

# GET UP TO SPEED WITH



# Mail & Guardian online

Make this your homepage

RSS for your website, blog or reader



08 February 2007 09:17

Africa's first online newspaper. First with the news.

SEARCH:  M&G Online

Web

**BRIBYS** Business

Go

enhanced by



## BREAKING NEWS

- FRONT PAGE
- NATIONAL
- AFRICA
- INTERNATIONAL
- BUSINESS
  - > Companies
  - > Markets
  - > World
  - > Africa
  - > Labour
  - > Economy
  - > Technology
  - > General business
  - > Mining
  - > Black empowerment
  - > Banking
  - > Property
  - > Telecommunications

- SPORT
- AND IN OTHER NEWS
- ...
- SPECIAL REPORTS
- ZUMA SPECIAL REPORT
- WEEK IN PICTURES
- NEWS INSIGHT**

- NATIONAL
- AFRICA
- INTERNATIONAL
- COMMENT & ANALYSIS
- BUSINESS
- COLUMNISTS
- EDITORIALS
- MONITOR
- KRISJAN LEMMER
- BODY LANGUAGE
- OBITUARIES

- LEISURE**
- ARTS
- M&G MONEY
- WHEELS & DEALS
- TECH
- ESCAPE

## BUSINESS

### Bad telecoms service? Tell the world

Riaan Wolmarans | Johannesburg, South Africa

30 August 2006 05:18

"Are you tired of overpriced telephone and internet charges, bad service when you order or move a telephone line or months of waiting for an ADSL connection? Then tell us and tell the world."

These are the words of the newly formed Telecoms Action Group, which is calling on South African businesses and private individuals to donate money to take out a full-page advertisement in a national newspaper protesting against the lack of alternatives in the country's telecommunications sector.

"We want to send a clear message to the South African government that Telkom's high prices and poor service levels, together with a general lack of momentum in opening up the telecoms sector to competition, are hurting South African businesses and households," says Richard Frank, an IT journalist who leads the campaign.

"A full-page advert, paid for by hundreds of South African businesses and individuals, should do this."

The action group says a full-page advert in a national newspaper such as the *Mail & Guardian* will require approximately R50 000. By 3pm on Wednesday, R2 700 had already been pledged on the group's [website](#) -- 5,4% of the total.

The campaign draws inspiration from the Spread Firefox Campaign, which took out a double-page spread in *The New York Times* on December 16 last year to celebrate the launch of the open-source Mozilla Firefox browser. The Firefox advert listed thousands of donors' names, who each contributed \$30 or more to ensure the advert was published.

The South African campaign will also publish the names of contributors, which Frank says will create a larger impact. "It's one thing for a big organisation or association to take out an advert; it's another for literally



**SIGN ME IN**

Get news by e-mail

HTML  Text

enter e-mail

[ [More about this](#) ]

**Article tools**

- [E-mail this story](#)
- [Print this story](#)
- [Bookmark page](#)
- [Most read stories](#)
- [RSS feed](#)
- [JavaScript feed](#)

**Online services**

- FIND A JOB
- PROPERTY
- MAP SEARCH
- INSURANCE QUOTE
- FIND A DATE
- ONLINE AUCTIONS
- HOLIDAY FINDER
- EASY INFO
- ONLINE SHOPPING
- WEB HOSTING
- FREE E-MAIL
- NEWS BY E-MAIL
- INSURANCE
- SUBSCRIBE TO M&G
- FREE NEWS FEED
- PLACE AN ADVERT

**Mobile services**

- M&G MOBILE

**REGULARS**

- ZAPIRO ➤
- MADAM & EVE ➤
- NEWSLETTERS ➤
- BLOGMARK ➤
- FORUMS ➤
- NOTES & QUERIES ➤
- LETTERS ➤
- CORRECTIONS ➤
- HIV/AIDS BAROMETER ➤
- PARTNER SITES**
- THE TEACHER ➤
- THE MEDIA ONLINE ➤

**Find your match now!**

I am a:

Looking for:

Age Range:  to

**Career search**

Search South Africa's #1 job listings and career advice site.

**Find me a job!****Get the news on your phone**

Unlimited M&G Online news on your cellphone -- for free!



[Read more ...](#)

**FIND**

- [A job](#)
- [A date](#)
- [A destination](#)
- [An insurance quote](#)
- [Accommodation](#)
- [Business search](#)

**MOBILE SERVICES**

- [M&G Online on your phone](#)

**QUICK LINKS**

- [Get your free blog](#)
- [Notes & Queries](#)

**SERVICES**

- [Subscribe to M&G](#)
- [Subscription queries](#)
- [Free news for your site](#)
- [Place an advert](#)

hundreds of people at a grassroots level to put their names to an advert saying, 'Enough is enough,'" he says.

Frank has received dozens of e-mails from irate Telkom users who have pledged their support. "The spectrum has been huge. We've had messages of support from CEOs, managers, small-business owners, academics, lawyers, IT specialists and others from all walks of life. It's clear that this situation affects nearly every consumer in South Africa."

