SELF
PHONE

a **massive** revolution
in the **smallest** sense

e KERK
Jesus - sigbaar, voelbaar, verstaanbaar

INTRODUCTION

Cell phone and internet technology has taken the world by storm. Almost no area of life has been left untouched by technology - art, culture, business and everything in between have been affected by cell phones and their applications.

Because we live in an integrated community, where everything is connected to each other, it is important that we reflect on the effect of these massive technological and cultural shifts on our community, our country and the church.

History has time and again proven that when a technological shift takes place, it not only affects the storing and availability of information, but that big changes take place in how power and authority is distributed. Think of the influence of Gutenberg's press on the Roman Catholic Church's sole right to the Bible. Today the Bible is not only in print, but also electronically available in your pocket! In every translation possible, with explanations and Bible studies and it is all free of charge. This is only one way how the revolution of mobile technology is forming our community.

The stream of mobile technology throughout the world is full of interesting, and sometimes confusing paradoxes. For the first time in human history we are seeing a global community that is more connected than ever, yet who lives, works and worships more individualistically.

Hence the title of this report: *SELF PHONES*.

In this report we want to look at the increasing influence of mobile technology. We not only want to focus on the international trends, but also all the local ways that cell phones and tablet computers are affecting South Africans' lives.

Then we shall have a look at the practical implications for the church in general, as well as a few practical guidelines how these trends can strengthen ecclesiastic ministry, and how we think it can contribute to the continuous expansion of God's kingdom on earth.

INTERNATIONAL
TRENDS

When we look at the global situation and its future, Africa finds itself in a very interesting place compared to the Western world. With the two other important developing continents, Asia and India, Africa is spearheading the use of mobile technology.

The average percentage of data that has been added by mobile devices such as cell phones and tablet computer almost consists of 10% of all worldwide data use. Of all the continents Asia is first on the list of mobile data with 17.85% [a 192% increase from 2010]; second is Africa with 14.85% [a 155% increase from 2010]. With regard to mobile data use, we are ahead of the developing continents such as Northern America and Europe.[1] Consequently Africa is first in a mobile centred internet community, with on average 92 cell phones for each computer.[2]

Of course, the developed world is not lagging behind with regard to these trends. In most Western countries there are 20% more cell phones than people. This means that as much as 20% of people have more than one cell phone! In Europe and the USA almost half of all cell phone owners surf the internet via their phones, for example to look for something on the web, to read, to visit or to share, or to download an app of get access to online data. Across the world the number of cell phone contracts is already more than five times more than land line contracts.[3]

Apart from calls and SMSs, photography is the third most popular use of cell phones worldwide, with more than 50% users that use daily their phones for this purpose.

With regard to the business world, electronic transactions are doubling each year. Put another way, it grows by 100% a year. This can be compared to Latin-America's 50%, and India and China's 30%.[4]

In all the countries where a high percentage of mobile internet traffic is recorded, the most popular electronic device is Nokia's Symbian operating system. Both the positive and negative reactions to Apple Computers's latest version, the iPhone 5, indicate consumers' need to more innovation, as well as producers' inability to meet these unreasonable, fast growing needs.

The internet giant Facebook also noticed this trend. This social network company recently realised that users spend on average 441 minutes per month on the mobile versions of the site, compared to 391 minutes per use per month on the large website.[5]

[1] http://royal.pingdom.com/2010/11/23/mobile-web-usage-highest-in-asia-and-africa/
[2] http://businesstech.co.za/news/it-services/14736/africa-the-mobile-centric-society/
[3] http://mobithinking.com/mobile-marketing-tools/latest-mobile-stats/
[4] According to Park, CEO of Samsung SA: http://vodacom.digitalmag.co.za/issue/9/#3/1
[5] http://techcrunch.com/2012/05/11/time-spent-on-facebook-mobile/

The projections of Microsoft predict that the internet usage of cell phones and tablet computers will exceed the usage of ordinary computer by 2014.[6] Adobe Digital Index also indicated that tablet internet use will exceed that of cell phones by 2013.[7] The implication is that in about two years from now, cell phones and tablet computers will be the main way how people will visit the internet. On international level it will also be people's first choice to chat, do shopping, find information and keep up to date with events.

