

# Press Release

## For immediate release

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South African Institute of Race Relations

*The power of ideas*

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#### **South Africans spend almost a 100 billion minutes talking on their mobile phones – IRR report**

A new IRR report reveals the scale of South Africa's mobile phone revolution.

IRR Head of Risk, Kerwin Lebone, noted that between 2000 and 2014, mobile phone subscriptions for every 100 people had leapt by 702%, while those for fixed-line telephones had dropped by 38%. At the same time, the proportion of people who accessed the internet increased from 5.4% to 49%.

He added: "In 2000, the ratio of mobile phones to fixed-line telephone subscriptions was 1.7 to 1. By 2014, that had shot up to 22 mobile phone subscriptions per fixed line.

"Of 26.2 million people aged 16 or older with access to the internet, almost half report doing so via their mobile phones, with Samsung and Microsoft dominating the handset market".

The IRR report also shows that the dominance of the mobile phone extends to voice traffic.

Mr Lebone said: "There were 12.5 billion minutes of fixed-line voice traffic in 2014/15, compared to 82.9 billion minutes of mobile voice traffic. Moreover, some 41% of outgoing fixed-line voice calls went to mobile phones while just under 3% of outgoing mobile voice traffic went to fixed-line telephones."

Just under a quarter of South Africans spent R50 or less per month on mobile phone expenses and less than 1% spent more than R1 150 per month.

Mr Lebone also predicted a swing to online retail transactions if data costs declined sufficiently. He also believes the internet will become an increasingly important political tool in South Africa.

IRR CEO Frans Cronje said: "The mobile phone and the internet are perhaps the most prominent examples of how the private sector is able to improve the lives and living standards of South Africans."

*The IRR is a think tank that promotes political and economic freedom. Follow the IRR on Twitter at [IRR South Africa](#).*

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