

The YouTube opportunity in Africa

 By [Ilse van den Berg](#)

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Brett St Clair, head of new products sub-Saharan Africa for Google, talked at [AfricaCom](#)'s day two AfricaCast session about understanding the role YouTube can play in Africa, and specifically about the opportunities YouTube and Gen C presents to operators.



Who is Gen C?

St Clair gave a clear breakdown of who Gen C (generation C) is. As opposed to the Baby Boomers, Generation X, Y and Z, and whichever other 'generations' there might be in between, Gen C is best described as the YouTube generation.

You don't have to be of a specific age to classify as Gen C, as it is defined as a group of people (mainly Millennials) who are all about content creation and curation, connection, and community.

What are they watching?

This content-hungry generation, says St Clair, is mainly watching three types of content:

1. Local content for a local audience
2. Local content for a diaspora audience
3. International content for local people desperate for content to consume or share

Gen C defines the era of social networking. They are constantly connected (with 91% of Gen C sleeping next to a smartphone*) and ready to share relevant, original content from their social profiles.

Opportunities

Mobile operators in Africa are missing the video opportunity - they have the audience, but lack the standard of connectivity to support the demand.

The YouTube generation doesn't particularly care about the device they use to consume or share video - as long as they can watch what they want when they want. For this to be possible, operators need to be focusing on how to deliver better connectivity to these markets and audiences and access speeds need to be opened up.

St Clair says that online video distribution in Africa is not just about mobile devices but about a multi-device strategy.

Consumer demanded content

Reportedly 90% of televisions today are internet-connected TVs built for consumer demanded content and thus more and more people are starting to use their TVs to consume video content.

St Claire used the example of Chromecast from Google, a little device for \$35 that you plug into your TV which allows you to enjoy online music and video on your TV, using your mobile device as your remote.

Uploading is another opportunity for operators in Africa. There is nothing more frustrating - especially for a Gen C - when you want to upload something to share with your friends, family or followers, than a slow network.

What Google is doing with regards to this is making use of global caching. This platform aims to deliver Google content and services as close to users as possible in order to provide the best possible performance and lowest cost for network operators to serve traffic demanded by their subscribers.

Mobile operators in Africa should make use of these opportunities - the demand for rich content is there, says St Claire, but how do we unlock it?

**Engaging Generation C, November 2012*

For more:

- Google: [Meet Gen C: The YouTube Generation](#)

ABOUT ILSE VAN DEN BERG

Ilse is a freelance journalist and editor with a passion for people & their stories (check out Passing Stories). She is also the editor of Go & Travel, a platform connecting all the stakeholders in the travel & tourism industry. You can check out her work here and here. Contact Ilse through her website here.

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