

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Always take the number with you

Portability now a reality in SA

ON MONDAY 26 April local or geographic number portability came into play, meaning South Africans can now leave Telkom and move to other telecommunications providers without having to change their phone number. Smaller industry players have hailed the move, while analysts don't foresee it bolstering competition much.

As with mobile number portability – which allows subscribers to switch cellular networks and keep their numbers – geographic number portability is something the smaller telecoms companies are excited about. For example, Neotel is now able to port customers over from Telkom and allow them to keep their same number.

Vox Telecoms says it expects the move to bolster competition. "We see the introduction [of local number portability] as quite a big step forward in SA's telecoms environment," says CEO Tony van Marken.

However, World Wide Worx Strategy MD Steven Ambrose says the impact of local number portability may not be great.

"The big issue in SA is that there's no comparable service to Telkom. Only Telkom can bring a cable into your premises. So for VoIP services you need fibre or Telkom.



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