



# Africa's Digital Platforms: COVID-19 Edition

Webinar: 16 April 2020  
16h00 SAST

## Webinar speaker line-up



**Host and Panel Moderator: Chernay Johnson**  
Engagement Manager: Cenfri and insight2impact



**Presenter: Matthew Dunn**  
Senior Researcher: Cenfri and insight2impact



**Panellist: Annabel Schiff**  
Co-director: Caribou Digital



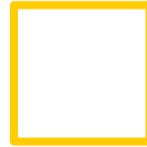
**Panellist: Herman Singh**  
CEO: Future Advisory



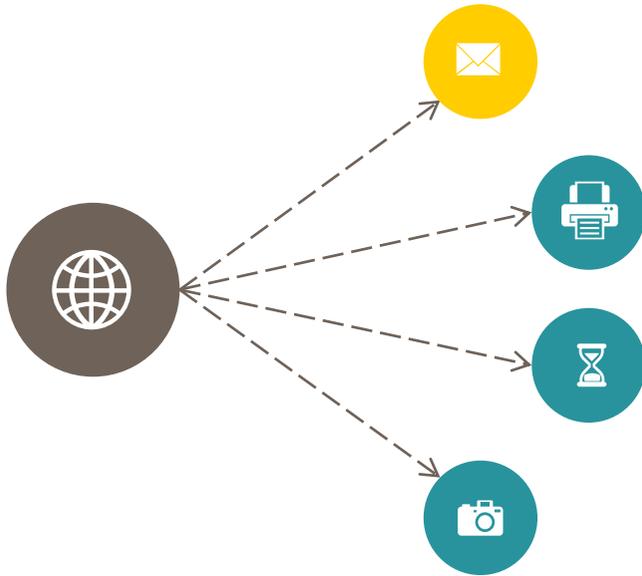
**Panellist: Hilda Kabushenga**  
CEO: Jobberman Nigeria

## Live poll

Do platform business models have a role to play in helping economies in Africa go digital during the current crisis?



# The role of platforms in digital economies



## ● Digital economy

A collective term for economic transactions that rely on digital technologies. It covers all business, economic, social and cultural activities supported by web and other digital communication technologies.

Global estimates of the size of the digital economy range from 4.5% to 15.5% of GDP.

## ● Digital platforms

Digital platforms are a driving force behind the development of digital economies and are broadly defined as virtual marketplaces facilitating interactions between two or more distinct groups of users (providers and consumers of goods and services).

Our narrow definition of transactional digital platforms furthermore requires that transactions between buyers and sellers are settled on the platform.

# COVID-19 impacts heavily on platform activity globally. Africa is not immune as lockdown restrictions are enforced.



Healthtech companies are, unsurprisingly, in the best position for growth amidst the crisis, 31/03/2020

Takealot returns to service: Here's what you can buy during lockdown  
31/03/2020



Airbnb is letting NHS staff and frontline coronavirus workers stay at for free  
29/03/2020

Freelancers Relief Fund aims to assist out-of-work independent contractors during COVID-19 pandemic  
25/03/2020

