

# How scalable cloud enables African online retail innovation

Renowned for its approach to e-commerce, Konga.com has become one of Nigeria's most prevalent and prospering online retail stores. Launched in July 2012, their mission is to become the engine of commerce and trade in Africa and supporting this mission is an advanced technology infrastructure.



Image by 123RF

Konga.com is headquartered in Nigeria, a diverse and bustling African market with one of the highest mobile penetration rates. With this in mind, they set about to expand in a market known for its unbanked potential and thus personalised their approach in this unique territory. Additionally, they have also established a Development Centre in South Africa.

Pivotal to their African success has been the scalable advantage of cloud technology. According to Jacobus van Heerden, the devOps team leader at Konga Online Shopping, “Prior to activating the scalable and agile capabilities of cloud, Konga.com relied on physical hardware-centric data centres for all of our resourcing needs. However with the exponential growth that we are currently experiencing, the cloud environment provided by Amazon Web Services has allowed us to expand our environment extremely fast – from a matter of minutes to a maximum of a couple of hours. Today Konga’s complete product and customer data intelligence sits in the cloud. ”

Van Heerden continued: “This benefit has allowed Konga.com to also lock into globally prominent deals such as Black Friday. The scalability of the Amazon Web Services solution allows Konga.com to assign more resources in a cost effective way for the duration of the deal. This option can then be downscaled or closed completely following from the completion of the short term campaign. The AWS offering also allows businesses to respond to capacity requirements almost immediately and prevents unforeseen downtime through comprehensive backup solutions during periods of increased user capacity.”

Cloud services also translates to cost savings. “In the cloud you don’t need your service to be running 24/7 as in data centres. During peak time all servers can remain running and during off peak time those servers may be reduced. With AWS you pay for what you use. That results in major cost reductions and the great thing is it happens automatically. AWS gives you the tools to set it up like that,” added Van Heerden

The next phase will see Konga.com further dominate the Nigerian market. The company plans to leverage the burgeoning mobile market, which is set to grow with the Nigerian economy. “The agility, cost effectiveness and scalability of cloud will allow us to earn a greater percentage of the Nigerian online retail industry. Nigeria is a unique market, with unique challenges and opportunities. A solid technological infrastructure that can handle these unique challenges is key to dominating this country filled with latent possibility,” concluded van Heerden.

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