

The Implementation of Mobile Communication at the University of South Africa

The University of South (Unisa) is currently implementing a mobile communication service. Unisa is a dedicated distance education institution that offers university and technikon type learning programmes. Various teaching approaches are employed and multiple entry and exit points are available. Unisa has approximately 200 000 learners.

The widespread availability and use of cellular phones have provided unique opportunities to the University of South Africa and its students. This means that Unisa students could receive and send SMS messages. Unisa has therefore decided that this technology should be used to improve the communication to learners. Areas such as learner support and administration (finance, exams, library, and despatch) have been identified as obvious targets for this initiative.

The demography of the Unisa learner community is very diverse in terms of location (urban, rural and international), language, and cultural background. Although the main medium used by Unisa to communicate with learners is currently conveying paper-based material through the postal mail system, the Internet and e-mail is also used. The introduction of the SMS technology would be a more direct means of communication between the university and its students therefore improving efficiency of services.

The poster will provide an overview of the Mobile Communications project with specific reference to SMS services for students. It will cover the various application areas for SMS and services that are currently available and being planned. The existing infrastructure and the implications to the university's processes and systems will also be covered.

approaches for the peaceful resolution of the Cyprus problem. He is a senior researcher with the Cyprus Neuroscience & Technology Institute and a co-founder of the Cyprus-based Technology for Peace Project. As an academic, he has published numerous articles on peace and conflict issues, focusing in particular on Cyprus, Nationalism, Peace building and the European Union.

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Maria "Marinkie"

Madiope is not simply your average working girl. Her academic record speaks of a vigilant style and resilient independence. During 1999 to 2001 she obtained her MEd. in Computer-based Instruction, and also completed a non-degree course in Bed. Computer-based Instruction in 1999 both at RAU. In the late 80s Maria completed her Bed. At the University of the North. During the early 80s (1983, 1985) she obtained her BA specialisation in Education from the University of the North. She obtained a two-year Junior Secondary Teacher's Certificate at the Hebron College of Education during 1980/81. Her career evolved from being the Head of the Languages Department at LG Holele High, Garankuwa to an Instructional Designer for Technikon Pretoria (2000, 2001), Absa Bank (2001, 2002) and currently she is one of the Drivers for Online learning and teaching at the University Of South Africa. Marinkie also completed the following short courses: Project management course, Technikon South Africa. Online Staff Development course through an international college NSBA and Online Education and Training course from the University of London. Her research focus area is ICT in education. Maria has presented papers at several conferences locally and internationally.



Henry Monyela has a B.Ed (Hons, Adult Education), degree from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, and has completed various other short courses, including a recent certificate with the University of London in Online Education and Training, with a specific focus on Mobile Learning and Teaching. Henry has both public and private sector learning and teaching backgrounds. He taught at high school level in the early 1990s. He later took up a job as a trainer with the country's top transport parastatal - Transnet. He thereafter joined one of the provincial governments here, as a training advisor to line managers in various regional departments. At the same time he consulted for various companies both as a management trainer and skills advisor.