Airbnb, Uber, and Lyft Downloads Hit All-Time Lows  
18/03/2020

Uber introduces reduced rate for medical professionals  
28/03/2020

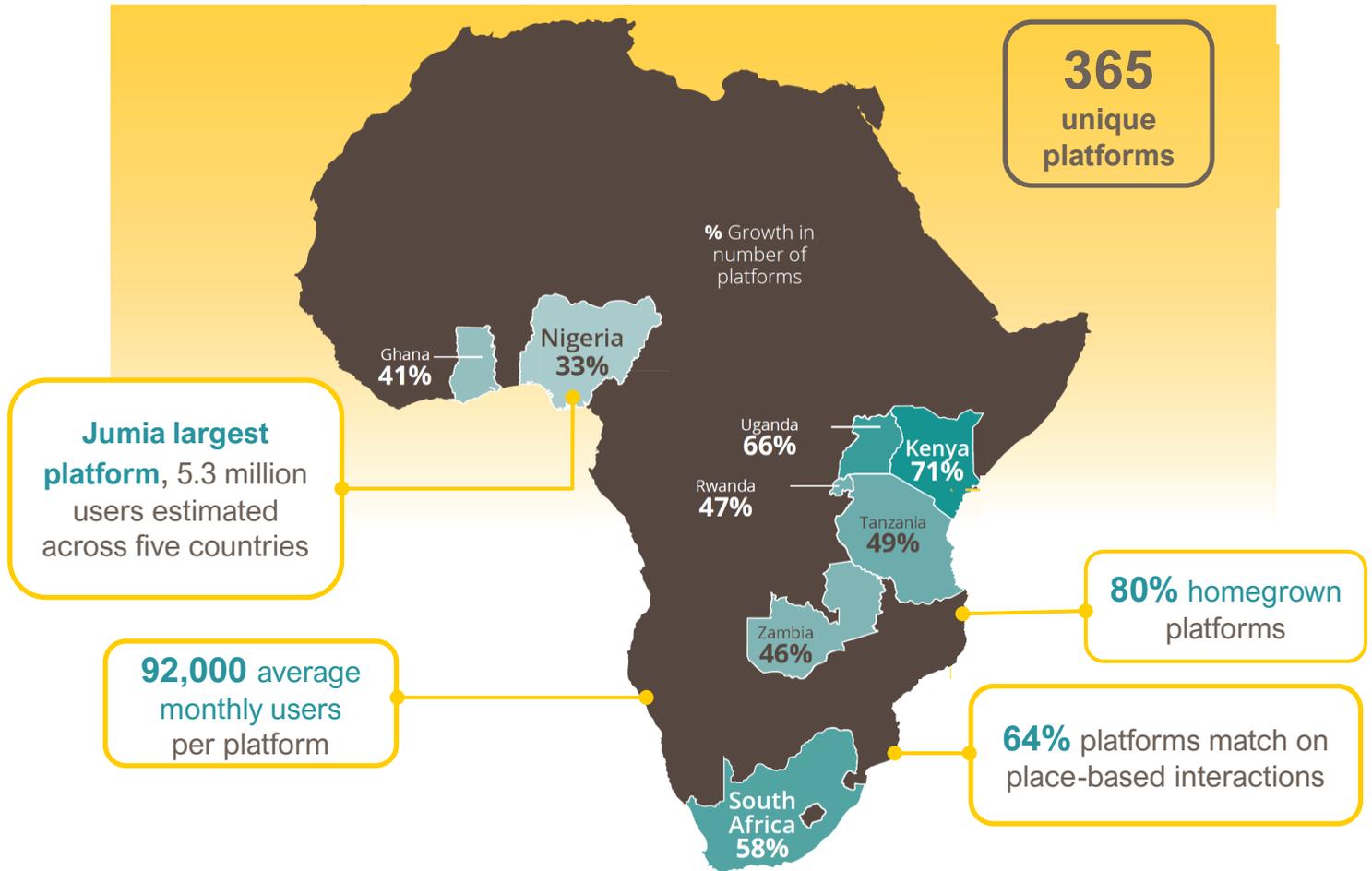
Excluded from stimulus package: E-hailing drivers disappointed  
27/02/2020

Uber available in South Africa but during restricted hours for national 21 day lockdown  
26/03/2020

Social Distancing, Work From Home and Quarantine Policies Beget an Uptick in Demand for Food Delivery Apps  
18/03/2020

