Industry insider warns that Africa's IoT adoption will stall without uptime guarantees

The future of Africa's digital economy lands on 5G, AI, or blockchain. But the one that determines whether these technologies deliver any value - is uptime.

Africa borderless IoT

JOHANNESBURG, GAUTENG, SOUTH AFRICA, July 23, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Continent's connected future relies on regulators, operators and businesses designing resilient networks

Africa risks falling behind the IOT adoption curve if it doesn't address uptime challenges.

This is the warning from Peter Walsh, MD of CommsCloud, who says, "The future of the continent's digital economy - whether it is 5G, artificial intelligence, or blockchain - depends on uptime."

The 2023 ABB report Value of Reliability: ABB Survey Report 2023 estimated that enterprises lose about $170,000 per hour of unplanned IT downtime on average globally.

> "IoT systems in Africa must be designed to withstand failure because network disruptions are unavoidable."
>
> *Peter Walsh*

Walsh points out that if connected devices can't stay online, the promises of efficiency, automation, and data-driven decision-making collapse.

He describes downtime as the "biggest threat to digital transformation".

The perfect storm

Several converging forces have made uptime essential. These include drives for efficiency in logistics, the demand created by AI and analytics, and regulatory requirements for insurers, fintechs and governments.

Currently, most IoT devices use SIMs tied to a single mobile network operator (MNO) or rely on roaming agreements that were designed for recreational travelers, not always-on, cross-border use.

Walsh cautions that foreign roaming SIMs risk being cut off or considered non-compliant as global restrictions on 'permanent roaming' — where a SIM is permanently used outside its home network — are tightening. African regulators are among those enforcing stricter rules, he notes.

"Network disruptions are unavoidable. The goal is for IoT systems to recover instantly when outages occur, which means designing for resilience," Walsh notes.

"Resilient IoT also requires close alignment between connectivity providers, device manufacturers, and customers. Connectivity must be a core part of IoT architecture and strategy from day one," he suggests.

The way forward

Walsh believes too much of Africa's IoT conversation still revolves around high-level visions like smart cities, Industry 4.0, and digital transformation.

"Those goals are valid, but they depend entirely on stable, continuous connectivity. Without uptime, IoT adoption will stall," he concludes. "

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