



*Networks of Communication
in South Africa*

Within a short period of time, South Africa has made remarkable progress in the adoption of mobile and Internet technologies. In this landmark study, R. Sooryamoorthy examines the development of communication patterns, social contacts and networks in South Africa. Based on pioneering quantitative and qualitative data, he analyses trends in changing media use in Africa, showing the development of the use of new media for communication by South Africans of all ages, races and genders in relation to the development of media infrastructure, its cost and government policy. It shows how people use the media for communication purposes that affirm or break their social contacts and networks, and how they apply media to establish, re-establish or maintain social relationships. This book will be of interest to those researching the growth of communication technology in Africa, as well as those involved in the wider fields of development studies and economics.

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Networks of Communication in South Africa

New Media, New Technologies

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To my beloved wife Renjini

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Preface

The origin of something happens, sometimes, all of a sudden – either unexpectedly or unintentionally. The idea to write this book struck me while I was working on a chapter for an edited volume.

This book deals with exciting aspects of our life today – the new media and networks. It takes us through the ways new media are employed, by both the young and old, for building their networks of contacts. With the support of empirical evidence from both quantitative and qualitative data, the book explores some interesting but also important dimensions of media use in the African context. Choosing South Africa as the setting of the study is beneficial not only to an understanding of the South African side of the story but also to gain an understanding of an African perspective.

Funding from the National Research Foundation (NRF) for the collection of data used in the study is acknowledged. The support I received from my university has been great. Thanks to my respondents whose views and experiences constitute the substance of this book. The recommendations of the peer reviewers were useful and constructive and improved the manuscript. Geoff Waters was my first reader and his assistance is gratefully appreciated. The support from my family was crucial for a prolonged work such as this, for which I am indebted to my wife Renjini and my son Dakshin. Maria Marsh at Cambridge University Press took special care of this project from its beginning. James Gregory ensured that the project ran smoothly at Cambridge. Julie Hrischeva and her content management team were very meticulous about the content of the book, for which I am really grateful. Jeevitha Baskaran led her team to do an excellent job of taking care of the production process. I am thankful to all of them.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

3G	Third Generation
ADSL	Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line
AT&T	American Telephone and Telegraphy
CDMA	Code Division Multiple Access
CMC	Computer-Mediated Communication
CUASA	Communications User Association of South Africa
GNI	Gross National Income
GPRS	General Packet Radio Service
GSM	Global System for Mobile Communication
IBA	Independent Broadcasting Authority
ICASA	Independent Commissions Authority of SA
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDI	ICT Development Index
IM	Instant Messaging
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MIM	Mobile Instant Messaging Services
MMS	Multimedia Message Service
MNP	Mobile Number Portability
MTN	Mobile Telephone Networks
MPA	Mobile Phone Appropriation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PDA	Personal Digital Assistant
RICA	Regulation of Interception of Communications and Provision of Communication Related Information Act
SATRA	South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority
SIM	Subscriber Identity Module
SMS	Short Message Service
UMTS	Universal Mobile Telecommunications System
U&G	Uses and Gratification Theory
VOIP	Voice Over Internet Protocol
WAP	Wireless Access Protocol