

Beyond data in Kenya: How the right SaaS company can help your business

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With more than 22 million internet users and over 11 million social media users in Kenya, access to digital data is on the rise in the country that continues to be a technological hub on the African continent.



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There has been a growing rise to the dependence on social media for news, a decline of the traditional media, influencer marketing, and brands moving online to reach a wider audience.

However, with the plethora of data and information now available online, how can businesses be certain that the data they are accessing is authentic and not 'fake news?' If Kenya, in general, has trust issues when it comes to the information that users want to receive, how can credible SaaS companies help businesses go beyond the data to create actionable change based on genuine insights?

Focus on the facts, not the fake

Containing a crisis in our digital age is one thing, but seeing how a crisis can cause panic that gives rise to misinformation and [fake news](#) is another, and the Covid-19 pandemic proved this throughout 2020. According to the [2020 Misinfodemic Report](#) from Meedan, there has been an increase in false claims linked to Covid-19 in Kenya. When there is a deliberate fabrication of news information that aims to deceive people, one has to then ask: how do we combat this?



Social media users in Kenya and South Africa trust science, but still share Covid-19 hoaxes

Herman Wasserman & Dani Madrid-Morales 7 Apr 2021



This is where partnering with a trusted Software as a Service (SaaS) company that provides [media monitoring](#), like Meltwater, will benefit you greatly. Media monitoring plays a vital role in helping to discern between what is fact and what is fake. Social media, for all the benefit that it brings, can also be the fuel that spreads negative news and misinformation.

Having the ability to monitor content on news or social media can help businesses identify information that has the potential to be dangerously untrue.

Experts within the PR & Communications field would tell you about the great benefits of having media monitoring as a tool for maintaining brand reputation and monitoring misinformation. Much like an unwatched flame, the worst you can do is let fake news spread; that's a direct route to seeing the fires of a widespread story about your business that isn't true. If you are considering a SaaS company that can help you with this, consider Meltwater, who provide the added benefit of delivering email alerts as soon as you are mentioned in the news or on social media. This will give you the upper hand to refute fake news timeously and provide facts promptly.

Social media provides a platform for information to spread faster. It was reported that 33.8% of social media users in Kenya have come across misinformation online. As an example, lessons can be learned from past events in understanding the role social media as a communication tool has on a country. A survey found [90% of Kenyan's encountered fake news](#) regarding the 2017 elections, and with the upcoming general elections in August 2022, it is even more important for industries to separate the facts from the fake news.

Ramping up crisis communication due to Covid

There were a number of industries hit hard by Covid-19, such as travel, hospitality, and agriculture. Most prominently, the retail sector was also significantly impacted. With mandatory movement restrictions, the usual trip to the local grocery store wasn't exactly feasible. However, this did give rise to an increase in 'virtual foot traffic' for e-commerce businesses, with the likes of Jumia having the ability to keep up with the increase in demand.

For others, on the other hand, the Covid-19 pandemic presented itself as a crisis that required businesses to think fast and act quickly in accelerating their digital transformation efforts while maintaining online customer service. An essential tool that businesses in Kenya can leverage to keep their heads above a crisis is social listening.



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Given how nationwide and global lockdowns changed not only consumer behaviour but consumer interactions with brands and businesses, analysing the relevant social data from your customers and target market is now even more important to your crisis communication plan. No matter the size of your business or the industry you find yourself in, knowing what your customers say about you on social media is important, and how you engage with them is vital for customer service.

Fintech is filling the financial gap

As of January 2020, there were [52.06 million mobile connections in Kenya](#), and this number is expected to increase in 2021. With growth like this in the mobile space in Kenya, financial services firms are sure to take advantage of how technology can fill the financial gap in providing products and services much faster and more personalised to the customer.

Kenya has already proven itself to be a top fintech hubspot, thanks to the success of innovations such as phone-based money transfer services. Fintech seems to be a technological enabler for the emerging digital economy we see in Kenya, as we see a continued rise in digital lenders and more fintech companies coming forth to meet consumers' needs. However, how is this new digital space being regulated?



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The challenge in answering this question perhaps lies in understanding that fintech's rapid growth will naturally give rise to new challenges that have not been dealt with before, with the biggest being cyber security and data protection. Fintech presents exciting opportunities but also has its own risks and regulating the emerging innovations from fintech include the protection of both customers and their data.

The technological hub that is Kenya is booming, and doing so quickly and if businesses want to see success in the coming year, look towards partnering with software solutions that provide you with the accurate information and insights needed to keep your business ahead of the curve, competition and a crisis. There has never been a better time for businesses to seek collaboration with SaaS companies than now.

Staying one step ahead

The overall digital landscape in Kenya has changed, and as one of the most innovative hubs in Africa, how can businesses partner with SaaS companies to stay ahead of the curve, and competition?



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For one, it is important to realise that the outdated systems of the past will definitely get left behind in today's fast paced digital world. From scaling your business to expanding on your ever-evolving needs, only the tools and systems built to meet the demands of today will keep you ahead of the rest while adding value to your business. 2020 showed us how important it is for businesses to be agile and adaptive to changing circumstances, and in 2021, staying one step ahead means being open to transformation that can happen in the blink of a business eye.

Meltwater recently acquired leading social media intelligence company, Linkfluence, a French SaaS company that uses artificial intelligence to mine social media for consumer insights. Investments in acquiring some of the top software out there is just one reason why Meltwater is a global leader in media intelligence, and why we are well positioned to help businesses navigate today's digital landscape.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Siphesihle Hela is the Kenya Country Lead Director at Meltwater, the global leaders in media intelligence and social analytics, and has expert knowledge in building data strategies, and developing positive, long-lasting relationships with CXOs to meet evolving needs of businesses. A storyteller at heart, Hela has a keen interest in creatively expanding on how data has shaped strategy for businesses across Africa.

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