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TECHNOLOGY, MEDIA,
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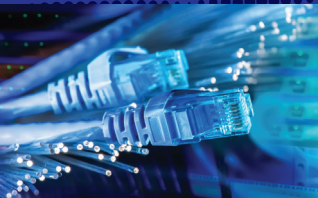


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Cassava Technologies Announces Plan to Build AI Factory

Cassava Technologies has announced plans to build Africa's first AI factory, a cutting-edge data centre equipped with NVIDIA AI computing technology. This facility will provide access to advanced AI computing power, enabling the development of smarter AI products and solutions while keeping data within the continent. The AI factory, powered by NVIDIA's supercomputers, will support AI model training, fine-tuning, and advanced inference, and will be operational by June 2025 in South Africa, with subsequent expansion to other African countries including Egypt, Kenya, Morocco, and Nigeria. The facility will offer AI as a Service (AIaaS) using Cassava's high-speed, energy-efficient, fibre-optic network and sustainable data centres.

The AI factory will play a vital role in Africa's AI ecosystem, empowering local businesses and researchers to scale their AI solutions and tackle regional challenges. Serive Masiyira, Founder & Chairman of Cassava, emphasized the importance of digital infrastructure in supporting Africa's AI economy and enabling local innovation, with less dependence on foreign solutions.

The collaboration with NVIDIA aims to drive AI development across sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, and finance, fostering innovation and boosting productivity across the continent.

This initiative highlights Cassava's commitment to responsible AI adoption and its broader mission to support Africa's digital independence and growth.

Comment

Cassava Technologies' plan to build Africa's first AI factory represents a significant opportunity for the continent, offering advanced AI computing infrastructure that can drive innovation and economic growth. However, to truly reap the benefits of this initiative, there must be compliance with data protection laws and there is a need for stronger AI regulations across Africa. The AI factory has the potential to improve a range of sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, and finance by empowering local businesses and researchers to create solutions tailored to African challenges.

For more information, please click [here](#).



African Startups Face Stricter Investment Scrutiny Compared to Global Counterparts

In recent times African startups have been facing tougher investment scrutiny compared to their global counterparts, with investors demanding more evidence of traction and conducting more thorough financial audits. This heightened scrutiny is often fueled by perceived risks associated with the region, including political instability and infrastructure challenges. Venture capital strategist, Tayo Olorun emphasized that while startups in Silicon Valley and other global hubs can secure funding with just an idea and a

strong team, African startups are typically required to demonstrate substantial revenue before attracting serious investment. Despite these challenges, African startups are still receiving investment, although at a noticeably slower pace. In January 2025, African startups raised nearly \$300 million, but the overall funding for the year dropped by 25% compared to 2023, reflecting increased investor caution.

The gap in funding between African startups and those in regions like Silicon Valley is partly attributed to outdated risk perceptions and stricter financial requirements for African founders. Many investors view the African market as high-risk, prompting more rigorous due diligence, which some founders liken to forensic investigations. This cautious approach is compounded by limited capital availability in Africa, with local venture capital firms managing significantly smaller funds compared to their global counterparts.

Despite this, experts urge African investors to lead by example and offer more support to local startups, as this could boost confidence and attract more international investment.

Comment

The challenges faced by African startups securing investment are typically due to factors such as strict due diligence, underdeveloped regulatory frameworks, and the perception of the continent as high-risk. These concerns, coupled with volatility and limited infrastructure, make investors cautious, especially with early-stage ventures that struggle to prove substantial revenue.

Socially, the pressure on entrepreneurs to demonstrate financial success before attracting investment stifles innovation and deepens socio-economic inequalities. The cycle of limited capital hampers growth, but improving legal, economic, and social conditions could unlock the potential of Africa's startup ecosystem, driving meaningful development and growth.

For more information, please click [here](#).

Nigeria records largest global drop in cash usage as digital payments surge

Nigeria has experienced the largest decline in cash transactions among major economies, with a 50% drop from 2014 to 2024, surpassing six other cash-reliant countries. This decline is largely driven by the rise of digital payments and increased fintech partnerships. Electronic transactions have surged, particularly following the Central Bank of Nigeria's Naira redesign policy, which aimed to combat cash hoarding and money laundering. While the policy led to a cash shortage, fintech companies like OPay and PalmPay became key players by offering reliable alternatives for money transfers, fueling the shift towards digital payments. As a result, Nigeria's financial inclusion rate has increased, with projections suggesting that cash usage will fall to 32% by 2030.

The adoption of mobile and digital payments has been transformative, reducing Nigeria's cash reliance from 91% in 2019. Fintech innovation and partnerships have played a pivotal role in this shift, improving the efficiency of financial transactions and positioning Nigeria as a leader in digital finance across Africa.

Comment

Nigeria's shift towards digital payments necessitates the development of robust regulations to ensure data privacy, security, and fair competition, especially as fintech companies grow in influence. The decline in cash transactions marks a positive transformation, enhancing financial efficiency, boosting financial inclusion, and positioning Nigeria as a leader in digital finance in Africa.

The move towards digital payments is reshaping consumer behavior, increasing access to financial services, and potentially reducing reliance on cash-based systems, but it also requires addressing digital literacy gaps and managing the risks of exclusion for unbanked populations.

For more information, please click [here](#).

