

UCC to amend regulation of OTT social media services in Uganda

The Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) is offering to amend the regulation of OTT services such as Facebook and Twitter to boost investment in the sector. During an international preparatory meeting, the issues related to OTT was raised by the UCC since Africa is a net user of OTT services and the regulators are facing hard times to protect consumers, personal and pricing.



Image source: Gallo/Getty.

According to a statement from Irene Kaggwa, the UCC director for engineering and communication infrastructure, "It is not that we are looking at how Mobile Network Operators and infrastructure providers are supposed to benefit but since OTTs are a popular service, we are looking at how to ensure a situation that there is money to develop the necessary infrastructure that will ensure continuity of all the new services that are coming up."

UCC points out that a policy needs to be applied to understand how regulators control fair competition, which for example, Kaggwa specified consisting of calls and text messaging via OTTs that competes with the traditional voice calls and text messaging services.

Consequently, the Commission is willing to ensure that Mobile Network Operators have revenue that allows them to invest in network infrastructure.

In terms of security concerns in the era of OTTs and data protection law, the UCC were doubtful and said that, “While there is still a security linkage with telecoms in different countries, when it comes to OTTs, how do we as a global community address the security issues that may arise?”

For example, the lack of traceability of origin of calls via emerging social networks inhibits credible identification which bears additional repercussions. According to UCC, OTTs have disrupted the economics among Mobile Network Operators, especially voice calls.

Kaggwa, concluded by saying, “Operators compensate each other for termination of traffic which is based on the origin of the call. When the traffic hasn’t been properly identified, the compensation process is difficult.”

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