

## Advertising feature: E-Tech Living Index

# Technology shapes social fabric

## Research reveals amazing trends

Technology might not have changed our basic human genetic make-up, but it shapes the fabric of the social body with which we interact on a day-to-day basis.

Ask Afrika, South Africa's largest independent market research company, recently conducted the E-Tech Living Index, where it assessed South Africa's usage of technology and the most popular brands among South Africans.

"The Internet alone is used extensively in our work and social lives when we need to communicate with those around us," says Dr Amelia Richards, Ask Afrika's Client Service Director.

"In our technology driven world it means a more structured approach to time management since the idea of a 'virtual' office implies flexible working hours bringing the different spheres of life for example work, family and leisure closer to each other.

"Within the South African context many 'transnational' families with family members that emigrated to other parts of the world use cyberspace as a much-needed tool to keep in contact with family members on different continents."

The Internet is becoming more important in South African consumer's lives. Statistics show that 6.68 million adult South Africans used the Internet in the past seven days. South African adults also spend a large part of their daily lives on the Internet, with an

average number of 13.9 hours in the past month. The population is also fond of social media networking sites like Facebook and Twitter: 4.6 million adult South Africans accessed social networking sites in the past 12 months.

According to the Target Group Index (TGI 2011), the largest single source consumer brand and lifestyle survey in South Africa, there is also 4.9 million installed computers in South African households.

### Electronic living

TGI is owned by Ask Afrika as part of the Ask Afrika Group. The fieldwork among 15 000 adults (16 years and older) takes place yearly between February and November each year, and represents 18 million consumers yearly. This symbiotic relationship creates opportunities for syndicated and customised market research compatibility and harmonisation.

"For the E-Tech Living Index, the focus was placed on E-Tech living lifestyles, coupled with technology brand and product usage of South Africans," Richards explains.

The data has local relevance across all population groups and measures actual loyal consumption trends across all groups. The core focus of the index is not about aspiring or liking the brand; Apple may be one of the most coveted electronic brands, but in this survey it's not a brand loyally used by most South Africans.

Richards explains that the survey looked at South African con-



E-Tech living is a symbol of collapsing boundaries between human and machine, global geographical boundaries, the past and the future. || PHOTO:THINKSTOCK

sumers using the brand. The E-Tech Living Index focused on 23 product categories and 162 different brands, and were weighted accordingly to the specific E-Tech lifestyle statements:

- 55% of South Africans look for something unique and different when they choose electronic products;
- 54% seek out electronic items with the most advanced functional features;
- South Africans can be described as informed taxpayers and 52% do extensive research before purchasing electronic items; and
- It's an individual decision with

50% of consumers that perceive electronic items as a strong reflection of personal style and status.

### Necessity, not nice-to-have

"Consumers have not changed what they do, but they have changed in how they do it," says Richards.

"E-Tech living goes broader than cyberspace and the Internet." Technology moved from a 'nice to have' to a necessity when it comes to everyday living. One of the main goals of technological inventors is to link the different pieces of technology with one another, enabling South Africans to make use of

technology to balance different parts of their lives.

"Different brands, for example allow you to sync your laptop, smartphone and tablet, so you can have access to your information at all times. Ordinary like household appliances are also becoming smarter, with heightened connectivity. One model manages your food shopping and can monitor its contents and automatically add food to a user's on-line shopping account when stocks are running low. It can make recipe suggestions based and even manage your other kitchen appliances via a wireless connection."

Home automation is the new

## The winners

Amelia Richards explains that the survey didn't aim to measure the most coveted or popular brand, but rather the brand that was the most used by South African consumers.

1. LG
2. Samsung
3. Sony
4. Woolworths
5. Look and Listen
6. Mecer
7. Acer
8. Canon
9. Pick n Pay
10. CNA Bookshop
11. Edgars
12. Kodak
13. MTN
14. Nokia
15. Sony PSP
16. Truworths
17. Dell
18. Hewlett Packard
19. Makro.com
20. Vodacom

### CATEGORY WINNERS

► **Electronic Items, Sound systems**  
Mini Hi-Fi System: LG  
Home theatre system (Blu Ray): LG

Hard Disk Drive recorder: LG  
CD player and recorder: LG  
Radio: LG  
MP3/Digital Music Player: LG  
MP4/Digital Music and Video player: Sony  
DVD player and recorder: LG  
Separate Amplifier: Sony  
Software, CDs or DVDs by Post or the internet: Look and Listen  
Television sets: LG  
Books and Audio books: CNA Bookshop  
Digital still cameras: Kodak  
Cell or Mobile Phones: Nokia  
► **Personal computers at households**  
Laptop: Acer  
Desktop Screen: Samsung  
Desktop Box: Mecer  
Printers: Canon  
► **The Internet**  
Service Provider: MTN  
Electronic retailer site to purchase clothing: Truworths  
Electronic retailer site to purchase gifts Edgars  
Electronic retailer site to purchase groceries: Pick n Pay  
Computer and Video systems and games consoles bought new in last 12 months: Sony PSP



Navigation software and apps are helping consumers find their way around. Foto: THINKSTOCK

## GPS apps make navigation easy

Anybody who ever had to struggle with a map will understand the freedom that navigational apps for smartphones or tablets are giving to those that need a little more direction in their lives.

