

The Platform Economy

By [Josephine Buys](#)

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The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is ushering in technologies that can enable us, the South African digital industry, to change the course of history.



Josephine Buys, IAB South Africa CEO.

The world over, fake news and brand safety is under the spotlight and it's no different here in South Africa. The IAB has kickstarted a series of round tables for our members to discuss the challenges and agree on opportunities to address this rising problem with several collaborative initiatives in the pipeline.

These include verification seals for:

- Consumers to be assured that their news source has been verified as credible.
- Brands to rest assured that their online marketing messages are being delivered in those brand safe environments.

I believe both consumers and advertisers will push the industry to own our truth.

Private Market Places

As premium display advertising continues to decrease we will continue to see a rise in Private Market Places (PMPs), where private, invitation-only digital advertising deals are bought and sold programmatically over a curated list of premium websites. Programmatic campaigns will run transparently, efficiently and cost effectively across brand safe environments.

Mixed Reality

Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality evolving into Mixed Reality. Mixed Reality will combine the best aspects of both VR and AR to let users augment the real world with virtual objects that look as if they are really placed within it. Expect to see an acceleration in examples of this digital marketing.

Artificial Intelligence explosion

The explosion of Artificial Intelligence and data driven solutions will see more marketers swiftly adopting data informed strategies and continued expansion to include data driven innovation. As marketers use tools to master complex algorithms to learn more about consumer habits, they will increasingly be able deliver the right message at the right time and more importantly on our mobile first continent, on the right device.

The Platform Economy

Continued growth, and increased awareness and education around the Platform Economy (online structures that enable a wide range of human activities). There is so much opportunity to innovate and scale by leveraging digital technologies which can give us the necessary growth opportunity for our economy to create employment.

As Mary Meeker's Internet Trends report declares that Healthcare is at a digital inflection point, there will be continued rapid growth in sources of health data as consumers increasingly move towards enhancing healthy lifestyles with apps that track health and benchmark performance. Podcasts will see growth as a 'word of mouth' media channel. On-demand audio, intentionally downloaded by a highly engaged listener, leads to a stronger emotional connection and greater trust. This is every brand's holy grail in 2018 and beyond.

Gamification will take over

At this year's IAB Digital Summit in March 2017, trend specialist John Sanei predicted that gamification would take over our lives as quantum computing ("billions of times faster the super computers currently available") looms. This form of computing will fit into a pair of glasses allowing us to augment and create a brand new reality in front of our eyes. Every aspect of our lives will be gamified, rewarded and recognised, which creates an opportunity for marketers to use gamification to turn customers into super fans.

Rise of short form video

Despite the high cost of data (in South Africa) still being a hot topic, I believe we will see a rise of short form video as smart phone access proliferates and companies like biNu negotiate arrangements with the mobile network operators so that advertisers can foot the bill for data used. Hopefully this will also improve access to online education and training.

Mobilising social change

Digital innovation will also play an important role in mobilising social change. The alarmingly high youth unemployment rate in South Africa can be reduced by creating an enabling environment for our youth to not only to survive but to thrive and experiment in the digital space.

Free internet for all

That can happen if we declare internet access a basic human right – to give all South Africans basic minimum levels of access to free public Wi-Fi and through zero rated content. In 2017, IAB proudly supported the Association for Progressive Communications, with the assistance of Applied Law and Technology and the South African National Editor's Forum on the launch of the issue paper addressing, *Perspectives on universal access to online information in South Africa: Free public Wi-Fi and Zero-rated content*.

The purpose of this issue paper is to examine the background and legal frameworks to support the right to universal access to online information, with a specific focus on the South African context. As IAB collaborates with the SA Human Rights Council to make this a reality, our goal is to secure free internet for all, but that might come just a little later than 2018!

ABOUT JOSEPHINE BUYS

Josephine Buys is CEO of The Publisher Research Council (PRC).
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