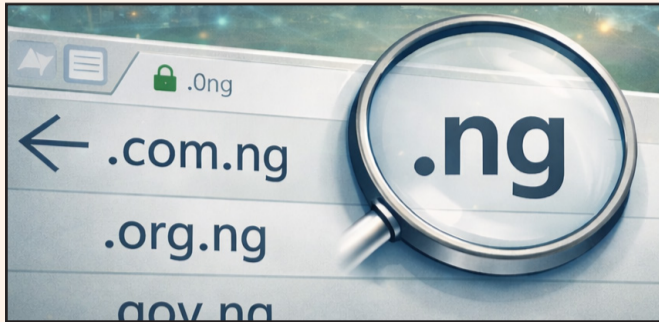


ntel Insights



NIGERIA'S INTERNET SPACE EXPANDS AS 6,155 BUSINESSES EMBRACE LOCAL DOMAINS

BUSINESSDAY

Nigeria's online footprint widened in January as 6,155 businesses registered third-level .ng domains, underscoring a steady shift toward locally anchored digital identities amid a broader push for data sovereignty. Figures released by the Nigeria Internet Registration Association (NiRA), which manages Nigeria's country-code top-level domain, showed that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) accounted for nearly three-quarters of the 8,111 new .ng registrations recorded during the month.

TELCOS HIGHLIGHT KEY STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES, ASSURES NCC

THISDAY

Telecoms operators under the aegis of the Association of Licensed Telecoms Operators of Nigeria, (ALTON), has highlighted key structural challenges militating against telecoms operations in the country, and has called on the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) to address the challenges to enable them serve the country better.

The operators also assured the Chairman, NCC Board of Commissioners, Dr. Idris Olorunnimbe, of their determination to boost service quality and strengthen connectivity across networks, as well as their resolve to support education and ensure that no one is left behind, through the deployment of internet connectivity to enhance educational websites for research and development. Telcos gave the assurance in Lagos, while presenting their key challenges during a courtesy visit to NCC chairman at the NCC's Lagos Zonal Office, led by the Chairman of ALTON, Gbenga Adebayo.



FIBRE CUTS CONTINUE DESPITE TELCOS' WARNINGS

PUNCH

Despite repeated warnings from Nigeria's telecommunications operators, damage to fibre-optic cables continues to escalate, threatening the country's digital infrastructure, disrupting services, and raising concerns about the effectiveness of existing protective measures under the Critical National Information Infrastructure framework.

The latest data from the Nigerian Communications Commission highlights a sharp rise in fibre damage in early 2026. Reported incidents jumped from just four in December 2025 to forty in January 2026, a tenfold increase. By 17 February, a further 18 incidents had been recorded, bringing the total disruptions in the first seven weeks of the year to 58.



STARLINK'S N159,000 LIFELINE HITS NIGERIA'S STARVED CITIES

BUSINESSDAY

Starlink threw open its premium Business Priority service in Nigeria's choked urban zones on February 14, giving businesses and deep-pocket users in Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt a way around months of "Sold Out" blocks, but only if they can stomach N159,000 (\$99.38) a month.

Website checks in prime Lagos spots like Victoria Island, Ikoyi, Lekki and Surulere still show the same blunt notice: high demand means residential orders stay shut, with only Priority plans on offer. Would-be home users get pushed to waitlists that offer little more than vague promises and up-front deposits with no firm rollout date.

TELCOS HIGHLIGHT KEY STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES, ASSURES NCC

Telecom operators under ALTON visited NCC's new chairman, Dr. Idris Olorunimbe, last week where the ALTON chair, Gbenga Adebayo shared the cautious optimism of industry operators. He acknowledges that "Two years ago, industry sustainability was under serious strain. If decisive actions had not been taken at the time, some of us might not even be here today." The turnaround he described is not lost on anyone who keenly follows the industry as the industry has benefited from FX stability and policy action that has enabled the industry to attract \$392.9 million in foreign investments in the first three quarters of 2025, resolved debt crises and return to profitability due to tariff adjustment.

Additionally, operators conveyed their commitment to service quality, rural connectivity and supporting education through internet deployment. They also put forward challenges facing their operations: fiber cuts by government road contractors, multiple regulations and multiple taxation leading to conflicting directives. ALTON also called for the



NCC to maintain real independence as they highlight that investor confidence in the industry depends on that. The NCC chairman assured operators of the NCC's independence and encouraged them to invest in the creative industry, support education, research and development in tertiary institutions.

For NTEL's strategic objectives, NCC's push for operators to invest in the creative and academic segments of the economy give crucial pointers to potential niche plays for Project Beam

especially as they are sure to receive significant regulatory support. The NCC's continued commitment to addressing operators' concerns reinforces the need for NTEL to ensure that we are fully involved in the Nigerian Telecommunications Policy review process as it presents a very profound opportunity to ensure policy fits company strategy.

