

Consumers benefit from Waspa's self-regulating status

South Africa's Wireless Application Service Providers' Association (Waspa) was founded in 2004 as a self-regulating industry body and has worked hard to protect this hard-won status ever since.



Ilonka Badenhorst, general manager of Waspa

“The best way to keep the local mobile content and applications industry self-regulating is to keep doing a good job balancing the interests of our members with the interests of the country’s over 35 million active mobile users,” says Ilonka Badenhorst, general manager of Waspa.

Waspa’s self-regulating status offers the South African mobile consumer real protection and tangible benefits that any statutory body would be hard-pressed to provide, especially in the current climate of failing state-owned enterprises and similar.

From the efficient monitoring, implementation and enforcement of effective subscription fraud protection measures such as the Double Opt-In system and the following of fraud prevention best practice guidelines, to the Waspa Code of Conduct; South Africa’s mobile content and applications industry regulator is a significant country asset.

Keeping it so requires constant stakeholder vigilance so Waspa can continue to deliver the following benefits to South African consumers:

- Consumers don't struggle to receive feedback from Waspa.

Keeping its self-regulating status intact means Waspa pulls out all the stops to be transparent.

For example, Waspa manages a consumer complaints process to ensure that all users of WASP services have a single point where they can raise concerns and resolve complaints. In addition, Waspa ensures feedback is provided to the consumer during the resolution process.

- Waspa uses its global mobile industry connections to keep on top of the latest developments that may impact South African mobile consumers. Waspa can then develop appropriate responses that protect local consumers of content and applications.

For example, knowing that overseas-based mobile fraudsters were making their presence felt worldwide, Waspa proactively reached out to leaders in the field and developed a relationship with French anti-fraud firm Evina following an objective tender process.

- Waspa's status as a self-regulating industry association that sits apart from the public sector helps create consumer confidence at a time when the public's trust in state institutions is not quite where it should be.
- Self-regulating usually means self-funding. Waspa's self-regulating status means it is able to raise operating capital from sources that do not include the public purse.

Members, for example, pay membership fees in order to sustain Waspa as a self-regulating industry body that helps ensure the long-term sustainability of the industry. A limited supply of capital also means that Waspa operates as a lean organisation where the delivery and receipt of good value is prioritised.

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