Connectivity Series
The Key for Growth in Africa

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SatADSL

Disrupting the Satellite industry with agnostic satellite services and tailor-made solutions.

Mr. Ernest Sheka
Senior Vice-President
Sales Africa, SatADSL

In a chat with **Ernest Sheka, Senior Vice-President Sales Africa,** we talked about the challenges in African connectivity and the offerings at SatADSL.

Could you please tell us a little bit about SatADSL? What is your main business focus?

SatADSL was founded in 2011 and is now a globally active, award-winning technology and operator agnostic satellite service provider. Our organization is disrupting the satellite industry and realizing the potential of satellite connectivity in the new digital economy.

We specialize in providing tailor-made solutions based on customers' specific requirements and flexible service plans that meet our clients' needs.

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We specialize in providing tailor-made solutions based on customers' specific requirements and flexible service plans that meet our clients' needs, providing services to satellite operators, teleport and hub operators, government and enterprise bodies, and ISPs.

Our flagship platform is called neXat and it's the first satellite aggregation system that acts as a capacity broker and connects teleports with new customers and markets, providing affordable and dependable IP access.

Talking about the African markets: Which ones are key to your business in your opinion?

We mainly target the professional market, including enterprises, prosumers, or the SOHO market segments. However, we also deal with NGOs, public administration, churches, and educational institutions too. The beauty of SatADSL solution is the dynamicism and flexibility we can provide, which is one of the things that grants us access to this wide variety of markets.

Why is satellite connectivity in Africa so important? Which opportunities does it bring along?

Satellite connectivity is of huge importance to Africa for many reasons. Most African countries are still not connected by terrestrial connectivity because fiber arrives in the country starting at the coast. This means that there are large parts of the territory that are not covered simply due to the lack of necessary infrastructure to support it.

In remote areas, it is difficult to implement terrestrial connectivity such as fiber and 4G efficiently and the alternative technologies that do exist, are frequently unreliable. This is one reasons why satellite solutions can really shine in the African market, connecting rural or hard to reach areas with the reliability that is so badly needed. In fact, this is something we consider to be a real opportunity for us.

However, it would be remiss of me not to recognize another key factor contributing to the value of SatADSL's solutions in Africa. That is the importance of the cultural aspects that play a role in the demand for connectivity. For many Africans,

direct, immediate communication between people is very important. As a result, digital communications tools such as social networking apps become necessary for

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them. Indeed, we know from our data that apps like Whatsapp account for significant portions of data on our networks. This speaks to the cultural value of connectivity in Africa. Keeping people connected is not only about servicing business goals but also the more human element of connecting families, friends, colleagues and students who want to be able to engage each other directly.

How can satellite connectivity help in combating the downsides of network outages?

SatADSL's carrier grade platform has been built with the support of the European Space Agency. As a result, we deliver not just the resilience and redundancy to mitigate network outages, but also security and superior service all come as standard.

You have recently rebranded your cloud delivery platform which is now called neXat. Could you name some of the reasons for this rebrand?

neXat used to be called the Cloud-based Service Delivery Platform, or C-SDP. We felt our unique business model justified a unique name for our flagship platform and this rebrand established our territory in a rapidly evolving market.

As we continue to expand our reach and services, neXat will be recognized as core to our distinct offering to our partners and customers. Our patent ownership of the technology secures our unique position in a competitive industry as the marketplace to buy and sell capacity and secures neXat's exclusive satellite services suite for extending hub capabilities

Could you explain in a few words how the platform works? What makes the PaaS technology stand out?

neXat allows satellite, teleport, and hub operators to offer the full range of SatADSL value-added services to their own clients. This includes classical and packaged satellite connectivity services, with customer management, monitoring, billing, and online payments. The platform also facilitates the sale of teleport and hub operators' bulk Virtual Network Operator (VNO) capacity by providing all the tools to their clients for them to manage the VNO capacity themselves.

Talking about new and planned features of neXat in 2021 – what is new and what is in the pipeline?

SatADSL is currently enhancing neXat security, redundancy, and resiliency features in the frame of a contract with the European Space Agency (ESA). The added

security makes it more attractive to large teleports, Governments, and large enterprises with stringent safeguarding requirements.

SatADSL is also developing an e-commerce feature which will allow customers, ISPs, and teleport and satellite operators to request quotations and place bandwidth orders.

What are the key benefits of PaaS solutions like neXat for teleport or satellite operators? How does it help them to monetize their assets?

Because neXat is a complete OSS/BSS in the cloud, it acts as an intermediary platform between teleport and hub operators and the marketplace and offers our partners access to SatADSL's network of resellers across four continents.

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This allows operators to get easy access to satellite capacity and teleport and hub infrastructure globally. It will require no additional infrastructure or capital investment.

With neXat, teleport operators can offer multiple types of bandwidth management optimization services regardless of the technology used at their hub(s). Payment management services will be available through a white-labelled

Customer Management Tool (CMT), and the platform's pre-paid voucher system will ensure that revenues are distributed to all parties quickly and securely.

You have recently announced a partnership with YahClick to enhance its connectivity across Sub-Saharan Africa. Could you tell us a little bit more about this project?

Our partnership with Yahsat helped us to broaden our service portfolio, offering highly competitive new service packages in areas covered by their HTS satellite Alyha3. This allows us to offer the African market Ka-band services through low Opex and Capex packages and created a competitive advantage over other existing satellite communication providers.

We're mainly targeting enterprise market by high-end (VNO's, big capacities) services due to the fact Yahsat already has local resellers operating on the consumer's market.

Given that more and more professions are becoming digital without reliable connectivity accessible to everyone, these professions will not evolve technologically at the correct pace.

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Are there any other connectivity projects you are currently involved in in Africa?

Yes, we are currently embarking on a new and exciting project in Cameroon that will involve connecting 500 schools with about 60 Mbps VNO capacity for internet access and eLearning.

In comparison to other emerging technologies like 5G – how will satellite connectivity continue to position itself, especially in emerging countries? What are its benefits making it especially suitable for these markets?

We believe that advances in the 5G field will drive similar advancements and new opportunities for the satellite industry. Satellite technology is able to support the process of bringing 5G capabilities to hard-to-reach locations, where terrestrial infrastructure is not available.

In your opinion, which overall role will satellite connectivity play on the African continent in the coming years?

We believe that the arrival of VSAT connectivity is a vector for development in Africa, one that makes it possible to serve remote regions.

Given that more and more professions are becoming digital (education, medicine, banks, administration), without reliable connectivity accessible to everyone, these professions will not evolve technologically at the correct pace. As such, Africa risks falling behind, in relation to other parts of the world.

It's clear that the African market understands this to be true, hence the growing demand for satellite connectivity that we have observed for several years in African Telecoms.

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