

Recently we wrote about the fascinating trends around the mobile web, paying particular attention to the African Continent, although the phenomenon has worldwide dimensions. Even more interesting is the development of different service models for mobile devices where we witness an explosion of technological innovations reaching out to people and offering them new ways to engage and exchange. For many years CTA has been organising a yearly expert meeting on cutting-edge ICT innovations for development. This year's event has focused on mobile services for the which we compiled a description of a range of services.

These services are described in more detail on the [conference wiki](#) . The information made available on the wiki includes

[descriptions and analysis of a of channels](#)

for mobile services and a

[multimedia coverage of the three conference days](#)

. The listed projects below are a mix of commercial and public services. Some have achieved financial sustainability such as Mxit, others such as FrontlineMedic work with minimal investments but achieve high impact.

Mobile services as businesses or public services

Job board

- [Souktel](#) is an SMS service in Palestine that connects young people with jobs.
- [Kazi560](#) is a Kenyan job alert service through mobile phones.

Local advertisement

- [CellBazaar](#) in Bangladesh is a platform where people can sell and buy products via their mobile phone.

Information systems

- TradeNet offers market information through SMS across countries in Western Africa. TradeNet focuses on a sustainable business model and develops its approach towards business-to-business (b2b) services.

- [Nokia LifeTools](#) is a paid SMS service in India, which offers market price, agriculture information and a weather service. It runs through a special application on low cost phones.
- [LifeLines](#) is an initiative for information services delivery in India, which uses an innovative mix of internet and telephony to provide critical and timely information to communities in rural India on a range of livelihood issues.

News services

- [Inzawa - Freedom Fone](#) Zimbabwe is an interactive news and general information service which is accessed through the mobile phone.
- [African mobile reporters](#) uses a mobile toolkit to report from places around Africa.
- [Jasmine News Service](#) in Sri Lanka offers the latest news through SMS for a hundred thousand subscribers.

Social network applications

- [Mxit](#) offers a mobile social network service and has over 5 million members in South Africa. The exchanges are on chats through data transfer – much cheaper than SMSs.
- [Sembuse](#) East Africa's first social networking service, which works entirely through mobile phone access.

Mobile Banking

- The successful Kenyan example of [M-Pesa](#) , a mobile-phone based money transfer service;

Health

- [Text to Change](#) in Uganda uses quizzes sent by SMS to help spread information about HIV/AIDS
- [MOTTECH](#) - an initiative being developed to monitor and improve pre-natal health care for rural women.

- [FrontlineMedic](#) provides a service to hospitals to coordinate mobile health workers for delivering more efficient healthcare to rural areas.

Income generation

- [txteagle](#) is a mobile phone service that enables subscribers to earn small amounts of money by completing simple tasks for companies who pay them in airtime or cash.

These services vary in their approaches and use different technologies, are pioneering innovative mobile services and offer inspiration for further uses. Contrary to past ICT projects, [the technologies focus on flexibility and often do not need a high investment in technology](#). The emphasis is put on the local context and the potential demand for such a service. This need is often best addressed by delivering the right local content needed.

A great example for a demand driven service through local content was presented by Mark Davis from [Esoko](#) (formerly known as Tradenet), Ghana at the CTA observatory. Mark Davis is one of the first pioneers using mobile phones for delivering market information systems. His main clients are farmers, who anticipated an average of 68% improvement in their revenues after benefitting from his services. He presented at the CTA observatory some intriguing lessons learnt in and explained more of his views in an interview.

[Mobile Information Services: The Esoko Initiative](#)
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