# Africa's digital platforms

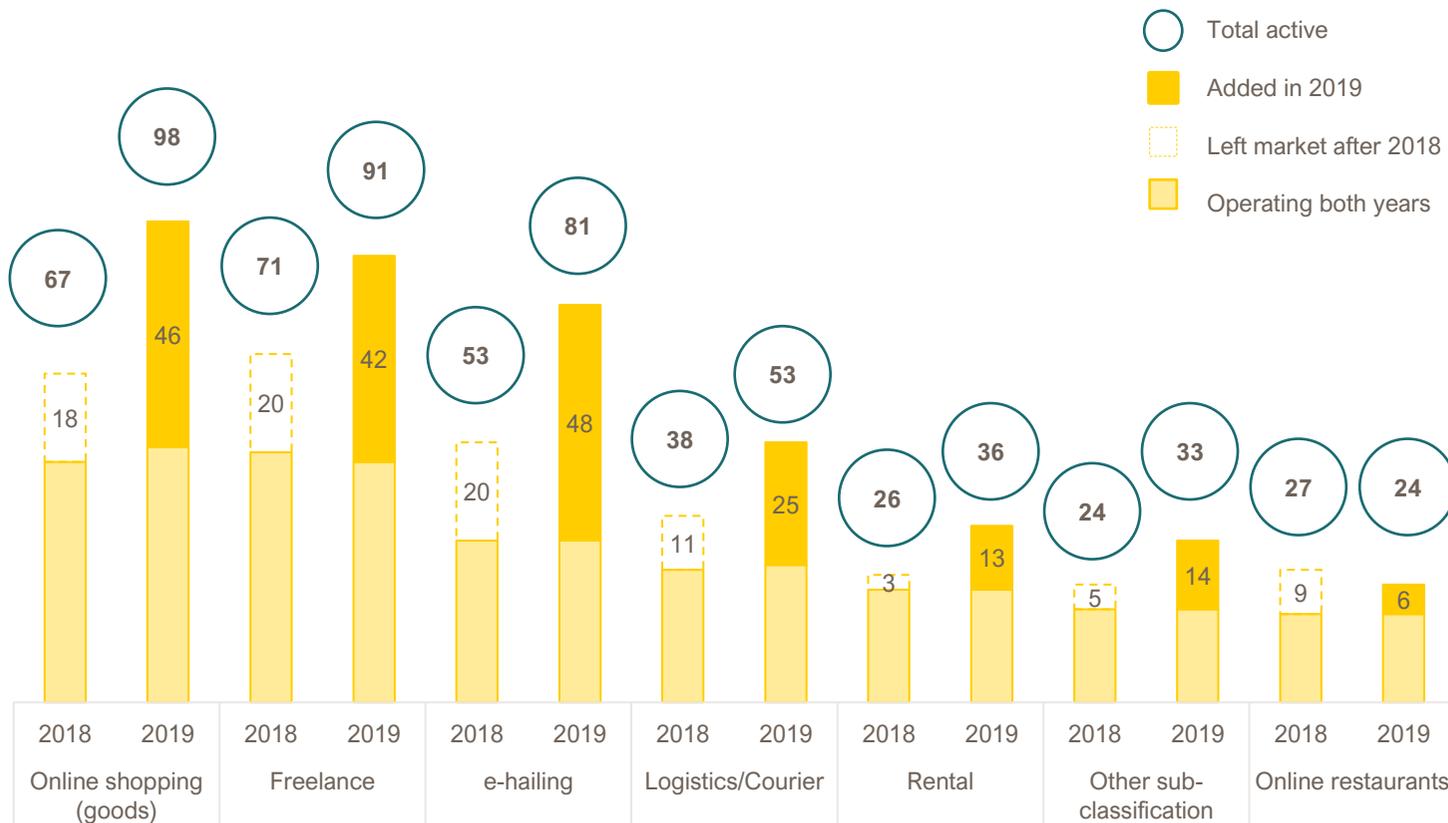
Emerging trends in 2019



Source: insight2impact, SEMrush (2020)

# Africa's digital platforms

Fragmented market with a high degree of churn



Source: insight2impact (2020)

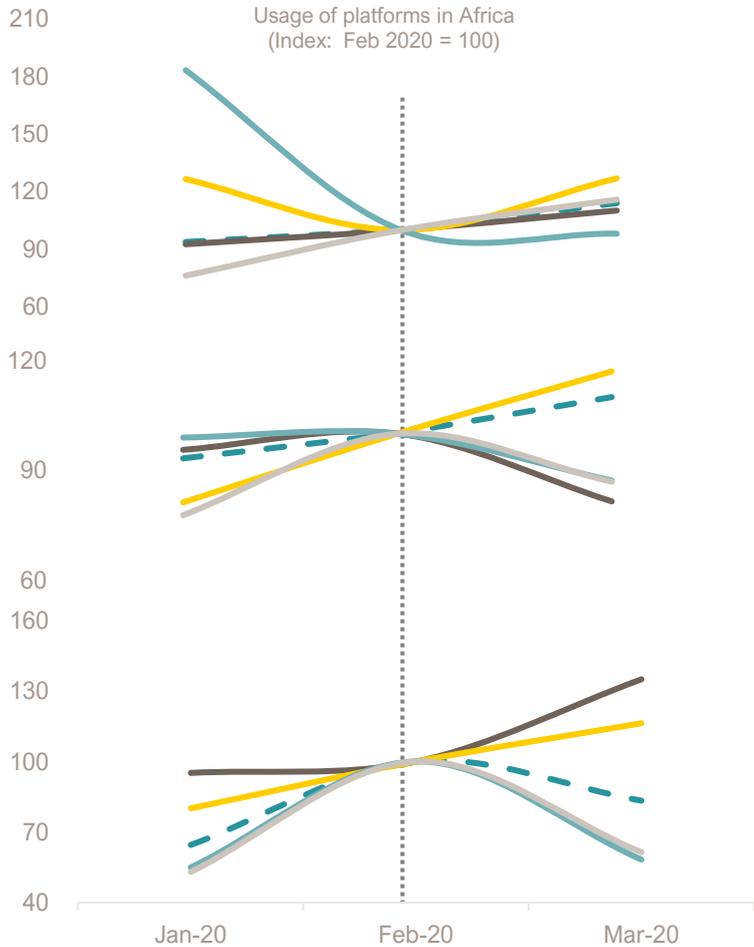
## COVID-19 lockdown implementation by largest platform markets

