

Fibre vs fixed LTE - why the latter might be better for you

By [Theolin Moodley](#)

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Fibre has taken preference over traditional fixed connectivity mediums in many South African homes due to reliable download and upload speeds with uncapped offerings. However, LTE and LTE-advanced technologies are becoming more widely available and can potentially cater for virtually any budget, this has started to change.



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According to the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa's (ICASA) [ICT Sector Report](#), almost nine out of every 10 households in South Africa are now relying on cellular phones as their means of communication. Following the hard lockdown of last year and the resultant financial pressures it placed on people, fixed LTE has become an alternative to fibre, especially in the R100 to R500 per month price bracket. The variety of packages on offer mean households have a broad selection of connectivity options open to them.

And while fibre is still being rolled out in many communities, fixed LTE coverage throughout South Africa is rapidly growing. Unlike fibre which requires trenches to be dug and CPE units to be installed at homes, a person can get a SIM and fixed LTE router within a week of placing an order. Its plug-and-play functionality ensures families can get up and running quickly.



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Many South Africans have been impacted negatively due to the Covid-19 pandemic from an income perspective and therefore, tightening their budget to spend on "essential items" has become a reality. Basic connectivity is now seen as an essential item as part of our daily lives and therefore giving consumers choice based on their affordability coupled with flexible monthly options will be a key factor in the consumer buying process. We are expecting the next wave of infections to hit in the months to come which makes access to reliable connectivity crucial to remain productive especially while working from home.

Of course, LTE is not limited to an either-or approach. Consumers can still use both. Fixed LTE can be a viable backup option should the fibre line go down. This ensures households can remain connected even in the event of load shedding if they have a mini-UPS to power their router.

Providing value-adds

While many service providers are using price as a differentiator on their LTE offerings, this should not be the only focus. Attention must also turn to create a superior customer experience by providing complementary services to create a one-stop-shop. This simplifies the process for the consumer and starts building brand loyalty.

For instance, a service provider that delivers a one-stop-shop will be more compelling than one that only offers connectivity. This can include internet security, cloud-based applications, UPS devices, laptops, and other hardware rentals to turn your home into the ultimate workplace.

The normalisation of a distributed work environment means reliable and fast internet access must be in place at home. For those South Africans looking to remain connected despite the economic uncertainty of recent months, fixed LTE proves a viable alternative to fibre from both an affordability and availability perspective.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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