[6] http://liesdamnedliesstatistics.com/2012/05/stats-that-show-why-you-need-a-mobile-first-approach-now.html
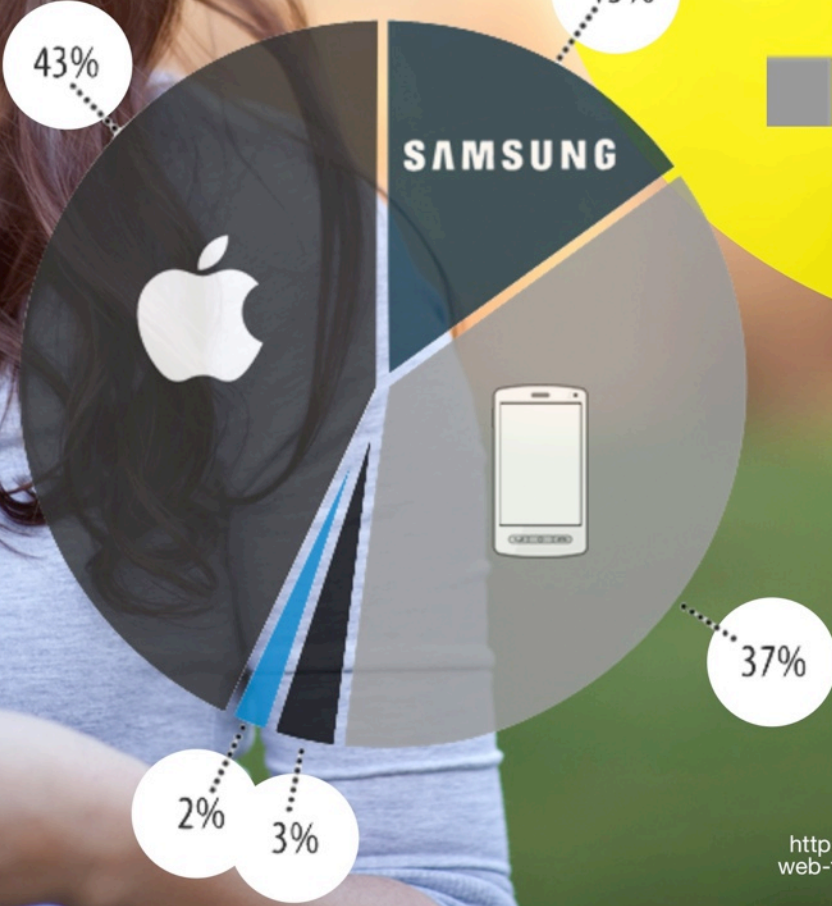[7] http://memeburn.com/2012/05/web-traffic-from-tablets-to-beat-smartphones-by-2013-report/

Apple iPhone 5

Samsung Galaxy S3

Other Apple iPhones

Other Samsungs

Other Smartfones

43%

15%

37%

2%

3%

SAMSUNG

LOCAL INTERNET SITUATION

Internet accessibility in South Africa is increasing in leaps and bounds. Band width and connectivity is more readily available, and cheaper than ever. To understand the local mobile internet explosion, one should understand the context in which it is happening, which of course is giving rise to it.

The South African internet population is currently growing at an average of 25% per annum, and it is increasing annually. There were 6.8 million local internet users in 2010, 8.5 million by 2011, and we expect that we shall exceed the 10 million mark by the end of 2012. Of the total South African population about 20% is adept on the internet, of which 7.9 million users use the internet on their cell phones. 2.48 of those users have no access to a laptop or other computer. Band width abroad to South Africa was measured at 2.69 terabytes per second (Tbps) by the end of 2011. By the end of 2012 the incoming speed of data should be 11.9 Tbps, while that capacity is expected to double by the end of 2013.

Aforementioned trends make mobile internet increasingly available and usable for all South Africans. Locally people of all cultures and income groups are increasingly relying on mobile internet access for their daily lives.

We live in a country where the value of the internet and access to information and other people are noticed. However, not everyone has internet access on a computer at their homes. For this reason internet access and use is much more mobile for people in South Africa, and also the rest of Africa according to Toby Shapskack's writings [9].

The cell phone is the answer

South Africa is third on the list of countries for the number of people who use the mobile web and who do not have access to the internet by means of an ordinary computer[10]. Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria are the other countries in Africa in the top ten. It means that for most people in South Africa their first experience with the internet is on a two-inch cell phone screen, all in text, and possibly in black and white.

We see that of all online cell phone destinations, Facebook was the most popular by far. Of all local mobile web data in 2011, Facebook cornered 38% of the market, Whatsapp 26%, Mixit 23% and Blackberry Messenger 17%. Twitter was fifth with a meagre 12%.

With regard to economic matters, we see that internet transactions currently contribute 2% to the total gross domestic product [GDP] of our country.[11] It is currently rising by 0.2% per annum, and will contribute 2.5% by the year 2016. Total internet related expenses [that includes buying and selling, infrastructure and access] amounted to R59 billion during the past financial year!

