

5G soon to become standard of choice in construction industry

As digital technology becomes increasingly integral to the construction process, so too does high-speed, reliable internet connectivity, says Databuild CEO Morag Evans.



Morag Evans, CEO, Databuild

“In fact, in today’s digital landscape, it’s critical. A construction site is a hive of activity at any given time, with numerous teams working together to deliver the required project timeously and within budget.

“This demands an enormous amount of collaboration between teams and if on-site connectivity is not up to scratch, they won’t be able to access crucial information when they need it and the project could soon be facing expensive reworks and delays.

“The same applies to companies making use of remote operations, equipment tracking and building information modelling (BIM). For these data-intensive technologies, sluggish and erratic internet connections simply won’t cut it.”

Consequently, says Evans, 5G, the fifth generation of cellular network technology, will soon become the wireless communication standard of choice among construction participants.

“Not only is 5G more reliable and stable, but it also promises speeds ten times faster than 4G networks. Indeed, some experts are even predicting speeds up to 100 times faster.”



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28 Jan 2022



South African 5G market

She cites a recent report by Africa Analysis which reveals that while the South African 5G market is still in an early growth phase, 5G subscribers in the country are expected to reach 11 million by 2025, with a 43% population coverage. This is significantly higher than 90,000 subscribers and 4.4% population coverage at the end of 2020.

This holds numerous advantages for the internet-connected construction site, especially in the areas of collaboration, productivity and safety.

“Data-intensive BIM files, for example, can be processed in the cloud rather than a mobile device and their content downloaded quickly and easily.

“Additionally, biometric devices worn by workers to monitor their health and safety are becoming increasingly popular on construction sites. In the event of an emergency, however, every second counts, so network speed and reliability are vital.”



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15 Oct 2021



Opportunities for cybercriminals

But with all the benefits that 5G brings, the technology is not without its challenges, Evans points out. Not only does it require a significant investment to implement acceptable 5G coverage on a construction site, but there is also the ever-present aspect of security to consider.

“While 5G allows for more connected devices on site and for information to be accessed from any location, it also means more hacking opportunities for cybercriminals. Consequently, strict security protocols must be implemented and adhered to so as to protect and safeguard sensitive data and prevent a security breach.”

“These concerns aside, there’s no escaping the fact that super-fast internet is becoming indispensable to the construction industry, and role-players need to start thinking now about laying the groundwork for 5G-enabled construction sites so that they can harness the innovative opportunities it offers and position their businesses for growth,” Evans concludes.