

The impact of sharing on e-commerce and digital payments

The Covid-19 pandemic forced organisations to shift their focus to digital and e-commerce environments. Those that already had a digital presence and e-commerce capabilities have had an advantage over those laggards struggling to play catch up.

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Supporting the growth of e-commerce are new market entrants and solutions which are actively shaping the digital payment space. South Africa's payment ecosystem has adopted the current real-time gross settlement (RTGS) system, which both reforms and modernises domestic and regional payment settlement services. According to the South African Reserve Bank, the new global messaging system facilitates wider access to the payment system, improves payment efficiencies by leveraging new technology and provides better security against cyber threats.

Reserve Bank Governor, Lesetja Kganyago says the migration to the new system paves the way for faster payments through the introduction of the Rapid Payments Programme which is due to be launched in 2023.

"There is no question that the ongoing modernisation and developments in digital payment technologies are disrupting the sector. Customers have become increasingly comfortable with making digital payments which is helping to fuel the growth of e-commerce," says Arunabh Madhur, regional vice president and head of business for EMEA at ShareIt, a file and app sharing, gaming and content streaming platform which aims to democratise digital content.

The ShareIt app – the "airdrop" of the Android system – currently has 40 million active users in sub-Saharan and South Africa. It allows users to share games, content and files with family and friends via peer-to-peer sharing without the need for internet or mobile data.

In emerging markets, content discovery begins with referrals from friends and family. ShareIt country director for South Africa, Chanel Hardman, explains that ShareIt helps to facilitate this by making sharing easy, seamless, unlimited and without constraints.

In South Africa, the rise of app-sharing was initially driven by limited internet availability and high data costs. Even when internet availability is not a constraint, the rapid speed at which users on the ShareIt platform can share content, files and games ensures the platform is a compelling proposition. South Africa's tech-savvy youth population are installing more apps than ever before. In the past year, it is estimated that app installations, primarily from financial services providers, online retailers, food delivery services and gaming, increased by more than 40%.

Most content and app sharing occurs via smartphones. It is estimated that South Africa has more than [53 million](#)

[smartphones](#). The challenge however, is that the majority of these smartphones are entry level devices with limited storing capacity. In these instances, content sharing between friends and family becomes ever more prevalent. The big appeal of ShareIt for users is that they don't incur any data costs when utilising the platform.

E-commerce brands in the region are using ShareIt's advertising solutions which allows them to create interactions with users, product views, cart views and check-outs on purchases made.

"One of the fastest growing ad-supported digital media channels is retail media. Retail-owned digital platforms that sell ad space to marketers. A mix of first party data from purchases enhance a marketers targeting capabilities on programmatic platforms. South Africa is starting to see the rise of retail media opportunities and the power of their targeting capabilities. First party data is key to this success but the piece of the puzzle that is missing is the creative. Now partners like Cavai are leading the way with conversational shoppable ads that enhance the users decision making process." says James Edwards CEO of PerformDM.

Brands wishing to reach mobile users need to stay visible and top of mind by offering additional value or rewards to consumers. "Those brands that make offers which are aligned with consumer expectations will successfully capture the attention of consumers. In an increasingly distracted world, that's a significant achievement." says Hardman.

ShareIt has helped a number of brands in a diverse range of sectors including banking, finance, retail, e-commerce and delivery services to better reach their customers.

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