The campaign is being run by *Tectonic*, a leading technology news website in South Africa. For months, *Tectonic* editor Alastair Otter has updated the website via cellphone because Telkom has still not completed the installation of an ADSL line at his new office.

"The campaign comes out of the utter frustration and disillusionment that we feel over the telecoms sector in South Africa," says Otter.

"We're being let down by policymakers in this country who have failed to grasp how important a competitive environment is in the global economy."

The Telecoms Action Group's advert is planned to be run on October 20 2006. "We've set up a pledge database on *Tectonic* where consumers can pledge their support and the amount they are prepared to contribute," says Otter. "Once we've received enough pledges to take out the advert, we'll open a bank account into which donations can be placed."

Although the advert is only scheduled to run once, Frank says the gesture could mobilise South African consumers to sustained action on the issue. "The advert will contain a bold statement that expresses how government, Icasa [the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa] and Telkom are killing our businesses, affecting our lives and hurting South Africa," he says. "It will also inform readers on how they can get actively involved in the fight for telecoms reform."

There has already been talk of doing more than one advert, Frank says. "However, I am not sure in what way we might move forward. It may not be print-based; we could use other media, or do something completely different."

On the site, the Telecoms Action Group also says the country's eagerly awaited second network operator (SNO) won't make any significant impact in the short term. The SNO "is not a magic pill for the South African ICT industry", it says. "Our three major cellphone companies and four major banks have proven that anti-competitive practice is the norm in South Africa, even in the absence of a monopoly."

Lulu Letlape, Telkom group executive for corporate communication, told the *Mail & Guardian Online* on Wednesday that Telkom acknowledges the various challenges that still need to be overcome regarding service levels.

"In order to ensure that the customer remains central to all Telkom's business decisions and service offerings, various proactive strategies have already been initiated," she said.

"We believe it is in the best interest of the company and our customers to provide a service that meets customer expectations. For instance, in order to make Telkom a truly customer-centric organisation, the company has established a customer-centricity office. Telkom is confident that its customer base across all segments would soon begin to experience the benefits of the company's initiatives."

- [Unit trusts A-Z](#)
- [Fund performances](#)
- [Fund managers](#)
- [Equinox portfolios](#)
- [Why Equinox?](#)



Thu Feb 8 2007 08:00:33

**SA Exchange Rates**

R/\$ 7.1885 ▲

R/£ 14.1795 ▲

R/€ 9.3616 ▲

**GROW? Partnering with you to grow your business.**  
[Click here.](#)

**IN THIS SECTION**

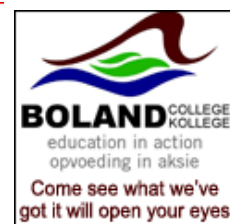
Champagne and silence as the A380 finally takes off

Union slams 'greedy' Reunert empowerment deal

R3bn smelter complex boosts Coega fortunes


Mvela Resources expects first-half loss

Parliament asked to bolster mining exploration




Get the latest *Mail & Guardian Online* news on your cellphone, free.  
SMS **mg** to **32368** or find out more [here](#).

 Blogs linking to: [M&G Online](#) | [This article](#) | [What's this about?](#)

 Save this page: [on del.icio.us](#) | [Digg it](#)

→ **[Listen to the new M&G Online podcast](#)**

→ [Add M&G Online news to your website or blog](#) 

→ [Get M&G Online news in your RSS reader](#) 

→ [For more news, go to the M&G Online home page](#)

### ADVERTISING LINKS

→ [FREE R75 kalahari.net voucher](#) for your favourite book, music album, DVD or game from OUTsurance... find out how you can qualify!

→ [Dating Buzz](#) Find your match now!

→ [Best web hosting](#) Find out how Afrihost does web hosting differently and how your website will win!

→ [Private Property listings](#) List your property with us or search for a property. No estate agent's commission

→ [Your gadgets, cheaper, on Bid or Buy](#) Do your shopping via online auction and get your goods for great prices

→ [Newsflash](#) Get news on your desktop!

[Advertise your business here](#)

### New BEE codes

Be informed of new codes by Emex Consultant explains implications [Emex.co.za](#)

[Ads by Google](#)

[Advertise on this site](#)

→ Contact Author: [E-mail the author of this article](#)

→ Talkback: [Have your say about this article](#)

→ Blog: [Blog this story in M&G Online's blogspot](#)

→ News on your desktop: [Download & install M&G Online NewsFlash](#)

→ Daily cellphone alerts: [Get news headlines by SMS](#)

→ Daily Newsletter: [Get the news by email](#)


[BUSINESS](#) | [HOMEPAGE](#)

---

[CONTACT US](#) | [ABOUT US](#) | [M&G HISTORY](#) | [SUBSCRIPTIONS](#) | [M&G CSI](#) | [FREE NEWS FEED](#) | [ADVERTISING](#)

All material copyright Mail&Guardian.  
Material may not be published or reproduced in any form without prior written permission.  
Read the Mail&Guardian's [privacy policy](#)



 [JavaScript feed](#)

