

Kicking off a mobile World Cup

by **Tim Green** | [Email a friend](#) | [Print](#)

[Add a comment](#)

How MTN and IMI mobile are putting the footy on to the phones of Africans.



2

tweets

retweet

In case you didn't know, there's a World Cup coming up. And it's the first one ever in Africa. The organisers are keen for African fans to enjoy and engage with the tournament - and the same goes for the mobile operators across the continent.

As most readers will know, mobile represents the primary entertainment and comms medium for most Africans, and this is why the region's largest operator, MTN - with exclusive rights to the FIFA World Cup - was determined to create a variety of mobile news and entertainment services around the festival of footy.

These services include:

- video clips of every top World Cup goal
- player photos
- team trivia and quizzes
- latest team news
- FIFA ring tones
- FIFA wallpaper

Of course it was far more tricky than it sounds. MTN is active across 21 countries, each with differing infrastructure and multiple languages.

So it brought in the VAS specialist IMI mobile to help with the implementation and to portray a consistent brand across all of these countries.

Specifically, the technical challenges were:

- Replace a 'spaghetti bowl' of legacy systems
- Manage multiple content providers in different locations within one branded system
- Roll out to 21 countries in Africa and the Middle East, with local customization of content, in 6 languages
- Fixed deadline of the FIFA World Cup with 64 matches to cover
- Ability to be accessed on redundant handsets
- Enable services through multiple channels including ring back tones, voice portals, SMS/MMS services, WAP portals etc
- Deliver services to 123.5 million subscribers

IMI mobile's solution was to replace the old spaghetti bowl with a single hub-and-spoke system.

This used the firm's DaVinci platform to connect several servers in Africa and the Middle East into the main server in London, making it easy for MTN to make sure content appears in the right place at the right time.

This set-up also means services can be launched quickly (in hours rather than days) in response to specific opportunities and events, and it's easy for them to market their services to customers.

For MTN, the system should help acquire new customers, reduce churn, save time and money, and focus on marketing (instead of working on complex content management efforts).