FIBRE CUTS CONTINUE DESPITE TELCOS' WARNINGS

It is no surprise that one of the main issues raised by ALTON at their meeting with the NCC was persistent fibre cuts across the nation, significantly disrupting telco operations. The numbers are alarming: four fiber cuts were recorded in December 2025, but this figure skyrocketed tenfold to forty fiber cuts in January 2026. In addition to this, eighteen more cuts had occurred between the 1st and 17th of February, bringing the total to fifty-eight in the first seven weeks of 2026, with eighty percent of these occurring in Abuja as road construction contractors operate with apparent disregard for telecommunication infrastructure despite the CNII framework President Tinubu signed in June 2024 designating fiber, towers and data centers as critical national assets. The ALTON chair noted that these disruptions create significant economic losses without compensation and cause nationwide service disruptions across critical sectors of the Nigerian economy such as banking, education and security.

To highlight the gravity of the situation, the telecoms sector recorded 19,384 fibre



cuts from January to August 2025, with MTN Nigeria alone reporting 5,478 cuts in the first seven months of that year, with June seeing 1,016 incidents, costing operators tens of billions of Naira in repair costs.

This persistent and escalating crisis poses both a threat and an opportunity for Ntel's operations. Persistent fibre cuts create downtime for ISPs and generate significant customer complaints.

This sort of issue is exactly what the Tarana project seeks to solve as it eliminates the need to lay fibre networks into residential or enterprise buildings and reduces the amount of fibre cables that have to be laid, thus minimizing the damage caused by fiber cuts on connectivity. However, these issues also affect Ntel's extensive fiber infrastructure, increasing maintenance and repair costs for the business.



STARLINK'S N159,000 LIFELINE HITS NIGERIA'S STARVED CITIES

As Ntel continues its course for its re-launch, developments in the industry often present threats and opportunities for the business. Interestingly, this story is one of the clearest cases of a double-edged sword for Ntel's strategic plans; leaving the company with the opportunity to navigate the development and future similar developments in such a way that the "positive" edge is what strikes the business.

For months, residents in Lagos (Victoria Island, Ikoyi, Lekki, Surulere) and parts

of Abuja have been on waitlists for Starlink's N57,000 residential plans hit capacity in some of Nigeria's most economically viable and urban areas. However, on the 14th of February, 2026, Starlink quietly restored access, but this came with a very steep increase to N159,000 (\$99.38) monthly subscription plus hardware costs in excess of N4million (\$2500). The reopening represents a restoration of the previously suspended Business (Priority) tier that offers 1TB or 2TB of priority data along with priority technical support and publicly routable IPv4 addresses. Without directly insinuating causation, it is important to highlight that this move comes as Amazon's Project Kuiper secured Nigerian landing permits in January 2026.

On the negative edge of our proverbial sword, this product renaissance is in direct competition with Project Beam's Tarana deployment which targets enterprise customers in the same Lagos and Abuja neighborhoods. Likewise, the capacity constraints that Starlink has experienced demonstrated that all wireless technologies face congestion in dense urban areas. In the near future, Ntel must secure adequate spectrum allocation through the NCC's 6GHz roadmap and deploy sufficient tower density to avoid experiencing a similar issue. Lastly, Amazon's Project Kulper and Starlink's product renaissance intensify satellite com-

petition that can create pricing pressures and subdue demand for other technologies as satellites are seen as superior technology.

Starlink's waitlist validates a demand that exists for quality connectivity in Nigeria's urban centres and with a huge price gap opened up, Ntel can capitalize on this demand by offering a mix similar connectivity and better pricing. Likewise, as satellite operators expand their presence and capacity, project Titan has the opportunity to expand its tenant base beyond traditional MNOs. The N159,000 monthly revenue Starlink extracts from business customers demonstrates willingness to pay for capacity, suggesting ground station lease rates could command premium pricing if they directly enable service restoration in "Sold Out" markets.

NIGERIA'S INTERNET SPACE EXPANDS AS 6,155 BUSINESSES EMBRACE LOCAL DOMAINS

If you spoke to anyone that has anything remotely to do with Nigeria's digital economy, they will surely speak extensively on how the digital space in Nigeria is expanding every day. However, these assertions become much more profound when there are numbers to illustrate this phenomenon. In January 2026, The Nigeria Internet Registration Association (NiRA) reported that 6,155 business registered third level ".ng" domains in a single month, adding to 8,111 total new registrations across all ".ng" extensions. This means that SMEs accounted for over 75% of new registrations. Likewise, there were 7,105 renewals signaling a shift in the digital ecosystem as Nigerian businesses are deliberately maintaining their online presence. The 15,216 total transactions in January represented product launches, new companies, rebrands and campaigns, but more importantly, they showed businesses refusing to let those domains expire.



These are data points that speak to the validity of Project's Beam strategy to target SMEs and build out the project with this market segment in mind. The expanding demand by Nigerian entrepreneurs to build a digital backbone for their businesses underscores the need for Ntel to position itself as a reliable broadband partner for SMEs across the nation. Another insight drawn from this story is that this trend also creates a demand for data sovereignty infrastructure that NiRA and

government policy are positioning as essential to national security. In compliance with local data hosting mandates, business and other domain owners will need Nigeria-domiciled data centers and secure hosting facilities that Ntel's Tier III facilities can provide. These are of course relevant to Project Titan as providing the infrastructure backbone to meet these connectivity demands remains a viable value proposition.