Except for getting from point A to point B, smartphone users are also downloading navigational apps to help them circumnavigate the traffic.

One of the big navigational companies and producers of GPSs that made their technology available through apps to tablet and smartphone users is TomTom.

Their technology is also available for iPhone and iPad and for Android phones.

"This allows you to get the same benefits on your smartphone as on our GPS devices," says Daan Henderickx, country manager for TomTom.

"As smartphones are not developed for navigation purposes we also developed smartphone cradles for both Apple and Android phones so that users can position the smartphone on their windshield and have the best navigation experience."

"Road networks changes 15% every

year. TomTom is constantly improving their maps and updating, enabling each user an up to date navigation and will avoid you ending up in unknown traffic jams.

"It is clear that the majority of the navigation devices and application purchases is to use to get from A to B. More specialised navigation such as bike navigation and off-road is more for a niche market, but there is a definite pull."

One of the TomTom features is MapShare, which allows users to make certain changes – such as updating street names or blocked streets, new traffic circles, changing driving direction, incorporating missing house numbers and missing points of interest – upload it on their profile in the TomTom cloud, which will automatically be shared with TomTom users."

Another app that is gaining popularity among smartphone and tablet users is the Google Maps app, which shows you where you are and helps you navigate to your destination of choice.

It gives its users voice-guided turn-by-turn navigation, whether driving, walking or taking public transport. They can also view the

estimated time to their destination based on live traffic information.

Live traffic information is one of the big buzzwords when it comes to navigation software and apps.

"Traffic jams are unpredictable and can happen any time and on any route," says Henderickx.

"TomTom has developed HD traffic, which gives you information on traffic jams for both main and secondary roads.

"All traffic information is updated every two minutes and makes sure you reach your destination fast, safely and as eco-friendly as possible."

"TomTom will also inform users about speed cameras."

"This way consumers can stick to the maximum speed limits, even in unknown places."

Google Maps also allows users to add more Google Maps layers into apps, such as satellite, hybrid, terrain and traffic features, and to build indoor maps for many major airports and shopping centres. It also has the ability to create map placemarkers and map information windows using less coding.

**Additional sources: Google Maps**



A guest takes a picture with his tablet. According to a US Poll, tablets is the preferred gift for consumers this holiday season. PHOTO:AP PHOTO/ANDRES LEIGHTON

## Tablet an ideal gift this Xmas

Not sure what to get your kids or loved ones for Christmas?

If South African consumers are anything like their US counterparts, they will want a tablet as a stocking filler.

According to a new Ipsos poll conducted for Thomson Reuters, one-third of US consumers are thinking about buying an electronic tablet this holiday season.

Consumers, however, should be willing to dig deep in their holiday pockets, an iPad3 with WiFi and Cellular 64GB will set you back R7 799, according to the website of a large South African electronics retailer.

According to the Ipsos poll the price of tablets will not put

people off: 22% of those who want one of the hot devices said they plan to cut back on other holiday purchases in order to afford them.

But the new, smaller tablet from industry leader Apple Inc – the iPad mini – is not taking the world by storm.

Only 8% named the iPad mini as their first choice, the same percentage that said they would like to buy a Microsoft Corp Surface tablet.

"There has been a lot of controversy about the fact that the iPad mini is \$329 (about R2 857), that the price might not be right," said Jharonne Martis, director of consumer research for Thomson Reu-

ter. In South Africa, you can purchase it on a leading e-commerce website for about R4 600.

Still, Apple's full-size iPad remains the leader, with 25% picking it as the tablet of choice while 15% want to buy Amazon.com Inc's Kindle Fire, and another 15% want a Samsung Galaxy device.

Laptops are still on the wish lists for 32% of respondents, while 18% would like to buy desktop computers and only 13% are looking for ultrabooks.

Amazon is the top online retailer shoppers plan to visit more than they did last year, with 42% picking it, 38% choosing Walmart, 23% selecting Target

and 14% picking eBay.

Physical stores remain the top destination, with 26% planning to shop primarily at stores and only 14% planning to shop primarily online.

The poll is the first in a series that Ipsos will conduct during the holiday season.

"The findings are from an Ipsos poll conducted for Thomson Reuters from November 15-19, 2012, with 1 169 American adults interviewed online. Results are within the poll's credibility intervals, a tool used to account for statistical variation in Internet-based polling. The credibility interval was plus or minus 3.3 percentage points. – Reuters.