Country	Start of lockdown	Duration of lockdown	Areas affected	Severity of restrictions
South Africa	26 March	35 days*	Nationwide	
Ghana	30 March	21 days*	Accra, Tema, Kumasi	
Kenya	27 March	30 days	Nationwide	
Nigeria	30 March	28*	Lagos, Ogun, Abuja	

\* Original lockdown period extended

Source: National media (2020)

# Mixed impact of COVID-19 on place-based platform activity, as authorities respond with varying physical distancing measures



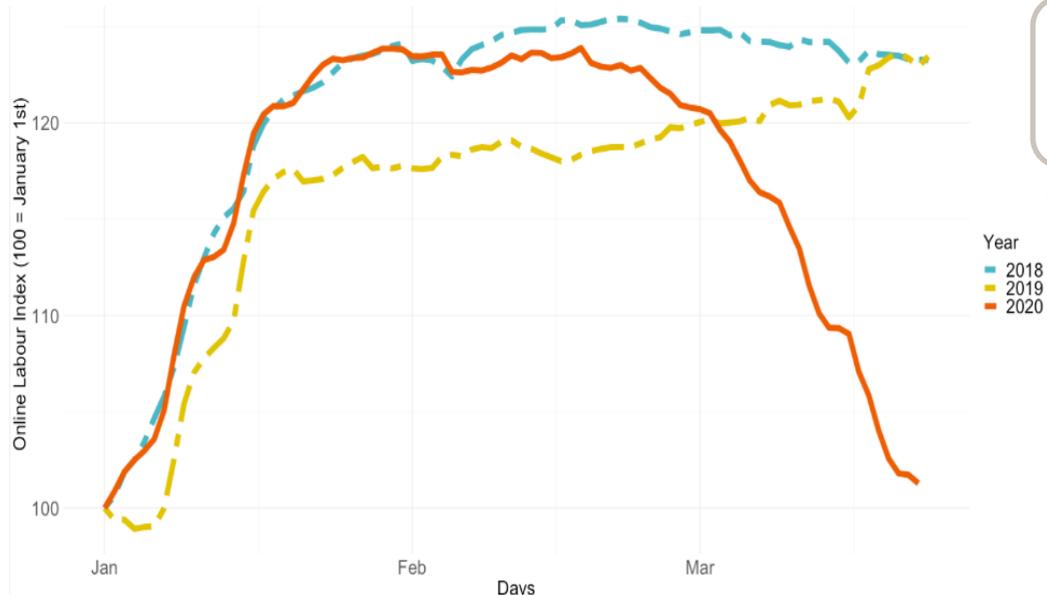
**Online shopping strong growth in major markets:** Since February, there has been a 14% increase on average in the usage of these platforms. The highest growth has been recorded in SA (27%).

**Logistics:** Since February, usage of logistics platforms has increased by 10% on average. This may be linked to the increased need for delivery services of essential goods under lockdown conditions. Usage in South Africa has increased by 17%.

**E-hailing:** Usage of e-hailing platforms has decreased by 17% on average since February. In Nigeria this may have been intensified by regulation banning okada services.

— Average\* — Kenya — South Africa — Ghana — Nigeria

## Potential trajectories for supply and demand in online work?



Global decline in demand for online workers in March 2020

- Global demand for online workers has plummeted in March 2020
- Africa's usage of online freelance platforms has grown over same period indicating a greater supply of job seekers now making use of freelance platforms to find work opportunities
- Supply of job seekers likely to outstrip demand for workers as the crisis continues, with African workers competing in the global environment
- We think this is likely to put downward pressure on wages in online work sectors

## Panel discussion

What impact have lockdown restrictions had on platform business models, and how have platforms innovated in response to these new conditions?

How do we expect e-commerce platforms to pivot through the COVID-19 crisis in Africa?

How is the pandemic already impacting platform workers' livelihoods in Africa?

Will the impact of COVID-19 be changing the skills required to equip Africa's youth for a future in which work may be increasingly digital?

What role could donor organisations/funders play?

# How to find us

Get involved. Contact us.

[digitalplatforms@cenfri.org](mailto:digitalplatforms@cenfri.org)

[i2ifacility.org](http://i2ifacility.org)



@i2ifacility



/insight2impact



/insight2impact



/i2ifacility



BILL & MELINDA  
GATES *foundation*

