

Vodacom, Netstar launch free in-taxi Wi-Fi service for SA commuters

Telematics company Netstar, a subsidiary of Altron, in partnership with Vodacom Business, is empowering taxi commuters across the country through the use of a free in-taxi connectivity service, WiTaxi.



Image supplied

“South Africa’s taxi industry is responsible for more than 60% of daily commutes, making it an integral part of the country’s transport sector and a significant economic player,” says Netstar Group managing director Grant Fraser.

“We are truly excited about this partnership with WiTaxi and Vodacom and believe that the connected commute is going to be a game changer for South African taxi passengers, drivers and even operators.”

How it works

Netstar’s telematics devices installed in Toyota minibus taxis can double up as Wi-Fi routers. These devices have already been fitted to more than 3,200 taxis across the country, and have the potential to reach 48,000 connected taxis.

“In exchange for free high-speed Wi-Fi, commuters just need to watch short, 15-second adverts. This is an untapped,

exciting opportunity for SMMEs to generate maximum impact and unlock economic activity by connecting with approximately 15 million people,” says Brian Mdluli, managing director for WiTaxi.

With the technology infrastructure already in place to support connectivity, commuters simply need to connect seamlessly to the free Wi-Fi through the WiTaxi app. This service is completely safe and free to users, who can access as much as 1GB of uninterrupted Wi-Fi daily.

Vodacom is also looking to introduce a reward system linked to this network through its super app, VodaPay. This will allow commuters to access a network of content, cashless transactions, and let them complete daily chores while being rewarded for it.

“Leveraging connectivity to create new revenue streams for entrepreneurs, taxi drivers and fleet owners at a time when business owners are looking to turn problems into new possibilities is how we take the industry and country further together,” adds William Mzimba, chief officer for Vodacom Business.

When connected, commuters can stream their favourite shows, browse social media, and use the time to stay up to date with what’s happening at work.

“The technology allows commuters, drivers and operators access to a myriad of convenience, connectivity, and safety benefits. Internet connectivity has become an essential need for economic, social, cultural, political, and civic participation in the digital age. South Africans are increasingly aware of how connected technologies can improve their lives, and we must ensure that we evolve in tandem with market expectations,” concludes Fraser.

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