Uganda Approves Historic Single SIM Card Policy to Streamline Communication and Reduce Costs

Uganda has approved a groundbreaking proposal for a single SIM card policy aimed at simplifying communication across mobile networks. The policy, which was unanimously approved by Parliament, allows users to make calls, send texts, and perform transactions seamlessly across various telecom networks, improving accessibility and reducing the burden of multiple SIM cards. Spearheaded by Ministry MP Joyce Bagala, the initiative is expected to enhance network service quality, lower connectivity costs, and encourage competition among telecom providers. It will also allow subscribers to retain their phone numbers when switching networks or moving locations, offering significant convenience to users.

Although the proposal has been well received, putting it into practice will be difficult because Uganda needs better telecom infrastructure. The ICT Minister, Godfrey Kabyumba Bakuku, said that both the government and telecom companies must invest heavily to make this happen. Still, the policy is expected to improve communication for all Ugandans, especially lawmakers, by making it simpler and less cluttered.

The Uganda Communications Commission has been asked to move quickly to implement it.

Comment

Uganda's single SIM card policy may require updates to telecommunications regulations to ensure consumer protection, privacy, and fair competition among providers. The policy is expected to lower communication costs, enhance service quality, and foster competition, benefiting both consumers and businesses by making communication more affordable and efficient. However, the need for infrastructure upgrades will impose financial burdens on telecom companies and the government.

Socially, this initiative will improve convenience for users by eliminating the need for multiple SIM cards and enabling easier switching between networks, which is particularly beneficial for frequent travelers. It also supports greater inclusivity by ensuring that all Ugandans, regardless of network affiliation, have better access to communication services.

For more information, please click [here](#).

Airtel Africa Launches AI-Powered Spam Alert Service to Combat SMS Fraud in Nigeria

Airtel Africa has launched an AI-powered spam alert service in Nigeria to help protect subscribers from the growing problem of spam messages and SMS fraud. This service is automatically activated for all Airtel customers, requiring no additional app downloads and is accessible to both smartphone and feature phone users. The AI system analyzes over 250 parameters in real-time, such as SMS frequency and sender behavior, to identify suspicious messages, which are then flagged as "Suspected SPAM." Importantly, the system does not access message content, ensuring user privacy is maintained. It also includes a centralized database to alert customers about harmful web links in

received SMS.

Dinesh Bhasin, Managing Director and CEO of Airtel Nigeria, hailed the launch of Africa's first AI-powered spam alert service as a major advancement for the continent's telecom industry. He emphasized Airtel's commitment to tackling customer challenges with technology-driven solutions. The service, which will soon be introduced in other Airtel markets, reflects the company's effort to enhance both user experience and security across Africa's telecommunications sector through advanced, proactive technologies.



Comment

Airtel's introduction of the AI-powered spam alert service reflects a growing trend of using AI in telecommunications to enhance consumer protection and combat fraud. In Nigeria, where spam messages and SMS fraud have caused significant financial losses and undermined trust in digital communications, this AI-driven solution helps telecom operators improve fraud detection, protect revenue streams, and boost customer satisfaction. This proactive approach strengthens the telecommunications industry's integrity across Africa and provides telecom companies with advanced tools to tackle increasingly sophisticated fraud.

For more information, please [click here](#).

African Development Bank Partners with Axian Telecom to Accelerate Africa's Digital Transformation

The African Development Bank (AfDB) has approved a \$160 million senior corporate loan to Axian Telecom to expand digital access and promote financial inclusion across nine African countries. This loan will support the modernization of Axian's network infrastructure, focusing on 4G and 5G deployment, while driving digital innovation in its operations and expanding its reach. Axian Telecom, based in Mauritius, currently serves over 42 million mobile subscribers and 15 million mobile financial service users, positioning itself as a leader in Africa's digital transformation. A key focus of the funding is empowering women, with over \$10 million allocated to support 22,000 women entrepreneurs in Madagascar through the Mvola platform, and a \$2.5 million grant aimed at enhancing financial literacy and credit access for 34,000 women in Madagascar, Tanzania, and Senegal.

This partnership aligns with the African Development Bank's priorities of fostering inclusive growth, financial inclusion, and sustainable development, particularly for women.

AfDB Vice President Solomon Quaynor emphasized that the investment will bridge the digital divide and create opportunities across the continent, while Axian Telecom CEO Hassan Jaber expressed pride in collaborating with the AfDB to advance Africa's digital economy. The partnership also supports AfDB's "14-5" development priorities, especially in "Industrialize Africa" and "Integrate Africa", by improving connectivity and supporting cross-border digital services. Together, they aspire to drive meaningful change and accelerate the digital and financial inclusion of Africa.

Comment

The investment will stimulate growth by modernizing telecom networks, hosting digital services, and fostering financial inclusion, particularly for women entrepreneurs, thereby contributing to broader economic development across Africa. The partnership between the African Development Bank and Axian Telecom emphasizes the importance of regulatory frameworks that support digital infrastructure expansion and financial inclusion, especially for underserved populations.

Socially, the initiative addresses significant gaps in access to financial services, particularly for women, empowering them with tools for economic participation and fostering greater digital literacy. This collaboration supports the continent's digital transformation while promoting inclusive and sustainable development, ensuring more equitable access to opportunities across various sectors.

For more information, please click [here](#).

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