

# 2015: Introducing the truly mobile consumer

 By Leigh Andrews

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Top insights from day 1 of MRMW Africa 2015 were about the truly mobile consumer of 2015 and how mobile marketers can better incorporate mobile research data into their campaigns.



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The second edition of Merlien Institute's MRMW Africa conference was held on 4 and 5 November 2015 at the Doubletree Hilton Hotel in Woodstock. Sarah Utermark, vice chair of the Mobile Marketing Association (MMA) was conference chair for day 1 of MRMW Africa 2015. She set the agenda for the day by stating that the local mobile industry has vested interest in extracting as much data as we can, and that the percentage of ad spend allocated to mobile is always a top question, as well as how users engage in mobile. The first keynote speaker for the day was Makhosazana Zwane-Siguqa, head of content at WeChat Africa, formerly editor of *Drum* magazine, who took on the challenge of answering these questions.

## Defining the future of digital research and social messaging in emerging markets

Zwane-Siguqa started off by explaining how chat services have changed the way consumers use their handsets. She explained that WeChat launched in China in 2011 as a social communications app based on three pillars: Transact, share and connect. More than this though, the chat app offers brands a great way to connect with consumers in real-time through features like voice and video calls, social ads, P2P payments and more. Simply put, "It's a utility app that goes beyond messaging."

How far beyond messaging? Well, consumers can use the app to order food and sell anything they like on the platform, while also interacting with their favourite brands. That said, it's not as though marketers who use the platform are dealing with a mass of single-minded consumers. WeChat South Africa users are trendsetters who are security-aware, hagglers who spot good deals, are close to their family and friends and need free Wi-Fi as 'a basic human right'. Add to this the fact that a child in Alexandra now has the same access to information as a child in Sandton and you'll see why it's so important for brands to focus on the health and education opportunities enabled through the mobile bridge connecting these previously disparate worlds.

Despite this success, mobile doesn't come without its challenges, especially on the continent. We have low propensity for apps, high data costs and a severe lack of broadband. [Digital literacy](#) is also an issue. Even if the consumers we want to reach have the data and the smartphone they need, that's no guarantee they know how to use them. This is an important

gap to close as technology is intimidating to the best of us. To do so effectively, we need to leverage smartphones as more than a status symbol and instead as an information device.

We need to create more mobile content and services that are relevant, accessible and available to users in their own language. Remember the African adage that we return to old water holes for more than just water; friends and dreams are there to meet you as well. Make sure your mobile content offering matches this mantra to meet mobile consumers' expectations.

## ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh\_Andrews.

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