Research has indicated that 150,000 South African small to medium businesses are entirely dependent on the internet for their

[8] Data from World Wide Worx I http://www.worldwideworx.com/
[9] http://www.cnn.com/2012/10/04/tech/mobile/africa-mobile-opinion/index.html?c=&page=3
[10] http://mobithinking.com/mobile-marketing-tools/latest-mobile-stats/b#mobile-only
[11] http://www.internetmatters.co.za/

financial wellbeing. Most of these businesses integrate cell phone and internet data in their information systems. These businesses represent 156 million job opportunities in total.

Of all cell phone and mobile data users, almost half uses the Vodacom network, while 35% use MTN, and 14% uses CellC.[12] It is interesting to see that of all Vodacom clients, only 4% makes use of cell phone contracts, while an astonishing 96% clients use pay-as-you-go packages.[13]

[12] http://mybroadband.co.za/news/cellular/53101-surprising-mxit-user-statistics.html
[13] http://vodacom.digitalmag.co.za/issue/9/#3/2

The question now arises, how do we structure our information, communities and communication, to not only accommodate mobile users, but rather prioritise them?

How do we create a mobile-first culture in our strategic communication plans?

215 million
Mobile users in northern Africa

3G 12% **2G** 88%

2012 mobile users in Africa +20%

2012 mobile users in Southern Africa +21%

77 million
Mobile users in southern Africa

131% South Africa's cellphone penetration (multiple sms owners plus inactive users)

By the end of 2012 there will be more than 750 000 000 cellular connections in Africa. That's some continental shift!

+6 million Access internet on computers, laptops and tablets

90% Also use their phones

SA's mobile online community is booming says internet guru Arthur Goldstuck, principal researcher at World Wide Worx

South Africa

5.5 million use 3G

7.9 million
Access internet on their phones

2.5 million Use their phones only to access the internet

SA smartphones users

8.5 million December 2011 → **11 million** December 2012

A NEW REALITY
FOR NEW PEOPLE

Nowhere in the world have we seen such a stream of change like we are currently experiencing in the technological sphere. Things are continuously changing and at such a speed that even those who are "change-fit" are struggling to keep up. Of course such a powerful force cannot affect a culture or local community without there being certain consequences.

For us as fulltime students of God's actions in the world, it is important to see and understand these consequences. We have to realise what the implications will be on the church, and we have to emphasise suitable applications that faith communities can utilise in the expansion of the kingdom of God.

A world that is connected by mobile technology is….

1. A world that is constantly changing and constantly able to be in a state of revolution.
2. Communities and individuals that are constantly connected, with increased cooperation and composition across various platforms.
3. An expectation that everything has to happen immediately and quickly, such as on our phones, as well as in our lives.
4. A reality where mobile technology obliges us in a more integrated form of existence where everything is connected and the boundaries of time and place are becoming increasingly feint.

5. Relationships are the most important component of any human interaction, business or recreation.
6. All information is immediately available and attainable, and can be stored of forwarded in an instant.
7. A world that is continuously interrupted, by countless mini-interruptions that influence our focus and continuous tasks.[14]

Research indicates that prolonged exposure to mainstream mobile technology can even transform our brains on a biological level, up to a point where we start forming new synapses that process information in radically new ways, and consequently result in new ways of thinking![15] In short, new heads that think, reflect and process information in new ways, is one of the consequences of our new era.

We have to remember that emerging mobile technology was invented by people. To the extent that people manufacture and place it on the market, it becomes a contemporary phenomenon and this again creates "new" people. It also means that as quickly as technology changes, just as quickly people change that are directly and repeatedly exposed to it with regard to their thought processes, values and association with reality. Consequently we have to ask: what is the implications and possible applications for the church of Christ, in view of fast expanding technologies and quickly-changing people?

