

MXit maintains social loyalty

According to the final analysis of the SA Social Media Landscape 2014 research study, released this week by World Wide Worx and Fuseware, Facebook as the country's biggest social network may have supplanted MXit, South Africa's homegrown instant messaging service, but it has succeeded in maintaining the loyalty of its user base.

Headline findings issued last month showed that the MXit user base had fallen significantly in the past year. However, when taking into account a change in the way the service measures active users - from being active on the network over 90 days to being on in the last 30 days - it appears have turned a corner.



Stats

In July 2012, a 30-day active measure gave it 6.2-million subscribers. A year later, in July 2013, the active subscriber base had grown marginally to 6.3-million. In August, this number had grown to 6.5-million. This means that, despite a high churn rate among pre-paid cellphone users, which comprise most of its base, the network is winning back enough users and attracting enough new customers every month to make up for that churn. It suggests that a high proportion of those who change their pre-paid phone numbers return to register again.

"This finding provides fascinating insight into the willingness of outgoing FNB CEO, Michael Jordaan to take on the role of chairman of MXit," says Arthur Goldstuck, MD of technology market researchers World Wide Worx. "Rather than coming in to rescue a dwindling brand, he has arrived to build on a relatively solid foundation."

The SA Social Media Landscape 2014 report describes the decision by new MXit CEO, Francois Swart to clean up how it reported its numbers as a turning point for the network. However, this does not mean its survival is guaranteed.

"It is holding its own, but at a time when Facebook has grown by more than half and Twitter has more than doubled," says Mike Wronski, MD of social network analytics company Fuseware. "That is enough of a challenge, but then you also have local instant messaging service 2Go overtaking MXit in active users across Africa and WhatsApp in turn overtaking everyone, including Facebook."

Increase in Africa

MXit currently has 7.4-million active users across Africa, while 2Go has 10.5-million.

The SA Social Media Landscape 2014 research report is now available for purchase. It contains extensive data on both consumer and corporate use of social networks.

For more information, go to www.worldwideworx.com and <http://www.fuseware.net>.