

## Free connectivity expands engagement

*Sponsored data platform can facilitate access to health information*

By Ediane Tiago - For Valor, from São Paulo



Data from the International Telecommunication Union show that half of the world's population does not have access to the internet. The disconnection rate is higher in less developed and developing countries. The situation hampers public health actions and the fight against pandemics. "Health information is an essential service. It is necessary to use tools capable of ensuring that they reach the citizens," comments Harjot Saluja, CEO of Datami, a mobile phone engagement company, leader in the sponsored data market.

The Datami platform allows brands to offer mobile data to their consumers in exchange for loyalty. According to the National Telecommunications Agency (Anatel), Brazil has 226.6 million mobile accesses - 50% of the base is prepaid cell phones. The cost of data connection is a barrier to accessing information about covid-19.

The Unified Health System (SUS), the private network and the state and municipal health departments have mobility as a tool to mobilize the population, but many citizens are unable to pay to access applications and websites. According to Saluja, the technology already allows users to use the mobile internet without paying for navigation, in a system similar to the 0800, also known as sponsored data. "In this case, companies, institutions or governments bear the costs of connection," he explains. The service ensures that the information reaches the destination and also allows data capture. "It is possible to create rules to ask the user's temperature or how he is feeling on the day", he exemplifies.

Saluja cites the initiative of the American operator Reach Mobile, also directed by him, who launched service plans with social impact. For each plan sold, the same amount is intended to finance access for those who cannot pay. The initiative is aimed at the female audience. "It is women who suffer most from the lack of connection," he says, recalling that the situation of many of them will become more complicated with the economic crisis caused by the new coronavirus. "Giving access to the internet means providing a social service, especially in times of confinement", comments the executive, recalling that the cell phone has become the main point of contact. "The health service competes with the money that the person has to see his friends and family."

Engaging people through information campaigns requires strategy. It is not enough to pay for the telecommunications service, it is necessary to guarantee access to the devices and develop applications and services capable of attracting users. "Among the strategies is to create a service center, with all applications with free access," says Saluja. The model allows combining health, education and citizen services.

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