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[14] http://mashable.com/2012/09/24/social-media-work-distractions/
[15] http://www.amazon.com/The-Shallows-Internet-Doing-Brains/dp/0393339750/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1348810734&sr=8-1&keywords=the+shallows
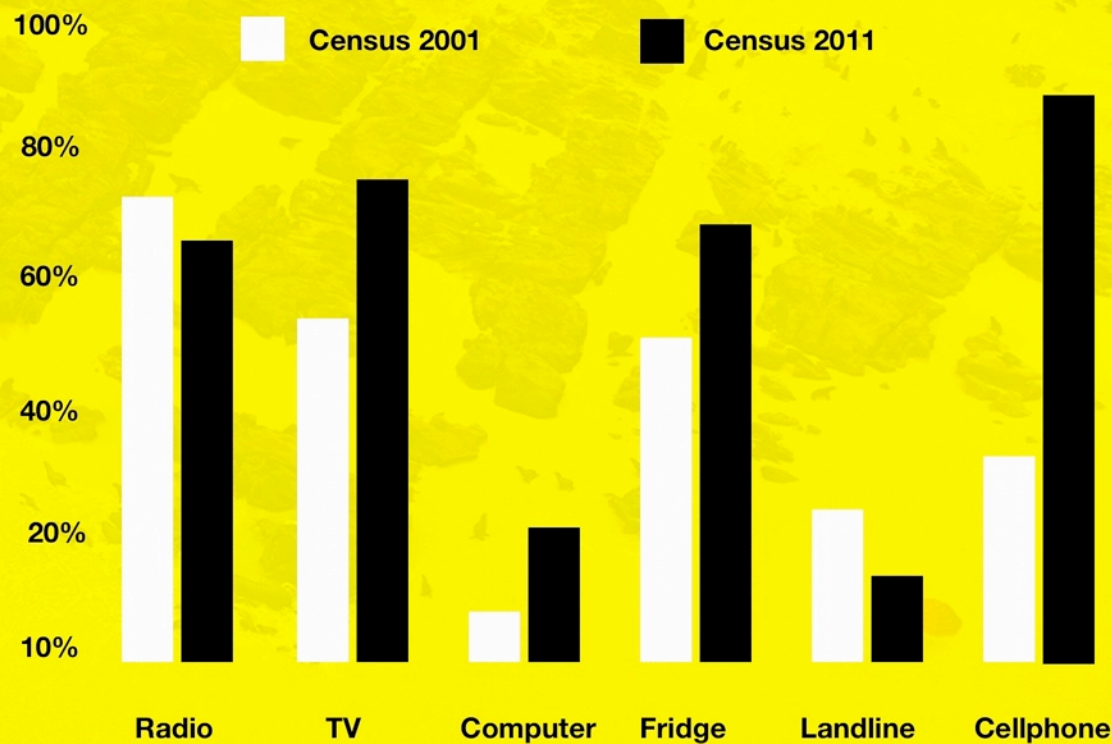
IMPLICATIONS
FOR THE CHURCH

How does the trend of mobile technology apply to the kingdom of God, and how can we prepare and equip the church to navigate this change in such a way that our love for God and care for people will still be a priority and even be increased?

If we carefully look at the consequences of the mobile technological phenomenon and make an effort to understand it, it isn't difficult to identify its implications for the church, and suggest specific applications. Given the consequences mentioned above, here are a few corresponding implications and applications that could be useful.

NEW REALITY	APPLICATION
Change is the order of the day in all areas of human existence.	Cultivate faith communities that are not afraid of sudden change. Create a culture where change is accepted as a given, and risk forms part of our journey of faith with Christ.
Interconnected communities, with cooperation on various electronic platforms.	Avoid an isolated existence as ecclesiastic island or isolated religious activities. Make an effort to work with neighbouring congregations and communities. Reach out across the borders of culture, language, race and geography. Constantly create kingdom driven actions.
Immediacy and speed determines actions and interactions.	Cut down all administrative red tape and any other burocratic waste to the bare minimum. Create new ways so that two-way communication and consequent action could take place as quickly as possible. Deploy people as quickly and efficiently as possible in the kingdom of God.
Communities understand integration and cooperation and have a highly developed global world view.	Realise that the local faith community is internationally connected 24/7. Take people's global awareness into consideration when themes, ministries and messages are planned and executed.
Relationship driven environments are second nature to people.	Transform everyone in the church into brokers or fulltime facilitators of quality relationships in Jesus's name. Clinical information, knowledge or stereotype studies should not be the "main business" of the church, at the expense of God-inspired relational networks. Believers should once again be people of the Way, not people of the Building or the Dogmatics.
Information is more available and cheaper [even free] than ever before.	Transform the church into a platform for quick and effective discovering and free distribution of life-changing information. Religion is not classified as information that should only be in the ecclesiastic field; it should be widely distributed in the kingdom of God through all available media.
People are trained in the art of interruption management.	Build variety and speed into any ecclesiastic ministry or activities. Beware of lifelong usage of known ceremonies. Constantly change gears without detracting from the focus on Christ to allow God's kingdom to be fresh, new and contemporary every time.

Pecentage of **households** with **selected goods** in working condition

□ Census 2001	■ Census 2011

100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
10%

Radio · TV · Computer · Fridge · Landline · Cellphone

Source: **StatsSA** Census 2011

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For more information on Ekerk Research, please visit www.ekerk.org. This trend report is also available as a seminar - please contact pierre@ekerk.org.

Thank you for reading!

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