitors connection speeds and automatically adjusts video stream resolution to avoid buffering.
- Download functionality to save up to 25 TV shows and movies in total to Android and iOS smartphones and tablets for viewing offline.
- User-selectable download quality to limit data usage.
- User-selectable streaming quality to limit data usage.
- Automatic size reduction of static pictures delivered to mobile devices.

“The other key to success is making sure you’ve got the right mix of international and local content. We’ve added Kiswahili and Nollywood shows and movies to our existing catalogue of Hollywood and British favourites,” said Ernst.

According to the GSMA, around 160 million connected smartphones were in use in sub-Saharan Africa in 2015, set to rise to more than 500 million by 2020. This explosive growth combined with the increasing availability of WiFi services, the rollout of FTTH in urban centres, and the rollout of other high speed fixed mobile options is driving the take-up of video on demand services.

“The growth potential of the African market is huge, and we’re not the only internet TV service looking to meet that demand. The difference is that we’re not simply cutting and pasting an existing model from elsewhere, and instead have built a product and content selection designed specifically for Africa,” concluded Ernst.

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